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Learner-centered Group Work in Multi-level EFL Classes

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Abstract
Multi-level classes pose a formidable challenge to EFL teachers. Many researchers suggest group work as a solution but, in its traditional form, it may not lead to effective learning because some important decisions and arrangements are under the teacher’s control. Taking essay writing and translation as examples, this study aims to propose some general and other course-specific measures whereby group work can be made more learner-centered. It constitutes a five-point departure from from traditional group work: the decision to do group work has to be based on the students’ attitudes towards it and they have to form their own pairs and groups, choose a group leader by themselves, use L1 for asking for and offering assistance, and interact across groups. Further research is needed to verify the findings of this study and to explore ways of using learner-centered group work in teaching other EFL skills.

Key words: group work, learner-centered teaching, multi-level EFL classes
Introduction
Multi-level classes constitute one of nightmares of the teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL). These are classes where the learners vary in their proficiency level, (Gordon, 2010) due to differences in learning styles, motivation, interests, needs, aptitude, attitudes, experiences, personalities and so forth, (Reyes and Rodriguez, 2005). As Ur (1991) noted, terms such as ‘mixed-ability’ and ‘heterogeneous’ classes are not accurate since no two students are identical in their proficiency level and, hence, no class is really homogeneous. Not only do students differ in overall proficiency level in the language (i.e. inter-learner variation), a student’s level may vary within the various language skills and sub-skills (i.e. intra-learner variation), (Mathews & Horne, 2006).

It goes without saying that teaching a skill is more challenging than imparting facts. In a content course, a set of facts can be successfully taught and learned in one class-period. In a skill course, on the other hand, it may take days to get the students learn one linguistic form or structure. Not all the students learn all that is taught all the time. After the initial teaching, feedback and remedial teaching of a certain language form, the students may vary in their achievement due to the multitude of factors listed above.

A Brief Review of Some Solutions
As Bremner (2008) says, multi-level classes are a universal phenomenon. The students are put together in a class according to the year of study regardless of the proficiency level in EFL. Classes where the students vary in their ages are not uncommon. Researchers (e.g. Butterworth, 2010) agree that teachers are not prepared to deal with such classes. Neither pre-service nor in-service training programs equip EFL teachers with the skills and techniques needed to teach multi-level classes, (Jorgensen, 2006). Perera (2010) adds the fact that the teacher’s manual does not help in this regard and the textbooks are not designed to address the needs of different learners. Thus, the teachers are on their own. The solutions proposed to address the problem are usually a list of recommendations at the end of some research reports and reference books. Al-Shammakhi (2013), for instance, believes that EFL teachers target the average student. Of course, this is not a solution since the other students - both good and weak - become frustrated and de-motivated. Furthermore, there is variation even among the average students, especially in large classes. The teachers may follow the textbook which is usually designed on the basis of what is covered in the previous courses irrespective of the varying levels of the students. Solutions such as the development of additional teaching materials for advanced students, increasing teaching hours (Reyes & Rodriguez, 2005), and streaming (i.e. grouping the students according to their levels) are not feasible in many EFL contexts where the students have to study at least five other courses or subjects in addition to the language course, (for more information about the problems of streaming see e.g. McMillan & Joyce, 2011).

Some researchers (e.g. Mathews & Horne, 2006) believe that the problem of mixed-levels can be addressed by varying the teaching techniques and styles. Variation of teaching techniques is recommended even if a language class consists of a small number of homogeneous students to take care of the different learning styles. However, if the teachers are not trained, they
cannot give what they do not have. Moreover, in most EFL teaching contexts teachers are obliged to follow the prescribed textbooks that are not designed to cater for multi-level classes as we stated earlier. ‘Differentiated’, ‘individualized’ or ‘personalized’ instruction is another solution proposed by some researchers, (e.g. Nordlund, 2003; Reyes & Rodriguez, 2005; Salli-Copur, 2005). According to Tomlinson (1999, p. 24), “children already come to us differentiated. It just makes sense that we would differentiate our instruction in response to them.” In another article, Tomlinson (1995, p.2) explains that “a differentiated classroom offers a variety of learning options designed to tap into different levels, interests and learning profiles.” However, in addition to the problem of teacher training and textbooks discussed above, there is the problem of large classes in most EFL classrooms where it is normal to find more than 30 students. In the face of such factors, differentiation or individualization of instruction is only wishful thinking as Mahmoud (2012) says. None of the solutions discussed above seems to work in EFL situations where classes are large, textbooks are designed on the basis of coverage rather than on learning, and the teachers are not equipped with the necessary strategies and techniques to deal with such classes.

**Learner-centered Group Work**

Many researchers (e.g. Bremner, 2008; Hess, 2001; Morris, 2008) believe that the problem of multi-level classes can be alleviated by group work. They agree that language instructors who adopt a teacher-centered approach face difficulties in multi-level classes. Involving the students in the teaching-learning process through group work is recommended as a means of addressing the variation in the students’ levels. Teachers need to encourage the students to work together and interact with each other to facilitate learning. Students can act as teaching assistants. Thus, group work makes it possible to implement some important educational principles such as problem-solving, critical thinking, independent learning, learning the strategies of learning and using various social and cognitive learning and communication strategies. Group work should foster cooperation rather than competition. Needless to say, group work poses some challenges related to class time, the physical setting (space, seating, movement, etc.), class control and use of the first language, (Al-Badi, 2006). According to Al-Badi, EFL teachers tend to avoid group work even if it is recommended by the course designer. This means they would never think of doing it out of their own free will. However, from the present researcher’s experience in teaching EFL at the university level, such problems do not exist in teaching adults. When some students use the first language, it is usually for purposes related to the completion of the task such as asking for assistance and giving instructions and explanations to each other.

Thus, from the foregoing brief review, group work appears to be a sensible course of action to address the problem of multi-level EFL classes, especially in higher education institutions where the learners are responsible and mature enough to work together and reap the benefits of cooperation. However, although group work constitutes a shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach to EFL instruction, teacher intervention needs to be reduced even further for more effective learning. The purpose of this study is to explore the possibility of achieving more learner-centeredness by relegating more responsibilities to the
adult learners until the teacher becomes almost redundant, (Weimar, 2013). A brief definition of the concept of learner-centeredness is in order in this connection. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 293), it is “a belief that attention to the nature of the learners should be central of all aspect of language teaching including planning, teaching and evaluation.” It aims at creating a learning atmosphere which “de-emphasizes the role of the teacher and stresses process over product as students take control over their own learning,” (Fahraeus, 2013, p.1), (see also Blumberg, 2008; Sarigoz, 2008; Weimar, 2013 for similar definitions). Thus, learner-centeredness entails delegating more responsibilities to the students and allowing them to play a more active role in making decisions and in participating in the teaching-learning process.

In traditional group work, teachers specify the language task to be completed, divide the students into pairs or groups based either on their seating or on their abilities and give instruction as to what to do and how to do it. A good student is usually appointed as a group leader. The task is usually a grammar, vocabulary or spelling exercise or contest included in the textbook or in the teacher’s manual. Traditional group work is teacher-centered because the teacher is in control of some key arrangements such as the formation of groups and the appointment of group leaders. Moreover, the decision to do or not to do group work is not based on the students’ views about this technique; it is made either by the teacher or the course designer. The students may not be allowed to use the first language or to interact across groups. The use of the first language is believed to be at the expense of learning the foreign language and cross-group interaction is seen as disturbance.

Adopting a pragmatic approach based on the present researcher’s experience in teaching EFL at the university level, this study is intended to propose some measures whereby group work can be made more learner-centered. The more learner-centered group work becomes, the less demanding it is for the teacher and the more beneficial it is for the students. The techniques and ideas presented in the following sections are based on the views and attitudes of 206 male and female 6th and 7th semester university students majoring in EFL at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). It is the policy of SQU to have the students evaluate each course at the end of the semester. The evaluation tool is an electronic questionnaire consisting of an objective section and an open-ended one. The objective section of the course evaluation tool includes questions about the teaching materials, the teacher’s punctuality, the use of audio-visual aids, course assignments, tests and examinations, feedback, and the teacher personality and competence. The subjective section consists of three open-ended questions about what the students like and do not like most in the course and any suggestions to improve the course. In addition to specialisations courses in language teaching and learning the present writer teaches and essay writing course and five different English-Arabic-English translation courses. He uses group work in teaching these courses. For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on the students’ responses to the open-ended questions in the evaluation of four translation courses in three consecutive semesters, that is, each course was evaluated by three groups of 20-25 students each semester. All of the students who responded to the questions (206 out of 247 – 83%) said what they liked most was
the group work and the instructor’s way of teaching the course. The remaining students (17\%) either did not do the evaluation or did not answer the open-ended questions. The high percentage of favorable responses (83\%) could be attributed to the greater role and freedom given to the students by taking the cognitive, social and psychological aspect of group work into account. Hence, the students’ positive attitude towards group work gave impetus to this study.

The teaching-evaluation cycle continues by ploughing the students’ views and suggestions back into the instructional strategies. The students are involved in making decisions about the mode of delivery by taking their views into account not only through the formal course evaluation at the end of the semester but also through informal chats with them during the semester. Regarding the group work itself, an important departure from the traditional arrangement is to let the students form pairs and groups by themselves with some flexibility regarding the number of the students in a group. The size of the group can range from only two to five or six students. It is important for the students to know that they are free to choose who they want to work with. This freedom constitutes an important socio-psychological factor leading to stress-free cooperation where the students eagerly assist each other and accept assistance. It is axiomatic that the students may not be ready help or be helped unless they accept each other in the first place and have the desire to work together. The instructions pertaining to group formation are given only at the beginning of the semester. Thus, the teacher’s intervention in the formation of groups is kept to the minimum.

The traditional practice of appointing a group leader reinforces the idea of streaming and discrimination and therefore has to be abandoned. The feeling of inferiority may prohibit weak students from participation. Some good students also may not be ready to cooperate if they feel they are precluded from leadership. When there is no leader, the feeling of equality can motivate all members to participate. If the work of the group is to be presented to the whole class, it can be done by the teacher to keep the group anonymous to encourage its members to complete the task and not worry about their mistakes being exposed to the other students. Anonymity can also encourage the group to reflect on and discuss their own work with the class. It also helps the class focus on the work rather than the group who did it. To foster the spirit of cooperation rather than competition, the groups can feel free to interact with each other when they deem it necessary. For instance, a group or a member of it can help or seek help from an adjacent group or a member of it. The use of the first language by foreign language learners is a part of the classroom culture. If it is not used openly, it is there in the learners’ minds as a source of linguistic knowledge that is relied upon in the hope of facilitating foreign language comprehension and production, (Mahmoud, 2012). The phenomenon is beyond the teacher’s control and any attempt at banning it would be futile. Instead, this additional linguistic source can be utilized in the foreign language classroom for good reasons. The students may be allowed to resort the first language to save time and ensure comprehension when giving instructions and explanations as stated earlier.
Learner-centered Group Work in Multi-level EFL Classes

The steps discussed above regarding group formation, leadership, cross-group interaction and the use of the first language are some of the general principles that apply to group work in all EFL courses and skills. There are, of course, some other course-specific measures that can be taken depending on the nature of the course. For instance, the students may have more freedom in creative writing than in translation. From the present researcher’s experience, the students can be involved in the choice of the topics they want to write about within a specified writing mode such as argumentation. The teacher can compile a list of argumentative topics suggested by the students and have them write about the most common ones. In translation, on the other hand, the texts are selected by the teacher to ensure coverage of a wide range of text types and genres. In writing, the brain-storming stage can be learner-centered by engaging the students in an oral debate to generate points in favor of and against the topic in question (e.g. the pros and cons of the social media). In translation, the students read the text and work together to figure out the meanings of the unfamiliar words and expressions and assist each other in global and detailed comprehension of the text. The production phase in both writing and translation is almost the same. Both tasks have to be process oriented where the students work together to solve problems of spelling, grammar, vocabulary and cohesion and review each others drafts. The two tasks may differ in the provision of feedback due to the difference in the nature of the tasks and the length of the texts produced. The translation text can be short (5 – 10 lines) or long (20 – 25 lines) but divided into pieces for each group to translate a piece. In this case, the last 10-15 minutes of the class can be spared for the presentation and discussion of each translation. For this purpose, the present writer asks each group to write their translation on a transparency to facilitate presentation. Such presentation and discussion may not be possible in essay writing due to time limitations. Of course, some writing and translation tasks have to be done individually in class and some at home for the students to gauge their levels and to rehearse for the tests and examinations.

Conclusion
Multi-level language classes are a universal phenomenon and pose a formidable challenge to both first language and foreign language teachers. Most of the solutions proposed to address the problem are ivory tower recommendations listed at the end of research reports. These recommendations cannot be translated into practical operational measures, otherwise they could have been included in pre-service or in-service teacher training programs. Adopting a pragmatic approach, this study reviewed some of these solutions and focused on group work as a reasonable course of action. The purpose of the study was to take group work a step further and make it more learner-centered. To that end, some general arrangements were suggested whereby EFL learners could be given more freedom and control over the teaching-learning process in the hope of making group more effective in adult multi-level classes. The decision to do group work has to based on the students’ attitudes about it. The students can form their own pairs and groups and work together without a group leader or choose a leader by themselves. They can also interact with the other groups and use the first language for the purpose of completing the task. The ideas and practices discussed in this study were based on the researcher’s experience in teaching essay writing and translation at the university level. In addition to the general
Learner-centered Group Work in Multi-level EFL Classes

Mahmoud

arrangements and principles of group work, course-specific measures can be taken to achieve more learner-centeredness. Examples of such measures were given with reference to essay writing and translation. Judgments about the effectiveness of the general and course-specific techniques were based on the high percentage of responses in favor of group work in the course evaluation. It goes without say that EFL teachers have to be equipped with some realistic tips that can encourage them to use group work. Pre-service and in-service training programs need to include practical learner-centered techniques and measures such as the ones described in this paper. EFL teachers and specialists can think of ways of conducting learner-centered group work in teaching other language skills (e.g. reading, speaking, etc.). Further research is needed to verify the findings of this study before they can be generalized. In an experimental study, the learner-centered techniques proposed in the study can be compared with those of traditional group work.

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Dr Mahmoud is a professor of Applied Linguistics. He teaches courses in ELT methods and curriculum, foreign language learning, and English-Arabic-English translation. He is interested in classroom-oriented research in TEFL. He published numerous papers in national, regional and international journals. He is a member of the editorial board of several regional and international journals.

References
Learner-centered Group Work in Multi-level EFL Classes


Teaching Grammar in non-Western Educational Settings: an Enquiry on Evidenced-Based Teaching Approaches

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Abstract
Educators teaching English, or via English worldwide are often subject to highly contrasting ideas on ‘the best teaching practices’ to use, particularly for grammar pedagogy. Four different nationality groups of learners and three diverse groups of educators of English from non-Western educational institutions were included in the study. A questionnaire was administered to enquire on preferences for grammar pedagogical instruction which was presented in various combinations or alternatives of: explicit or implicit instruction, deductive or inductive pedagogy, and with or without local cultural contextualization. In all learner groups there was a strong preference for explicit vs. implicit, deductive vs. inductive and local contextualized vs. foreign/non-contextualized pedagogy. Therefore among groups there was no significant difference in the proportion of deductive choices and proportion of inductive choices (p = 0.09), no significant difference in the proportion of deductive choices and proportion of delayed deductive choices (p = 0.18), no significant difference in the proportion of explicit choices and proportion of implicit choices (p = 0.16), no significant difference in the proportion of local context choices and proportion of other/no context choices (p = 0.74), and no significant difference in the proportion of explicit deductive choices and proportions of explicit inductive choices across all groups (p = 0.051 ≤ 0.01, Bonferroni correction). Paradoxically, among the educator groups, there was a significant difference in all the above proportions (p = 0.00, p = 0.00, p = 0.01, p = 0.00, respectively). Descriptive statistics suggest the difference rests mainly with educators that have undergone substantial Western-type ‘communicative language training’. Exposure to exogenous forms of grammar pedagogy may influence educators more than learners, accentuating differences between educators’ grammar-teaching practices and learners’ expectations in non-Western educational scenarios; this study found a significant difference between learners’ and educators’ pedagogical choices for teaching grammar (p = 0.00).

Key words: deductive and inductive pedagogy, explicit and implicit pedagogy, grammar teaching and learning, teaching with local culture and contextualization
Introduction

The need for evidence-based, culturally sensitive pedagogy

Educators teaching English or via English worldwide are often subject to highly contrasting, and sometimes even contradictory ideas on ‘the best teaching practices’ that they are to adopt. Perhaps no other aspect of English language teaching has been more contentious than the important area of grammar pedagogy. Consequently, educational and classroom practices that are based on evidence within research as being effective are under increasing focus of educational entities and institutions worldwide (e.g. see Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2014).

Yet paradoxically, educational scenarios where a single pedagogical approach is allowed and even encouraged to predominate are still evident, often ignoring the essential tenet of whether it is based on any underpinning theory, or evidence of its efficacy. In addition to the need for evidence-based pedagogy, the need for cultural ‘appropriacy’ of the pedagogical approach is also critical, hence: “…the importance of adapting evidence-based pedagogies to local institutional conditions and to the cultural expectations shared by students and teachers about how to interact in the classroom” is paramount (Hong Pham & Renshaw, 2015; p.256).

A further point for consideration is the increasing diversity of student representation within contemporary classrooms, emphasizing the need for educators need to display proficiency with a variety of such evidence-based practices and pedagogies to meet this growing challenge (Arthur-Kelly & Neilands, 2014; Ashman & Elkins, 2012). For example, even in traditional, apparently ‘linguistically homogenous’ societies such as Upper Egypt, learners of English in the same classroom may come from diverse ethno-linguistic backgrounds: Nubian students, growing up with and learning Nubian, their mother-tongue (L1), exclusively through aural and oral experience. Conversely, Arab classmates are raised in an environment where L1 (Arabic) is readily available in both oral and written forms. This may result in differences in the preferred methods of learning English between the ethnic groups, and hence the need for variety of evidence-based pedagogical instruction within the same classroom (Mallia, 2013a). Therefore educators increasingly need a broader repertoire of evidence-based practices and pedagogies that are also culturally appropriate.

Challenges for evidence-based, culturally-sensitive pedagogy

While the need for evidence-based pedagogies that are also culturally sensitive is clearly evident, a handful or perhaps even just a single teaching approach has come to global dominance. Possibly one of best-known contemporary pedagogical scenarios where a single teaching approach has been indiscriminately promoted around the world involves Communicative language teaching (CLT). CLT is largely implicit, where:

"Implicit learning is acquisition of knowledge about the underlying structure of a complex stimulus environment by a process which takes place naturally, simply and without conscious operations...Knowledge attainment can thus take place implicitly (a nonconscious and automatic abstraction of the structural nature of the material arrived at from experience of instances)....". (Ellis, 1994; p.1f)
CLT, by its strong proponents, has been increasingly presented as being the whole and complete solution to language learning (Baxter, 2003), yet the strongly-promoted and popular teaching strategies stemming from inner-circle countries (i.e. equivalent to native speaker or native speaker-like countries) may or may not be compatible with the teaching reality in outer-circle and expanding-circle countries in the rest of the world (Ramanthan, 1999). However, having a ‘one size fits all’ strategy may ignore diverse student needs, in addition to underestimating the importance of the culture of teaching and culture within teaching round the world (Mallia, 2015a).

Disappointing results with CLT and the gap between it and the realities of teaching English as a foreign language in countries round the world strongly suggest that policy makers and educators may need to decide locally as to how and in what form CLT might be adopted successfully (Wei, 2011). Indeed, an ‘ideal’ teaching model in one society may not necessarily be so in others, and “…a culturally nuanced perspective raises questions about how teaching and learning are understood in different contexts, and about whether… a ‘western’ construct inappropriate for application in all societies and classrooms” (Schweisfurth, 2011; p. 425).

Yet for teachers of English around the world “…there is an assumption in international TESOL training that the western academic setting is the default backdrop against which teachers teach. In most cases, the teaching environment of the international student-teacher is very different from the western setting” (Raqibuddin, 2003; p.283). The situation for international learners of English is also similar: “…learners’ preferences, if not aligned with CLT, are often surrounded by a negative connotation, i.e. too traditional and backward looking, (and) this is certainly at times unwarranted” (Mallia, 2015b; p.61).

Exploring pedagogical preferences in the classroom

The growing concern about the lack of theoretical underpinning of CLT (e.g. see Dörnyei, 2009) has therefore heightened the importance of utilizing evidence-based pedagogies, or at least adopting these alongside CLT where the later approach is already firmly entrenched. The simultaneous use of any teaching strategy other than CLT is often pitted against CLT, leading educators to believe that only one approach or the other, but not both, can be legitimately practiced; this is not so (Mallia 2015b; Spada, 2007; Lock 1997) and opportunities exist for the use of more than one compatible approach for teaching English.

While concerns with teaching approaches with weak theoretical underpinning such as CLT clearly exist, acceptance towards other approaches at the classroom level by both teachers and learners of English is still highly uncertain. Therefore enquiring and assessing their acceptance and preference of evidence-based pedagogy is addressed in this paper, in particular explicit and implicit instruction, deductive and inductive instruction and the use of ‘local’, socio-cultural contextualization for learning new language.

The focus in this paper is on an explicit form of pedagogy, Explicit Teaching (ET) in contrast to implicit CLT. ET is “a systematic method of teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for student understanding, and achieving active and successful participation by all students” (Rosenshine, 1987; p. 34). The instructional strategy of ET is effective for all learners, and additionally is also able to differentiate for diverse learning needs (Hattie, 2009); it may therefore be a suitable choice for diverse teaching conditions and cultures around the world. In contrast, implicit instruction such as CLT may make several assumptions
for example about the culture of teaching and learning is similar worldwide to that present in many Western countries (Mallia 2015c). For example, taking for granted that critical thinking, autonomous learning etc., and the culture in teaching, where teaching language embedded in Western educational scenarios and backgrounds, that may be less familiar and hence less successful in non-Western social environments (ibid, 2015c).

The paper will also explore the preference of learners and educators for deductive and inductive instruction. Deductive teaching involves the use of metalinguistic information presented explicitly by the teacher to the students at the onset of the lesson. This generally involves the provision of specific language rules, demonstrating how the new structures are formed and a breakdown of their components, and illustrating the type of contexts where they can be used (Al-Kharrat, 2000). Conversely, teaching via an inductive approach is based on a bottom-up strategy that gives learners greater responsibility for their own learning. Students discover, with varying degrees of guidance from the teacher, the target language and induce the rules themselves. For example, grammatical rules are not given and instead, carefully selected materials illustrating the use of the target language within a context are supplied (Mallia, 2015a).

Finally, this paper will also explore the use of familiar or ‘foreign’ cultural context and values. Discussions about the reasons for meaningfully embedding language learning in a context that aids learners by using a more meaningful local socio-cultural context is not new (Mallia, 2014b) and justifications may include increasing the motivation for learners, and creating a positive attitude and sense of ‘self-identity’, in addition to technically facilitating the meaning and use of new language. It therefore appears to be clear that “…the teaching paradigm should encapsulate, or be encapsulated by, the local culture and reality which is often starkly divergent from many Western countries where ‘global’ teaching paradigms are nurtured and developed” (Mallia, 2015c; p.267). Yet this remains elusive, and is not necessarily so. For example, Pathan et al. (2016) detail:

Syllabus contains materials which are not related to the learners’ culture and sometimes, they are very odd. It is also very difficult to teach and explain certain culturally sensitive issues included in the syllabus. The syllabus is biased and certain aspects show bias and racism towards particular type of people…which is not good for learners and in forming their attitudes, opinions and characters (p.27).

**Explicit Teaching: evidence based pedagogy**

ET is “an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures” (Archer & Hughes, 2011, p.1) and is one of several evidence-based pedagogies (Zundans-Fraser & Auhl, 2016). Cook and Cothren Cook (2013) precise that “Evidence-based practices (EBPs) are instructional techniques that meet prescribed criteria related to the research design, quality, quantity, and effect size of supporting research, which have the potential to help bridge the research-to-practice gap and improve student outcomes” (p.71). There are varying criteria accepted by researchers and policy makers as to what is considered to be evidence-based (e.g. see Cook et al., 2009). Pedagogical practices may be considered to be evidence-based are when the accompanying studies demonstrate: “(a) the use of a sound experimental or evaluation design and appropriate analytical procedures, (b) empirical
validation of effects, (c) clear implementation procedures, (d) replication of outcomes across implementation sites, and (e) evidence of sustainability” (Kerr & Nelson, 2006; p. 86).

There are also varying criteria accepted by researchers and policy makers as to what is considered to be explicit instruction, embedded within ET. For example, Norris and Ortega (2000) characterize explicit instruction by the inclusion of “rule presentation”, or if participants are “directly asked to attend to particular forms and to try to arrive at metalinguistic generalizations on their own” (p.437). Therefore explicit instruction can be either explicit deductive or explicit inductive, respectively. Specifically, “Deductive teaching involves the use of metalinguistic information presented explicitly by the teacher to the students at the onset of the lesson”, and in “Inductive teaching…Grammatical rules are not given, and instead, carefully selected materials illustrating the use of the target language within a context are supplied” (Mallia. 2014a; p.222) For example, an empirical study that contrasted the performance of two adult learner groups while learning the same grammatical item via explicit deductive or explicit inductive instruction showed that both teaching strategies were generally equally efficient (ibid, 2014). This possibly suggests the explicit element of instruction was more relevant to the positive outcome of learners’ performance than the inductive or deductive element.

Empirical studies supporting the widespread successful use of ET include the Missouri Mathematics Effectiveness Study (Good & Gouws, 1979), where more students showed improvement in standardised tests when teachers utilized explicit, whole class instruction. In another paper using multilevel modelling techniques, Muijs and Reynolds (2000) found that teacher behaviours were able to explain between 60% and 100% of pupils' progress on the Numeracy tests and the “…time spent teaching the whole class was found to be related to effective teaching behaviours and thus indirectly to pupil progress” (p.273). Mortimer et.al. (1988) examined 50 primary schools in a Junior School Project that also showed a significant positive relationship between the times teachers spent communicating with the whole class and overall learner achievement. Gautier and Dembele (2004), based on a follow-through project of 70,000 pupils drawn from 180 schools showed that ET yields better performance of basic skills but also cognitive and affective skills.

**Research Objectives**

The previous sections have explored how issues may be present when adopting pedagogical practices without an evidence-base, and with the assumption that teaching and learning in the classrooms of various cultures around the world is similar. As an alternative, or alongside popular teaching practices such as CLT, the possible advantages of an evidence based approach, ET has also been suggested.

An initial study, using a similar questionnaire on Sudanese learners of English has already been reported (Mallia 2015b). An analogous study will be extended to other groups of learners, and also teachers of English. This paper therefore examines (i) non-Western teachers’ and learners’ preferences for explicit pedagogy (e.g. ET) versus implicit pedagogy (e.g. CLT), and (ii) the use of local cultural context versus the more generic ‘Western’ cultural backdrop found in many course books and teaching materials. Specifically the purpose of this paper was therefore to enquire on teachers’ and learners’ preferences for pedagogical practices associated with English grammar, and by starting the lesson with:
(1) the new grammar rules, then look at the book for examples (Western), and then do exercises and activities to practice: i.e. \textit{explicit deductive pedagogy with worked examples};
(2) the new grammar rules, then go directly to do book exercises and activities to practice them: i.e. \textit{explicit deductive pedagogy};
(3) the new grammar rules, then discuss many examples using local culture and life, followed by practice via exercises and activities that use the grammar in local, familiar life-situations: i.e. \textit{explicit deductive pedagogy with relevant cultural context and worked examples};
(4) focussed tasks and exercises, such as a gap-fill, using ‘Western situations’, where they have to use the new grammar, then the students find the rules themselves: i.e. \textit{explicit inductive pedagogy};
(5) focussed tasks and exercises, such as a gap-fill, using ‘local cultural situations’, where they have to use the new grammar, then the students find the rules themselves: i.e. \textit{explicit inductive pedagogy with relevant cultural context};
(6) activities and games in class so students can notice the way new grammar is made and used without discussing the rules: i.e. \textit{implicit inductive pedagogy};
(7) activities and games in class, so students produce and notice the new grammar, and the teacher later helps them understand the rules: i.e. \textit{implicit, inductive pedagogy with subsequent explicit deductive pedagogy}.

Method
Participants and courses
The educators in all groups were chosen from courses in which the researcher was involved in, namely pedagogical training for the educators. The learners were also familiar with the researcher: directly as their tutor (South Sudan groups), or as a ‘familiar’ face’ via participation within the educational establishments hosting the other learner groups. Both educator and learner groups were therefore chosen as convenience samples, but all participants in the courses took part in the questionnaire and therefore no sampling within groups was necessary. All participants were adult, i.e. eighteen years of age or over, and all participants within the group were of the same nationality. A wide cross-section of socio-cultural backgrounds was present across all groups.

All participants were reasonably familiar with the researcher conducting the study as research activity was ‘naturally’ embedded within an on-going course for all groups, reducing the possibility of bias within the group by encouraging easy communication between the researcher and the researched, generating valid questionnaire responses. The similarity of circumstances across groups also helped reduce the possible introduction of bias.

Participants were not randomly selected from their respective general population as results were not aimed for extrapolation beyond the participating group. For example, Sudanese teachers training at the Sudan University for Science and Technology (SUST) may not necessarily be representative of all postgraduate trainees in all universities across Sudan. Results therefore should cautiously (not automatically) be interpreted in a broader Sudanese context. The same is true for all other groups. However, differences or similarities in pedagogical choices evidenced within this study among different groups are valid and allow objective analysis.
**Educator groups**

Although not tested for English language proficiency, most of them appeared to fall into the Common European Framework’s Common Reference Level of ‘proficient user’ C1 band, i.e. effective operational proficiency or advanced level.

**Strong CLT educators**

The educators in this group received several teacher-training courses with a strong emphasis on CLT methods. Explicit and deductive approaches are generally absent from these courses, with implicit and inductive approaches being promoted as ‘contemporary’ and ‘cutting-edge’. At the time of the study, participants were frequenting one of a series of teacher-training workshops organized by a well-known international British charity in Setif, Algeria, and in which the researcher also participated as a workshop trainer. It should be noted that the questionnaire administered during this training workshop strongly highlighted both the benefits of the ‘communicative language teaching’ and also other pedagogical options.

The educators in this study hailed from wide areas across north and north-eastern Algeria, rural and urban. Both neophyte teachers and those with over twenty years experienced participated in this study, in addition to teachers with teacher training and an ‘inspector role’ for local English teachers.

**Balanced CLT educators**

The ‘balanced CLT educator’ group in this study encompassed postgraduate educators following a Masters course in English at the Sudan University for Science and Technology in Khartoum, Sudan. They came from different rural and urban areas of Sudan, some were neophyte teachers, and many had moderate to substantial but also varied teaching experience. The questionnaire was administered at the end of the module entitled ‘Teaching English: aspects of classroom management’, embedded in adapting these in accordance to different cultural norms and needs, and with ample contrasts between Western and non-Western societies such as Sudan. In addition to being exposed to inductive, deductive, explicit, and implicit strategies, and the exploration of cultural preferences and contexts, the group was encouraged to critically consider the pragmatic utility of ‘established’ practices such as those associated with CLT in their own local classroom realities.

**Weak CLT educators**

Another group of educators were Sudanese teachers of English working in various private schools and educational centres in Khartoum. While all had an undergraduate degree in English and moderate to substantial and fairly varied teaching experience, none had access to professional development course held by international bodies. It is unlikely that this group would have had any specific, focussed training or exposure to CLT methods, or even to structured explicit methods. The educators’ pedagogical rationale here followed more likely reflects ‘…a system of teaching that is not accountable, poorly defined (if at all)…’ (Mallia, 2015c; p. 270).

**Learner groups**

All learners were tested for English language proficiency, and they fell into the Common European Framework’s Common Reference Level A2 (way stage or elementary), B1 (threshold or intermediate) or B2 (vantage or upper intermediate).
The Sudanese learners in this study were attending ‘in-house’ general English courses organized by a British charity organization, with all language instructors having a Cambridge Certificate in teaching English to speakers of other languages (CELTA) as a minimum teaching qualification. Learners were of a predominantly average or above average social background, urban-based, and with a good overall level of education. In addition to having completed secondary school level schooling, many also had a graduate, and some even post-graduate level of education. The institution has a strong bias in favour of CLT with all instructors being strongly encouraged to use this as their sole or main pedagogical approach.

The South Sudanese learners in this study also attended general English courses organized by the British charity, but were exposed to implicit, explicit inductive and explicit deductive approaches. Learners were of a varied social background and with a highly variable level of education. They were also of varying ethnicity: Achioli, Didinga, Dinka, Murle, Nuer and Toposa, among others. Most had not completed (and some not even started) secondary school level schooling, as they belonged to the ‘lost Boys of Sudan’: generally orphans separated from their families as a result of the systematic attacks in the southern part of the country and often conscripted by the Southern Sudanese forces as soldiers (Gettleman, 2012; Tisdall, 2013). A few learners had however had attended secondary school, and others still (post-war) reached a graduate level of education, generally conducted in English in Uganda.

Egyptian learners in this study were Berber (Siwa Oasis) or Nubian (Aswan, Gharb Aswan, Geziret is-Sehel, Gharb is-Sehel) and hailed from specific localities where the researcher has conducted extensive research, as opposed to having an educator role with these learners. Learners were of a varied social background, mainly rural (with the exception of Aswan) and having completed their school education.

The Somali learners in this study were all asylum seekers in Malta and attending or in the process of attending general English courses. Learners were of a varied social background and with a highly variable level of education. Although residing in Malta, most only had educational experience from their own country. Some had up to a year of EFL education via educators having some experience of CLT, in addition to other largely ‘non-principled’ pedagogical approaches.

**Measurements and procedure**

All learners and educators in the study were given the same written questionnaire to answer. In addition to the identical written instructions, each of the seven pedagogical options was explained orally to all groups by the same researcher, highlighting (without technical jargon) the differences between explicit and implicit, deductive and inductive and contextualized and non-contextualized teaching and learning. No reference to possible advantages or disadvantages relating to any option were stated or implied to safeguard against the introduction of bias into the study.

Participants were told to circle one option only, specifically that which they felt best related to the teaching of grammar specifically within their own community. They were not given advanced warning of the nature of the questionnaire so as to discourage group discussion prior to its administration to the groups which could lead to the introduction of bias. Participants answered the questionnaire under supervision and in groups of 15-45 individuals. Dialogue was
not allowed and response sheets were immediately collected in the same session that the questionnaire was presented, therefore eliminating the possibility of opinion-sharing.

Descriptive statistics (counts and percentages) were developed for the four learner groups (Egyptian, Somali, South Sudanese and Sudanese), and for the three educator groups (Algerian State School educators; Sudanese educators of English following an M.A. course; Sudanese educators). Counts and proportions were also computed after participants’ option answers were grouped according to whether they reflected a preference for explicit instruction (questions 1-5), implicit instruction (questions 6-7), instruction with local contextualization (questions 3, 5, 6, 7), instruction with Western or no contextualization (questions 1, 2, 4), immediate deductive instruction (questions 1-3), immediate inductive instruction (questions 4-7) and deductive instruction, i.e. immediate or following inductive instruction (questions 1-3, 7).

The level of significance used in the study (alpha level α=0.05) was adjusted with the Bonferroni correction (Shouki and Edge, 1996) to buffer possible Type I error due to having multiple dependent variable (outcome) measurements on the same study population of learners and educators. These were as follows:

[A] The proportion of seven pedagogical choices (dependent variable or outcome) of (1) All learners vs. all educators, (2) All learners vs. ‘strong’ CLT educators, (3) All learners vs. ‘balanced’ CLT educators, and (4) All learners vs. ‘weak’ CLT educators. Due to the four tests measured on the same groups, a conservative alpha level α=0.0125 was used for the equivalency of α=0.05 actually reported in the study; Pearson’s Chi-squared test was used Martin et al. (1987).

[B] The proportion of seven pedagogical choices (dependent variable or outcome) of (1) Sudanese learners vs. ‘strong’ CLT educators, (2) Sudanese learners vs. ‘balanced’ CLT educators, and (3) Sudanese learners vs. ‘weak’ CLT educators. Due to the three tests measured on the same groups, a conservative alpha level α=0.02 was used for the equivalency of α=0.05 actually reported in the study; Yates chi-squared test was used due to the small sample size of some of the factors (ibid, 1987).

[C] The proportion of seven pedagogical choices (dependent variable or outcome) of (1) deductive vs. inductive, (2) deductive vs. delayed deductive, (3) explicit vs. implicit, (4) local context vs. other context/no context and (5) explicit deductive vs. explicit inductive. Due to the five tests measured on the same groups, a conservative alpha level α=0.01 was used for the equivalency of α=0.05 actually reported in the study; Yates chi-squared test was used due to the small sample size of some of the factors.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics, namely the counts and percentage of respondents in each group for each of the seven teaching approaches under study are reported in Table 1a.

Somali learners, previously used to traditional teaching methods but having ‘communicative’ teaching strategies when learning English around the time of this study...
preferred to have explicit, deductive pedagogy with worked examples (31.3%) or explicit, deductive pedagogy with examples and a relevant cultural context (33.7%). Egyptian and Sudanese learners also had similar preferences, specifically 29.4% and 44.4% of Egyptian learners, and 27.4% and 42.9% Sudanese learners, respectively. In addition, 16.7% of the Sudanese learners, who were all concurrently attending a private institution that used only ‘communicative’ teaching strategies, also chose implicit, inductive pedagogy with subsequent explicit, deductive pedagogy. South Sudanese students exposed to both explicit and implicit teachings strategies markedly preferred explicit, deductive pedagogy with examples and a relevant cultural context (56.6%).

Most ‘strong CLT’ educators in this study, who were frequenting a training workshop with international instructors offering mainly inductive ‘communicative’ teaching strategies, preferentially chose explicit, inductive pedagogy with relevant cultural context (29.1%) and implicit, inductive pedagogy with subsequent explicit, deductive pedagogy (29.1%). They also were the sole group that gave relatively little importance to the use of local cultural context for embedding the teaching of grammar (57.75%, versus ‘balanced CLT’ educators 62.75% and ‘weak CLT’ educators, 76.09%).

Most ‘weak CLT’ educators in this study, following home-country training workshops that advocated mainly explicit instruction, preferred explicit, deductive pedagogy with worked examples (29.43%) or explicit, deductive pedagogy with examples and a relevant cultural context (44.1%). Most ‘balanced CLT’ educators in this study educators, following an M.A, course in a local university with local and international instructors and that had a balanced exposure to both explicit and implicit teaching strategies showed similar choices to the previous Sudanese educator group, with preferences of 17.1% and 51.4% respectively; but they also chose, even if to a lesser extent, explicit, inductive pedagogy with relevant cultural context (11.4%) and implicit, inductive pedagogy with subsequent explicit deductive pedagogy (11.4%).

Statistical analyses

The differences in the seven pedagogical choices offered to learners and educators in this study are summarized in Table 1b. Of particular interests is that the ‘all learners’ group pedagogical choices were significantly different to the ‘all educator group (p = 0.00) and also to the ‘strong CLT educator group’ (p = 0.00). The pedagogical choices of the ‘Sudanese learners group’, learning English in an institution advocating a strong CLT approach, were significantly different to the ‘strong CLT educator group’ (p = 0.00).

Differences in proportions after participants’ answers, after grouping according to whether they reflected a preference for explicit instruction (questions 1-5), implicit instruction (questions 6-7), instruction with local contextualization (questions 3, 5, 6, 7), instruction with Western or no contextualization (questions 1, 2, 4), immediate deductive instruction (questions 1-3), immediate inductive instruction (questions 4-7) and deductive instruction, i.e. immediate or following inductive instruction (questions 1-3, 7) are in reported in Table 2 for the learner groups, and Table 3 for the educator groups.

There was no significant difference among learner groups in the proportion of deductive choices and proportion of inductive choices (p = 0.09), no significant difference in the proportion
of deductive choices and proportion of delayed deductive choices (p = 0.18), no significant difference in the proportion of explicit choices and proportion of implicit choices (p = 0.16), no significant difference in the proportion of local context choices and proportion of other/no context choices (p = 0.74), and no significant difference in the proportion of explicit deductive choices and proportions of explicit inductive choices across all groups (p = 0.05; not significant as due to the Bonferroni correction, a p-value of 0.01 must be observed to report a significance at p = 0.05 and the null hypothesis rejected).

There was a significant difference among educator groups in the proportion of deductive choices and proportion of inductive choices (p = 0.00), a significant difference in the proportion of deductive choices and proportion of delayed deductive choices (p = 0.00), a significant difference in the proportion of explicit choices and proportion of implicit choices (p = 0.00), a significant difference in the proportion of local context choices and proportion of other/no context choices (p = 0.01), and a significant difference in the proportion of explicit deductive choices and proportions of explicit inductive choices across all groups (p = 0.00).

**Discussion**

Perhaps one of the most significant observations that can be drawn, and one of the key factors behind this study, is the widely-held assumption that all people everywhere will benefit from minimally-guided teaching approaches such as CLT. All learner groups did not feel implicit, inductive approaches such as CLT met their learning needs. Indeed, as David (1990) highlights:

“CLT failed to realise that, although the goal of language may have been communication, it did not necessarily follow that a communicative teaching strategy...was universally acceptable. Research has indicated that there are many teaching and learning strategies and styles (p.73).

CLT, constructivist learning (Jonassen, 1991; Steffe & Gale, 1995), and other minimally-guided approaches such as discovery learning (Anthony, 1973; Bruner, 1961); problem-based learning (Barrows & Tamblyn, 1980; Schmidt, 1983), inquiry learning (Papert, 1980; Rutherford, 1964), and experiential learning (Boud et al., 1985; Kolb & Fry, 1975) have been actively promoted as the ‘better’ and ‘progressive’ teaching approaches internationally. This was fully justifiable, as the structures and relations that constitute human cognitive architecture had not yet been mapped, as has happened in contemporary times. Yet for learners, as Kirschner et al. (2006) state “…there is no evidence that presenting them with partial information enhances their ability to construct a representation more than giving them full information” (p.79).

Another outcome of this study is the unanimous appeal among learners of using local cultural contexts for embedding the teaching of grammar. Interesting, educators with the highest-levels of CLT training found the issue of use of local or foreign cultural contexts of less importance, possibly because the use of locally-produced textbooks with the inclusion of both local culture and more ‘international’ topics failed to tally with CLT, even if for reasons other than cultural context. For example, see Spotlight on English, Book Three (Arab et al, 2005) and Spotlight on English, The Second English Course Book (Bouhadiba et al., 2004). Moreover, educators in institutions around the world with training emphasizing CLT often make use of
‘standardized’ textbooks produced in Inner-circle countries using an international’, rather than ‘local’ cultural backdrop.

The other salient feature of this study is the unanimous preference for learners to be educated via an evidence-based practice, namely Explicit Teaching. Indeed, several other studies show both the preference for, and the benefits of ET. For example, the seminal paper by Norris and Ortega (2000) gave solid credence to the positive effects of explicit instruction. However, some concerns have been raised, such as if the evaluation of learners’ performance included sufficient free production of the target language. But Ellis (2002) provides an analysis that found that form-focused instruction did lead to gains on free production tasks in some cases, even if many variables were at play (e.g. the type of target structure and the duration of the treatment). Additionally, studies have been conducted in which some type of free production measure, such as picture-cued storytelling and description tasks was utilized, and ET was found to be highly effective (e.g. see Spada & Tomita, 2010).

In addition, the seminal 1970s' report on primary schooling of ORACLE project - educators labelled as ‘class enquirers’ spent four times longer using whole-class interactive teaching (as also done in ET) than ‘individual monitors’ (as encouraged by CLT), generating the greatest gains in maths and language (Croll, 1996; Galton et al., 1980). Analogously, Hattie (2009) pedagogy with a ‘teacher as activator’ approach, having dynamic teacher-student interaction appears to be more effective than approaches with the ‘teacher as facilitator’ where the teacher has a less prominent role. Indeed, stronger learner gains are registered when teachers spend more time actively teaching and interacting with the whole class (Rosenshine, 1979).

The four dissimilar learner groups in this study, even when exposed to CLT, all had a common denominator, i.e. remarkably similar pedagogical preferences: primarily that for ET. Hence the majority in all groups chose explicit teaching to implicit teaching, deductive to inductive approaches, and the use of a familiar socio-cultural context.

Interestingly, even learners attending English courses with mostly/exclusively CLT practices (Sudan group) also preferred explicit teaching, when given the choice (specifically contextualized explicit teaching). Their choice coincided with Sudanese educators that did not preferentially use CLT, and not with the CLT approach adopted by the native and non-native educators (including Sudanese nationals) within the institution. Not surprisingly, ET was met with great enthusiasm and participation of these learners, for example when given this opportunity during replacement of ‘regular’ instructors (using mainly CLT approaches) with and instructor using ET. Therefore notwithstanding having educators, pedagogy and textbooks skewed towards CLT, learners in this elite establishment had similar requirements (when asked) as learners from other groups with modest socio-economical backgrounds and/or frequenting educational scenarios where CLT was one pedagogical option used, or even used very infrequently.

ET therefore appeared to be highly favoured among non-Western learners of English in this study. Its success may be linked to its core characteristics: an unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures, and clear, upfront instructor-fronted teaching with emphasis on proceeding in small steps, checking for
student understanding, and its versatility in its instructional strategy reaching all learners and catering for diverse learning. Indeed, ET appears to instil a sense of security for the learner, primarily related to knowing exactly what the target language is. For example: what the form, meaning and use are for a grammatical item; the denomination, connotation, register, synonyms and antonyms for lexis, etc.

ET also creates learner security in that it makes clear - upfront – as to what needs to be achieved, the steps involved, and instructions on how to self-check and peer-check progress, in addition to await timely instructor checking. ET, therefore truly empowers the learner by favouring a healthy learner-educator interface, rather than not be ‘learner-centred’ (in the cliché sort of way). Embedding new language in familiar cultural contexts may give an added sense of security, in addition to its practicality.

Differences among educators were observed in this study, with educators operating in an environment with a strong CLT bias were inclined to favour it, and other educators that had weak or balanced understanding of CLT favouring explicit, deductive approaches, i.e. the same pedagogical preferences as learners. Indeed, this study also suggests that the difference among educators rests mainly with those that have undergone substantial Western-type ‘communicative language training’. Only these preferred implicit teaching to explicit teaching, and inductive to deductive approaches; they also preferred explicit inductive to explicit deductive, and preferred delaying the explicit deductive phase during mainly inductive lessons. Paradoxically, the pedagogical choices of ‘highly-trained’ educators (with only CLT training) were in net contrast to those favoured by learners in this study.

The ‘strong CLT’ educators in this study were frequenting a training workshop with international instructors offering mainly inductive ‘communicative’ teaching strategies, may have influenced their choices as they are seen to be ‘progressive’ and ‘modern’. In such educational environments not adhering to CLT (and implicit, inductive practices) has a negative connotation (Mallia, 2015b).

Conversely, ‘weak CLT’ educators in this study did not have such pressures and chose mainly explicit, deductive pedagogy. This may reflect their perception of how their learners learn best, but it may also be a reflection of ‘weak CLT’ educators’ lack of familiarity, and confidence with CLT.

Most ‘balanced CLT’ educators in this study, those having good exposure to CLT, ET and other pedagogies, also mainly chose explicit, deductive pedagogy. To a lesser extent they chose explicit inductive, but also implicit, inductive pedagogy…with the condition that a subsequent explicit deductive phase was present. Therefore perhaps if educators are exposed to a broader repertoire of pedagogies, and without the pressure of having to conform to ‘modern’ approaches, they may embrace a broader variety of classroom teaching practices. However, an ‘explicit phase’ – generally at the start of the lesson (but also possibly further along) seems to be of paramount importance to educators in the examined non-Western educational scenarios, and it was also the primary choice for their learners.
Conclusions

Non-Western learners of English in this study generally prefer explicit, deductive teaching approaches even when offered the possibility of implicit, inductive approaches such as CLT. They also value and prefer the use of a culturally relevant and familiar context for embedding the teaching of grammar.

Non-Western educators of English in this study also generally prefer explicit, deductive teaching approaches even when familiar with implicit, inductive approaches such as CLT. They also value and prefer the use of a culturally relevant and familiar context for embedding the teaching of grammar. However, educators operating in an environment with strong, implicit, inductive approaches, and where it is presented as ‘the contemporary and superior approach’ claimed to prefer and preferentially use these approaches. These educators also indicated that the use of local cultural contexts is of relatively little importance.

Exposure to exogenous forms of grammar pedagogy may influence educators more than learners, accentuating differences between educators’ grammar-teaching practices and learners’ expectations in non-Western educational scenarios. This is a possible cause of concern due to the increasing trend of ‘international’, ‘Western’ teacher-training packages being progressively disseminated and promoted further afield in culturally-diverse areas around the world. It is an area that therefore requires further research.

Table 1a. Preferred pedagogical approach for grammar education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach*</th>
<th>Somali (n**, [%])</th>
<th>Egyptian (n**, [%])</th>
<th>South Sudanese (n**, [%])</th>
<th>Sudanese (n**, [%])</th>
<th>Algerian (n**, [%])</th>
<th>Sudanese (n**, [%])</th>
<th>Sudanese (university, n**, [%])</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Table 1b. Educators and learners: differences in preferred pedagogical approach for grammar education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group contrasted proportions</th>
<th>Yates’ $\chi^2$</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Significance $\alpha = 0.05$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>all learners vs all educators</td>
<td>110.171</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>yes^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all learners vs strong CLT educators</td>
<td>178.783</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>yes^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all learners vs balanced CLT educators</td>
<td>12.416</td>
<td>0.053</td>
<td>no^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all learners vs weak CLT educators</td>
<td>2.413</td>
<td>0.878</td>
<td>no^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudanese learners vs strong CLT educators</td>
<td>71.360</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>yes^^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudanese learners vs balanced CLT educators</td>
<td>5.564</td>
<td>0.434</td>
<td>no^^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudanese learners vs weak CLT educators</td>
<td>2.382</td>
<td>0.881</td>
<td>no^^</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Approach: 1. explicit deductive pedagogy with worked examples; 2. explicit deductive pedagogy; 3. explicit deductive pedagogy with relevant cultural context; 4. explicit inductive pedagogy; 5. explicit inductive pedagogy with relevant cultural context; 6. implicit inductive pedagogy; 7. implicit, inductive pedagogy with subsequent explicit deductive pedagogy.

** n = counts of individuals in the group choosing the approach;  ^% = counts expressed as a percentage of the learner groups

*** Total number of participants in each group

^ Bonferroni correction, 4 tests for $\alpha = 0.05$, setting is $\alpha = 0.0125$ for a significant difference (all learners)

^^ Bonferroni correction, 3 tests for $\alpha = 0.05$, setting is $\alpha = 0.02$ for a significant difference (Sudanese)

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach categories*</th>
<th>Broad approach category**</th>
<th>Learner groups (counts)</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Difference $\alpha = 0.05^\dagger$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Somal (counts)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>a. deductive</td>
<td>168 120 94 126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>a. inductive</td>
<td>34 33 12 42</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>b. deductive</td>
<td>168 120 94 126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>b. delayed deductive</td>
<td>26 22 6 28</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>c. explicit</td>
<td>170 128 98 136</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 7</td>
<td>c. implicit</td>
<td>32 25 8 32</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>d. local context</td>
<td>128 96 70 82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach categories *</th>
<th>Broad approach category**</th>
<th>Educator groups (counts)</th>
<th>(\chi^2)</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Difference α = 0.05^</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 4</td>
<td>d. other context/none</td>
<td>74 57 42 60 1.26 0.73</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>e. explicit deductive</td>
<td>168 120 94 126</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 5</td>
<td>e. explicit inductive</td>
<td>2 8 4 10 7.78 0.05</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>202 143 106 168</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach categories *</th>
<th>Broad approach category**</th>
<th>Educator groups (counts)</th>
<th>(\chi^2)</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Difference α = 0.05^</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>a. deductive</td>
<td>25 25 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>a. inductive</td>
<td>9 5 62 46.112 0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>b. deductive</td>
<td>25 25 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>b. delayed deductive</td>
<td>4 2 23 24.496 0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>c. explicit</td>
<td>30 31 51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6, 7</td>
<td>c. implicit</td>
<td>4 2 28 15.743 0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>d. local context</td>
<td>28 19 66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 4</td>
<td>d. other context/none</td>
<td>8 14 13 8.747 0.01</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>e. explicit deductive</td>
<td>25 25 17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4, 5</td>
<td>e. explicit inductive</td>
<td>5 3 34 32.248 0</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group totals</td>
<td></td>
<td>34 33 78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Teaching Grammar in non-Western Educational Settings

Mallia

*Approach: 1. explicit deductive pedagogy with worked examples; 2. explicit deductive pedagogy; 3. explicit deductive pedagogy with relevant cultural context; 4. explicit inductive pedagogy; 5. explicit inductive pedagogy with relevant cultural context; 6. implicit inductive pedagogy; 7. implicit, inductive pedagogy with subsequent explicit deductive pedagogy.

**Broad approach categories:** a. difference in the proportion of deductive choices and proportions of inductive choices across all groups; b. difference in the proportion of deductive choices and proportions of delayed deductive choices across all groups; c. difference in the proportion of explicit choices and proportions of implicit choices across all groups; d. difference in the proportion of local context choices and proportions of other/no context choices across all groups; e. difference in the proportion of explicit deductive choices and proportions of explicit inductive choices across all groups

^ Bonferroni correction, 5 tests for α = 0.05, setting is α = 0.01 for a significant difference

About the Author:
Joseph Mallia has a PhD in English with a focus on the differences in English learning strategies” that reflect the influence of socio-cultural variance in language learning and teaching, particularly in the Arab World. Reflecting this, he has carried out teacher and trainer training in the MENA region and beyond. His current interests also include teaching English for academic and specific purposes, intercultural rhetoric and experimenting with the teaching of grammar within writing systems.

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Variability in L2 Acquisition: Investigating the Role of Formal Features

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Abstract
Following the development of the minimalist program in the 1990’s, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers’ interest shifted from a focus on functional categories to a focus on formal features which, thereafter, came to be viewed as the ‘center of learnability theory’. Subsequently, Chomsky’s distinction of feature selection and feature assembly, divided SLA researchers among those who take L2 impairment to result from a failure in the selection of parametrized features, and those who believe that the problem is caused by a failure in feature assembly. The present study examines the validity of the feature (re)-assembly account by providing arguments from the second language acquisition of English by speakers of two varieties of Arabic. In particular, the findings from the comparison of the written samples of two groups of students are argued to support the claim that L2 impairment can be explained by a failure to (re)-assemble features. However, certain problems in L2 acquisition are left unaccounted for, suggesting that more is involved in SLA than just feature selection and feature assembly.

Keywords: Arabic (Bahraini/Tunisian), feature assembly, imperfective vs. present simple, SLA of English syntax
Introduction

Generative second language acquisition (SLA) has gone through a number of stages in its development as a result of developments in linguistic theory and L1 acquisition. In the 90’s, for example, following work in L1 acquisition (e.g. Radford, 1990, 1995), the interest, among generative SLA researchers, was in how learners, gradually, build phrase structure where evidence comes from the acquisition of the inflectional morphemes which point to the (non-)availability of particular functional categories (see, for example, Vainikka, 1993, 1994; Vainikka & Young-Sholten, 1994).

Other SLA researchers, following what is known as ‘full competence’ approaches in L1 acquisition, which argue for the availability of a full clausal phrase structure available from the earliest stages of language development (e.g. Borer & Rohrbacher, 1997; Lust, 1994; Wexler, 1998) were concerned with issues regarding the availability of functional categories in early stages of development (Eubank, 1993, 1994; Schwartz & Sprouse, 1994, 1996).

Following the development of the minimalist program (MP) (Chomsky, 1993, 1995), SLA researchers’ interest shifted from a focus on functional categories to a focus on formal features. Features became the center of learnability theory (See Beninca, 2001; Cinque, 1999; Rizzi, 1997, among others). Later, as a result of Chomsky’s (2000, 2001, 2004) distinction of feature selection and feature assembly, SLA researchers became divided among those who believe that L2 impairment results from a failure in the selection of parametrized features (e.g. Hawkins & Liszka, 2003) and those who take L2 impairment to result from a feature assembly failure (Lardiere, 2005, 2008, 2009).

In this paper, using data from Arabic, the researcher argues that the feature assembly hypothesis is well supported but unable to account for all the facts of L2 acquisition.

Literature Review

Functional categories and features

The concept of a feature is not new in syntactic theory. In fact, Chomsky (1970) defines the syntactic categories N, V, P and A as combinations of the two features [-+N] and [-+V]. In Chomsky (1986), features are taken to project functional categories such as IP, DP or CP. In terms of language acquisition, this has led to the assumption that the acquisition of a particular inflection is linked to a corresponding functional category. For instance, tense, negation, agreement are assumed to constitute the category IP. Therefore, if the learner demonstrates learning of these inflections, this will be evidence for the learner having acquired the category IP.

In the later MP, more and more functional categories are assumed as features came to be distinguished from each other, and to each head its own projection (Cinque, 1999; Rizzi, 1997). SLA researchers have also used the concept of feature, as conceived in the Extended Standard theory, in their interlanguage descriptions (e.g. Flynn, 1983; Liceras, 1983; Mazurkevich, 1984; White, 1985). Following the introduction of the MP, syntactic formal features have come to be
viewed as the basic building units of linguistic structure: the ‘atoms’ of language (Adger, 2003; Baker, 2001). As a result, features have become, for many researchers, the “center of learnability theory” (Liceras, 2010, p. 250).

**Parameters and features**

Turning to the concept of a parameter, this was initially taken to be a set of options having the effect of constraining the range of syntactic variation arising between different languages. In SLA, this has come to imply that successful L2 acquisition would result from the learners’ success in ‘resetting’ parameters from the values of the L1 to those of the L2 (cf. e.g. Haegeman, 1988, p. 255). The significance of this idea is great as it provides the researcher with a means to deal with the problem of L1 interference.

As pointed out by Lardiere (2008) however, parameter setting is not well-suited to dealing with the problem of variability in L2 acquisition which seems to persist in spite of the learner having set a particular parameter.

This concept of a parameter has gone through a number of stages since its first inception: At first, it was argued that the set of parameters should ideally be small – for purposes of explanatory adequacy; later, that they should be associated with a cluster of deductive consequences; later still, that their number must not be restricted: Kayne (2005) for example, views all cross-linguistic syntactic differences as possible parameters. Subsequently, as the locus of cross-linguistic syntactic differences is found to be the morphological properties of functional categories – viewed as functional features - parameters have come to be associated with these features and parameter setting has become the selection and assembly of features into lexical items.

As a result, generative SLA has shifted its focus from whether the L2 learner has acquired the relevant functional categories to whether he has selected the appropriate features from the universal inventory of features (cf. Chomsky, 1998). Hawkins (2005, p. 124) provides an example of feature selection in SLA. Thus parametric variation has now become associated with the morphological properties of functional categories, which drive syntactic derivation (Chomsky, 1995, p. 222). For example, movement may occur in order for the feature of a particular morpheme (such as person, number, case…) to be checked.

Although the set of features is hypothesized to be universal, features are not activated or organized in the same way in all languages. In other words, what may cause problems for the L2 learner is the way they activate and organize the target language features and the way they use the features in conjunction with the operations of the computational system.

To conclude this section, parameters, functional categories and features are interrelated. For example, Liceras (2010, p. 250) argues that the EPP feature, located in the functional category CP, determines “the parametric option to which a given type of language belongs”, i.e. languages with fronting of wh-words, like English, or without, like Chinese. She also mentions the example of the minimalist analysis of the null subject parameter, by Alexiadou and
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Anagnostopoulou (1998), which proposes that the feature [+D], located in TP, determines the parametric option between [+null] and [-null] subject languages.

**Feature selection and feature assembly**

For Chomsky (2000, 2001, 2004), there are two processes involved in language acquisition: feature selection and feature assembly. Feature selection selects the appropriate features (formal, phonological and semantic) necessary for the construction of the lexical items in the language: \([F_L1]\); feature assembly combines the features of \([F_L1]\) into particular lexical items: \([Lex_L1]\). Both these operations are triggered by exposure to the language in question. The significance of this is that parametric differences between languages will result from the particular features selected and from the way they are assembled.

The question which arises regarding SLA is what happens after the features of an L1 have been selected? Can the L2 learner still select features in the L2 that are not selected by his native language? Research in SLA has addressed these questions by investigating cross-linguistic differences caused by the selection of different features in the L1 and the L2 and the extent to which they lead to impairment (e.g. Hawkins, 2005; Hawkins & Chan, 1997; Lardiere, 2006, 2009; Tsimpli, 2003).

One L2 approach which takes L2 impairment to result from a failure in the selection of parametrized features is the ‘representational deficit approach’ (Hawkins, 2001, 2003; Tsimpli, 2003). This approach argues that languages vary when they make different selections among formal features (Hawkins & Liszka, 2003, p. 25). In the context of SLA, features of the L2 that are not selected in the learner’s L1, are hypothesized to be unlearnable after the critical period.

Lardiere (2008) argues that this view of feature selection as parameter setting is “too simplistic” and that the problem of “acquirability” is instead the result of the “ways in which grammatical features are morphologically combined and conditioned”; i.e., assembled and “realized in each language, whether inflectionally or lexically, or even overtly realized or not” (p. 111). This view has been formalized in the so-called feature-assembly hypothesis (Lardiere, 2005, 2008, 2009) which takes the locus of persistent problems in L2 acquisition to be at the level of mapping of syntactic knowledge onto morphology and phonology (Lardiere, 1998a, 1998b, 2000; Prevost & White, 2000).

What this amounts to, is the observation that for the feature assembly hypothesis, the L2 grammar may be deviant even if knowledge of the target features is not impaired, suggesting that the source of the problems in L2 acquisition might lie somewhere else, namely, in feature assembly. This was recognized by Dominguez, Arche, & Myles (2011, The role of formal features in second language acquisition, para. 4): “acquiring the target \([Lex_{L2}]\) (and not \([F_{L2}]\)) might be the source of attested problems in second language acquisition”. To acquire the L2, the learner must re-assemble the features of his L1 into new functional categories and their associated lexical items. Problems will arise when the L1 features do not “have the same
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morpheolexical expression in the L2” and learners cannot re-assemble them (Dominguez et al., 2011, The role of formal features in second language acquisition, para. 5).

Liceras (2010) provides two examples to illustrate this point, namely, Lardiere (2008, 2009) and Valenzuela (2008). For Lardiere, problems of plural marking with indefinite nouns by a Chinese learner of English result from the fact number and definiteness form a union in Chinese, whereas they are independent in English. This means that, in order for successful acquisition to take place, the two features must be ‘de-linked’ and re-assembled. Similarly, Valenzuela argues that, in order for English learners to acquire the Spanish CLLD (see below) construction, they have to identify the feature [+specific] and combine it with topicalization.

**Some examples from Tunisian Arabic (TA) and English, illustrating the interrelationship between feature selection and feature assembly**

**Negation in English and TA**

Consider the data in (1) and (2) below:

(1) a. He does not cook the meal
b. He is not sick

(2) a. ma y-tayyab-sh l-ftuur TA
   Neg 3MImp-cook-Neg the-meal
   ‘He doesn’t cook the meal’

   b. ma hi-sh mriidh-a
   Neg 3FSg- Neg sick-F
   ‘She’s not sick’

On the surface, the differences seem to be great. However, a few parameters are capable of easily accounting for the differences: Glossing over the role of the null subject parameter, and focusing only on the parameters related to negation, a few such parameters affecting formal features are able to account for the differences (analysis adapted from Hawkins, 2001):

(3) a. [IP He [I’ doesi [NegP not [Neg’ e [VP t [VP cook the meal]]]]]]
   b. [IP He [I’ isi [NegP not [Neg’ e [VP ti; sick]]]]]

I is weak in English, but it can still attract auxiliaries and copulas – along with the empty Neg head- which move to I in steps, along the lines of the HMC (Travis, 1984). Not occupies the specifier position of NegP.

(4) a. [IP pro [I’ ma5 y-tayyab[i [NegP –sh [Neg’ tj ti [VP ti; l-ftuur]]]]]
   b. [IP [I’ ma5 hi; [NegP –sh [Neg’ tj ti [VP ti; mriidha]]]]]

TA strong I triggers movement of the main verb – along with the head Neg- to I. The head of Neg, in TA, is occupied by *ma*, whereas its specifier by –*sh*. In (b), *hi* is analysed as a copula.
Evidence for the main verb (like auxiliaries and copulas) raising to I in TA, comes from constructions like (5) where the Q particle is assumed to be located in C and hence, I to C movement would yield this structure:

(5) yiktib-shi ?

Write.3M-Q

‘Does he write?’

To recapitulate, a TA learner of English negation has to select the features [-+strong] and those associated with the Neg parameter, i.e. whether the head or/and the specifier of Neg is empty or filled. Now these features seem to be used in the same way in the two languages, and therefore, there is no clear evidence for feature re-assembly here.

**Yes-no questions in English and TA**

Consider the questions in (6) and their TA equivalents in (7):

(6) a. Have you sent the letter?
   b. Have you sent it?
   c. Have you sent it to him?

(7) a. b?ath-t- shi l-warqa ?

Sent-2Sg- Q the-paper

‘Have you sent the paper?’

b. b?ath-t-ha-shi

sent-2Sg-itF-Q

‘Have you sent it?’

c. b?ath-t-ha-l-uu-shi

sent-2Sg-itF-to-3M-Q

‘Have you sent it to him?’

In English, the EPP serves to move the auxiliary from I to C which must be [+null]. The TA data on the other hand, show that –shi first merges with C then the EPP triggers the movement and adjunction of the main verb to –shi:

(8) [CP Have{ [IP you { t[ VP sent the letter]}]}]

(9) [CP b?ath{shi [IP [VP t l-warqa]]}]

In sum, a TA learner of English must discover that, contrary to TA, I may only move to an empty C position in English, which suggests that the parameters are assembled differently in the two languages.
A further complication arises when we consider the behavior of clitic object pronouns in the two languages (6b, c) and (7b, c). Contrary to English, clitic object pronouns in TA, must first attach to the host verb before the latter moving and adjoining to the Q particle:

\[(10)\ a. \ [CP \ [C' \ b\?ah\-
\-[ha]_ij \ -shi \ [IP \ [I' \ tij \ [VP \ [V' \ tij \ ]]]]]] \]
\[\ b. \ [CP \ [C' \ b\?ah\-
\-[a] \ -l\-uu]_ijk \ -shi \ [IP \ tijk \ [VP \ [V' \ tijk \ ]]]]] \]

The TA learner of English must, therefore, ‘de-link’ the features responsible for clitic placement and those responsible for question.

**Restrictive relative clauses in English and TA**

Consider the following data illustrating object relatives (11-12) and subject relatives (13-14):

\[(11)\ a. \ The \ book \ which \ I \ read \ was \ interesting \]
\[\ b. \ The \ book \ that \ I \ read \ was \ interesting \]
\[\ c. \ The \ book \ I \ read \ was \ interesting \]

\[(12)\ a. \ l\-ktaab \ illi \ qriit\-u \ baahi \]
\[\ b. \ *l\-ktaab \ qriit\-u \ baahi \]

\[(13)\ a. \ The \ man \ who \ came \ is \ my \ friend \]
\[\ b. \ The \ man \ that \ came \ is \ my \ friend \]
\[\ c. \ *The \ man \ came \ is \ my \ friend \]

\[(14)\ a. \ r\-raajil \ illi \ ja \ SaaHb\-i \]
\[\ b. \ *r\-raajil \ ja \ SaaHb\-i \]

The data suggest the following:

--Following a proposal by Rizzi (1990) (as cited in Hawkins, 2001, p. 157ff.), the feature [wh] is present in English in the form [+-wh] but absent in languages with resumptive pronouns like TA.

--[wh] triggers the movement of the wh-element or the null operator (Op) to the specifier of CP; when [wh] is absent, a resumptive pronoun occupies the position from which a wh-element has moved in English (see, e.g. Shlonsky, 1992).

This is partially illustrated in (15) and (16) below, using the features [wh] and [pred] (predicate), the latter distinguishing relative clauses from other types of clauses (analysis suggested by Rizzi, 1990, p. 67) (cited in Hawkins, 2001, p. 157ff.):
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(15) a. [NP the book [CP which [C’ Ø [+wh,+pred] [IP I read [NP ti…..]]]]]]
    b. [NP the book [CP Opi [wh] [C’ that [-wh,+pred] [IP I read [NP ti…..]]]]]]
    c. [NP the book [CP Opi [wh] [C’ Ø [+wh,+pred] [IP I read [NP ti…..]]]]]]

(16) [NP l-ktaab [CP Ø [C’ illi Øwh,+pred] [IP qriit-u….]]]]]

Presumably, feature selection can account for all the facts above, namely, selecting [wh] and [[pred] would account for the movement of the wh-element or the null operator in English, together with the associated content of C; not selecting [wh], on the other hand, would account for (12a), but (12b) remains unexplained. This does not seem to be related to the presence/absence of [wh]. Learning English, therefore, would require re-assembling the features of TA which allow (12a) but not (12b) in different ways so as to allow (11a-c).

Similarly, as noted by Lardiere (2008) in connection with Chinese, the contrast between [wh] languages, like English, and non-wh languages, like TA, is not always straightforward as in TA (and Chinese) adjunct relatives, we, sometimes, observe locality effects, hence wh-movement. Without going into the details, observe the following contrasts to do with island violations:

(17) a. *What do [IP you know [NP the author who [IP wrote ti ]]]
    b. *Why do [IP you know [NP the man who [IP quit his job ti ]]]

(Examples from Miyagawa, 2010)

Whereas all types of complex NPs with relative clause result in ungrammaticality in English (17), this is not the case in TA, suggesting as before, that movement is not involved:

(18) a. haadha l-maktib illi na?rif r-raajil illi qra fii-h
    This the-school that know.1SGPerf the-man that read.Imp in-it

(18b), however, shows that relativisation of adjuncts results in ungrammaticality, suggesting that movement has occurred:

b. *fiin bish tkallim r-raajil illi Hatt l-ktaab ?
    where Fut speak.Imp the-man that put.Perf the-book

As argued by Lardiere (2008) in connection with Chinese vs. English, “the differences between the two languages appear not to boil down to a single stark parametric choice”. Rather, “the properties of adjunct relatives in Chinese must be extended to all relatives in English”. “Once again, we see that it is the assembly and, for SLA, the re-assembly of features that must be acquired” (p. 128).

The same reasoning applies to TA.

**Topicalization in English and TA**
Variability in L2 Acquisition: Investigating the Role of Formal Chekili

Two major types of left dislocation in languages – contrastive left dislocation (CLD) and clitic left dislocation (CLLD) are illustrated in (19) and (20) (there are other types which I am not going to consider here, such as Hanging topic left dislocation and Focusing, see, e.g. Chekili, 2004):

(19) This car, I wash everyday CLD

(20) l-ktaab qriit-u lkull CLLD

‘I read the whole book’

On top of CLLD, TA also has CLD:

(21) a. ktaab, qriit

b. *ktaab, qriit-u

(21b) suggests that, like Spanish (Valenzuela, 2008, p. 537), CLLD in TA arises only when the topicalized element is specific. Rizzi (1997) accounts for the difference between CLD and CLLD by proposing a parameter in terms of an Op (a null anaphoric operator) vs. a clitic (Cl):

(22) This car, [Op [I wash t ]]

(23) l-ktaab, [qriit-u]

The differences can be summarized as follows:

English: CLD; no specificity requirement; [Op].

TA: CLLD ([+specific]); CLD([-specific]); [Cl]; [Op].

The learning problems confronting a TA learner of English involve:

--re-ordering the feature [-+specific] as it is not relevant for English CLD

--‘de-link’ the features [+specific] and [+Cl]

--replace [+Cl] by [Op].

As all these features are selected in both languages, it seems that the problem resides in re-assembling them.

Feature assembly and the acquisition of the English present simple by L1 speakers of Bahraini Arabic (BHA)

This section examines the validity of the feature (re)-assembly account by providing arguments from the second language acquisition of the English present simple by Bahraini Arabic students. The importance of the choice of this area comes from the fact that the two systems operate quite differently with respect to temporal/aspectual distinctions. Learning
English, therefore, would require native speakers of BHA to ‘de-link’ the temporal/aspectual concepts in the L1 and map them onto new morphological elements in the L2. The data are taken from the written production of Bahraini students in the English department of the University of Bahrain, at two different levels of proficiency, and are meant to reflect the ability of the learners or absence of such an ability to re-assemble the features in the lexical items of the target language –English- and to give an idea about the remapping problem in SLA.

**Some properties of the present tense and aspect in English and Arabic**

The English present simple is commonly referred to as a tense that primarily expresses present time but that may also express certain aspectual distinctions. It can be used for example, to express habits and routines. The present continuous, on the other hand, is often used to express incomplete or ongoing events in the present.

Arabic - Assuming that all Arabic dialects share similar tense and aspectual distinctions- has only one form (the imperfective) for the two major interpretations of the English present, namely, the ‘event-in-progress’ and the ‘habitual/generic’ interpretations, as illustrated in (1) and (2). This fact will be claimed to lead to errors in the use of the English present simple. A similar claim was made by Liszka (2015, p. 80) in connection with French learners of English.

(1) a. yiktib ktaab kull yuum
   b. yektib kitaab kil yawm
   ‘He writes a book every day’

(2) a. yiktib (fi) ktaab
   b. yektib kitaab
   ‘He is writing a book’

One reason the present simple does not have the ‘event-in-progress’ interpretation can be found in Liszka (2009, p. 235) who argues that “as English thematic verbs do not raise to T [or I], only the habitual/generic interpretation is available. Auxiliary be, however, does raise to T, giving rise to the existential/event in progress interpretation that maps onto the progressive form”.

In what follows, I will provide definitions of the imperfective aspect in Arabic as used by a number of researchers, all pointing to its dual interpretation:

-“The present (imperfect) is used for both continuous and habitual actions or states” (Wightwick & Gaatar, 2008, p. 17).
-“The present tense verb describes actions or events that are ongoing” (Abdulsattar, 2012, p. 23).
-“The imperfective form as argued by Benmamoun (2000) and Aoun et al. (2010) can be associated with different temporal interpretations” (cited in Muftah & Rafik-Galea, 2013, p. 147).
-“The present tense in Arabic functions to indicate the present progressive as well as the present simple” (cited in Muftah & Rafik-Galea, 2013, p. 148).
-“The imperfective (indicative) form occurs also in the context of sentences with present tense interpretations. …[it has] progressive and habitual interpretations” (Benmamoun, 2000, p. 32).
In sum, the Arabic imperfective form seems to correspond to the interpretations of both the present simple and the present continuous in English.

**English and BHA in contrast**

Shamaa (1978, p. 32-33) explains the reason behind the difficulty encountered in translating Arabic tenses into English, as follows: “…[t]emporal contrasts in Arabic are less systematic, i.e., they are not clearly marked by verb forms…temporal reference in Arabic is expressed by means of verb forms in conjunction with time adverbials and other lexical items…”.

Eisele (1990, p. 191, cited in Brustad, 2000) argues for an aspectual correspondence between the English simple tenses and the Arabic perfective and between the English compound forms and the Arabic imperfective. Building on this idea, in particular, the observation that the Arabic imperfective is rendered in English by means of a periphrase, and assuming L1 transfer in SLA, this contrast between English and Arabic is predicted to present a learning problem: Crucially, while Arabic uses the same form (imperfective) for both ‘habitual/generic’ and ‘event-in-progress’ interpretations, English uses different morphological forms for the different interpretations.

As pointed out by Dominguez et al. (2011, Spanish aspectual morphology, para. 3), “………. aspectual syntactic and semantic content is assumed to be the same across languages whereas its morphological expression is language-specific”. What this implies is that each language will assemble the formal features associated with these aspectual distinctions into different morphological forms. Thus, the differences, as noted by Dominguez et al. (2011, Spanish aspectual morphology, para. 3) in how tense/aspect “are represented in [the] two languages need to take into account how the various meanings associated with the different features are mapped onto morphological forms in the two languages rather than merely whether the features themselves are selected in both languages”.

Concretely, the researcher would like to propose that, as pointed out by Eisele (p. 191), the Arabic imperfective is usually rendered by English periphrases (in the absence of any contextual information). E.g.:

(3) yektib
Write.3MSgImp
‘He is writing’

Both English and BHA possess the tense category and the [-past] feature. However, in BHA, this feature is closely linked with ‘continuous’ aspect. Therefore, in order to learn the English present simple, these two features (the feature associated with ‘continuous’ and the feature [-past] must be ‘de-linked’ and ‘re-assembled’ for English. The researcher will argue
that, while this process of re-assembling is taking place on the way to ‘full’ competence, problems may occur, giving rise to errors such as (4a-c):

(4) a. *He is leave
   b. *He is leaves
   c. *He leaving
   d. He leaves
   e. He is leaving

(a-c) show traces of the feature [continuous]. (a-c) will ultimately yield the correct forms (d) and (e). However, in this study, only (d), i.e., the present simple will be considered. Note that the verbal element in (4a-c) is a periphrase. Consequently, in the corpus of data, the author will be looking for such deviances which are indicative of feature re-assembly which is in the process of taking place.

Method

The rate of occurrence of such deviances in the written samples of two groups of Bahraini students will be compared, the idea being that, if the higher level of proficiency shows less deviances of the sort exemplified in (4a-c), this would support the claim that feature re-assembly is indeed taking place, provided the temporal/aspectual distinctions are similar for the two levels. In this study, a corpus consisting of students’ written production in the form of an essay assignment has been used. (Whether it would have been useful to supplement the data with elicited data remains a question for the future). Two groups of BHA students at different proficiency levels (namely, Engl111 and Engl203) participated in this study. (See Appendix A for a description of the two levels). The number of students in each group is thirty (30), randomly selected from a total of 30 to 35 in each group. The sample can be considered a ‘convenience sample’ in the sense that the L2 students “are taken as a whole group” (cf. Loewen & Plonsky, 2016, p. 173):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engl111</td>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>pre-intermediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engl203</td>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>upper intermediate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The procedure consisted in asking the students to write an essay on a particular topic (see Appendix B). The same topic, intended to trigger the present tense, was assigned so that the assignments remain comparable in terms of aspectual distinctions.

Results

Table 2 summarizes mean number of errors observed in the task. For each group, the numbers are calculated on the basis of the total number of verbs with a habitual/generic
interpretation - where the present simple would be expected- and the number of deviances. A sample of error types is given in (5):

(5) “At the weekend, in Friday I going to my grandmother”
    “After that we go a city center and shopping”
    “I writing this letter”
    “I usually swimming”
    “The weekend is be a nice day”
    “I am live in Manama”
    “We often shopping and swimming”
    “I am go to Manama”

Table 2 *Mean number of errors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean No. of verbs with a habitual interpretation</th>
<th>Mean No. of incorrect suppliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engl111</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engl203</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: *Mean percentage of incorrect suppliance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean percentage of incorrect suppliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engl111</td>
<td>34.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engl203</td>
<td>22.5 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

Because of varying proficiency and other variables such as gender and age, results would have been more accurate had the percentages been calculated separately for each student instead of a whole group as here. Similarly, a longitudinal study would also have increased accuracy of results; notwithstanding, the data show that the mean percentage of deviations for Engl111 is noticeably superior to that for Engl203. What this may suggest is that feature re-assembly in L2 is closely tied to the variable of level of proficiency, indicating, in turn, that feature assembly and not just selection is involved in L2 acquisition.

Finally, reflecting on the deviances in (4a-c), it becomes clear that feature re-assembly alone cannot account for all the facts as the Arabic learner of the English present simple would still have to learn when to ‘de-link’ the two features and when not to ‘de-link’ them, resulting in either the present simple or the present continuous. This is so, because the Arabic imperfective, as shown above, is used for both the ‘habitual/generic’ interpretation (where the two features are ‘de-linked’) and the ‘event-in-progress’ interpretation (where they are linked). Similarly, correct productions such as he leaves does not necessarily mean that the learner is using them in the correct context, but may be the result of ‘overgeneralization’.
Variability in L2 Acquisition: Investigating the Role of Formal Chekili

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present author has tried to demonstrate, using data from Arabic learners of English, that L2 impairment can be explained by a failure to (re)-assemble features. However, as observed earlier, feature assembly, alone, is unable to account for all the facts of L2 acquisition.

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References
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hypothesis. Second Language Research 12, 40-72.

Appendices

Appendix A

Engl111 and Engl203 are part of three integrated courses designed for Arts students and English majors. The series of courses starts at pre-intermediate level in the first course and continues to upper intermediate in the last course. The courses offer instruction in grammar, vocabulary, use of English and pronunciation, with practice in listening, reading and writing. (information taken from the University course syllabus forms).

Appendix B

The essay topic:
You have the name and address of an English language student in another country. Write them a letter in which you
-introduce yourself
-describe your everyday routine
-Say what you like doing in your free time.

Write about 150-200 words
A Corpus-based Study of Similes in British and American English

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the forms of similes and the types of nouns following them and their frequency in different simile constructions. It also unveils the implications that can be drawn from the findings for English as Foreign Language (EFL) learning contexts. More specifically, this study attempts to find out the most frequent nouns following similes in different constructions in two generalized corpora, namely the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). These similes were identified, retrieved and ranked in a descending order according to their frequencies per one million words. Results indicate that similes, unlike other multi-word units are changeable as different nouns with varying frequencies ranging from one to fifty three were shown to follow each of the similes under investigation. For instance, frequencies of nouns following the simile as good as were as follows: gold (53), (the) people (30), men (14), money (9), and cash (8). These results stood in contrast to the beliefs and opinions of some native speakers of English who view similes as fixed forms, very much like formulaic expressions and thus associated exclusively with certain nouns. The study calls on teachers and instructors to take these findings into account when teaching similes in the EFL context. Additional research is recommended on other similes such as, as sweet as sugar and as cold as ice, for instance in BNC and COCA to confirm or invalidate the findings reported in this research.

Keywords: BNC, COCA, corpora, corpus linguistics, EFL, similes
Introduction

A simile is a figure of speech that compares two different things or people to identify similarities or qualities which are shared by them by using the word “like” or “as” to make the comparison. Similes are generally more easily identified because of the use of the word "as" and/or like and metaphors are figures of speech used mainly in the analysis of literary texts. Whereas the former compares things which share a common feature, the latter does so more directly without using "like" or "as", as shown in the sentence: He is a lion. The impression among some students of literary expression and foreign language learners is that similes can be expressed through only one frame namely, [As+Adj+As+Noun], but the fact is that similes can be expressed through the use of other frames such as [Adj+like+Noun] as in "hard like brick" and [Adj+as+Noun] as in "black as coal."

When similes are taught in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes or in the analysis of literary texts at the college level, students are instructed explicitly to learn similes in much the same way as formulaic expressions that is in forms which are fixed and not changeable such as by the way, so far so good, see you later and by all means because for instance when the simile as old as the hills, it is usually emphasized that the form "the hills" was the only correct form and any other noun replacing "the hills" was considered incorrect. This, despite the fact that native speakers of English sometimes use other nouns to replace the noun the hills. In brief, it seems that similes are unlike idioms because idioms are culture-bound and fixed expressions are unchangeable. Similes, however, are changeable across language varieties and dialects, but this is subject to verification by the analysis of the data that will be obtained in this study.

Corpora and Language analysis

Corpora are important tools for the study of language. In the last forty or fifty years and with the availability and increasing use of electronic corpora, their role is getting increasingly important in the study of language variants, forms, and styles. Although no one can underestimate the role of native English speakers in identifying the correct grammatical, lexical or stylistic forms, lack of consensus among them as to the most acceptable or correct form makes their judgments sometimes less reliable. Therefore, native speakers cannot always be taken as undisputable arbiters on language issues such as the most frequent words in English, or differences between spoken and written English, tenses that people use more frequently and idioms or similes people frequently use. This perhaps explains why linguists, grammarians, researchers and dictionary compilers resort to corpora to verify the correct language forms and to find answers to controversial questions or issues. McCarthy (2004) confirms that:

With corpora and software tools to analyze them, we can see how language is really used. We no longer have to rely heavily on intuition to know what we say or what we write; instead we can see what hundreds of different speakers and writers have actually said or written, all at the click of a mouse (p. 2)

That is why language researchers, linguists and grammarians resort to corpora, either generalized or specialized depending on the goals and scope of their research. Bennett, (2010) states “Generalized corpora are often very large, more than 10 million words and contain a variety of language so that findings from it can be somewhat generalized” (p. 13). There are many generalized corpora such as The British National Corpus (BNC), and the American
National Corpus (ANC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) which contains approximately 450 million words. The generalized corpora contain written texts such as newspaper and magazine articles and spoken transcripts such as conversations and business meetings. Large, generalized corpora should be used if valid generalizations about language are to be drawn. Unlike generalized corpora, specialized corpora are often created to address very specific questions. The most widely used specialized corpora are The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) and Corpus of Upper Level Student Papers (MICUSP) which contains papers written by advanced students from a range of university disciplines such as English, education, engineering, philosophy, political science, psychology and history.

**Intuition in corpus linguistics**

Intuition in corpus linguistics is a controversial issue because whereas some scholars approve and subscribe to the use of intuition due to its value in formulating research questions and conceptualizing areas of research topics, others doubt the validity of intuition particularly in the analysis of speech. A compromise approach however is in favor of reliance but not over-reliance on intuition.

Gries (2006) maintains that “intuitive/subjective decisions come into play at different points of time”. (p. 86). According to him, intuition is involved in the identification of a topic or problem and to a lesser extent in the retrieval of data where a decision for the selection of a particular corpus is to be made and finally during the coding process and statistical analysis.

Conrad (2006) gives some credit to the use of intuition in corpus linguistics. She believes that intuition can play a role in helping analysts develop research questions. She notes, “your intuitions about how you use language can lead to many useful corpus investigations, as can disagreements in speakers' intuitions”. (p. 51). Finally, Hyland (2006) is in favor of reliance on intuition as we have intuitions about what to look for and then interpret what things mean. He is, however, against over-reliance on intuition. He argues:

Obviously it is the over-reliance on intuition that has attracted criticism in the past –cases where sometimes whole theories of language were based on armchair theorizing and invented examples. But while intuition is generally a poor guide to judgments about frequency, collocation, semantic meanings, phraseology etcetera, interpreting is important when generalizing from corpus data and understanding the numbers and patterns we find in it (p. 103).

Finally, Aston (2006) doubts the validity of intuition which is particularly unreliable for speech. He maintains:

Our intuition tends to focus on one use at a time, forgetting others than the one we first thought of –particularly uses in other text –types and context types. Intuition is also notoriously unreliable as to the relative frequency of different features, and obviously, is hopeless with regard to text –and context types with which we are not familiar (p. 5)
In investigating language forms and language use, generative linguists relied heavily on the intuition of native speakers which assumes an 'ideal native speaker/hearer' who speaks an invariant variety of the language in question. But Leech (2006) maintains that, sociolinguists and other usage-oriented branches of linguistics have highlighted the variability of the competences of different native speaker dialects or idiolects. As the non-uniformity of a language is widely accepted as self-evident, it is clear that the native speaker's knowledge of that language is bound to be incomplete, whether in terms of register, dialect or diachrony (p. 162).

In addition, native speaker's intuition varies considerably from that of other native speakers due to experience, language creativity, knowledge of other languages and educational level, as to the acceptability of forms and their meanings, and so the form that is acceptable by one native speaker may not be acceptable by others. It is not unusual that when a question or a language problem is raised by EFL learners, native speakers come up with diverse answers and express divergent opinions. This explains perhaps why some English grammar books are written by nonnative speakers with or without the collaboration of native speakers. A case in point is, A Practical English Grammar by Thomson and Martinet (1986) and, Communicative Grammar of English, by Leech and Svartvik (2013). The lack of consensus among native speakers is due to the variation from one genre to another, and from one dialect to another and diachronic variation that exists over time.

If intuition is partly reliable and if native speakers cannot consistently offer substantial help in determining the correct or acceptable forms, then the assistance of another source be sought, namely language corpora. Corpora can systematically provide answers to language questions or issues and queries such as word counts word frequency, forms and their co-occurrences with other word forms as collocations and colligations, multi-units, use and frequency idioms, formulaic expressions and similes across different registers, lexicography and more specifically lexico-grammatical patterns of language as performed by Sinclair and his Cobuild project team (Sinclair 1991). This in addition to research on register variation conducted by Biber (1988) and the difference between features of conversation and written discourse as explained by Carter and McCarthy (1995), and language use whether it is inherently variable or heterogeneous as stated by Labov (1972) or systematically heterogeneous as stated by Halliday (1991), is then a way out for language researchers, grammarians, lexicographers, dictionary writers and foreign language learners through the use of electronic corpora both generalized and specialized depending on areas or topic to be investigated.

The paper will be presented in the following order, section four provides a brief summary of the methods and objectives of this research, while section five presents the data analysis, and the last section presents the summary and conclusion.

**Methodology and Objectives**

The data collection process was carried out through the use of two corpora, the British National Corpus (BNC) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). Four randomly selected simile forms were investigated, involving the adjectives, *good, old, white and black* in reference to the constructions [As+Adj+As+Def.Art.+N], [As+Adj+As+Indef.Art.+N]
and [As+Adj+As+0Art.+N] in both the BNC and COCA. The four similes in their different constructions were retrieved, examined, and ranked in a descending order according to their frequency in BNC. Then they were described and analyzed.

One reason why we embarked on the investigation of similes is due to the fact that similes are believed to be fixed and not changeable in form in the context of English as a foreign or native language. In line with this conceptualization, when similes are taught in English as a foreign language classes or at college level, students are generally given the impression that similes are fixed, multi-unit words, very much like idioms. They are taught, for instance, that with the simile, \textit{as white as snow}, the only correct noun following it is \textit{snow}. But streaming the corpora certainly suggests this is not the case because one may come across other nouns following this simile in both the BNC and COCA.

To retrieve data from corpora, it is essential to use specific language software programs or tools. Aasheim (2012) asserts that, “A corpus often has as an inbuilt search engine, which makes it possible for search for different words or constructions in order to test hypotheses, check occurrences and validate rules of usage” (p. 6). Each corpus generally has a software or an interface which is very much like a key through which one can have access to publicly available corpora or restricted corpora. To obtain data from the British National Corpus one has to do so through Brigham Young University Interface, (BNC, BYU). The objective of this study is to find out the similarities and/or differences in the different constructions of similes in BNC and COCA, and attempts to highlight the implications which can be drawn from the findings for EFL learning contexts. More specifically this study will address the following questions:

1) What are the most frequent nouns following the simile frame [As good as…] in its different constructions in both BNC and COCA?
2) What are the most frequent nouns following the simile frame [As old as…] in its different constructions in both BNC and COCA?
3) What are the most frequent nouns following the simile frame [As black as…] in its different constructions in both BNC and COCA?
4) What are the most frequent nouns following the simile frame [As white as…] in its different constructions in both BNC and COCA?

Results related to the first question

In addressing the first question, it is clear that the most frequent nouns following the simile construction [As+ good+ as+ Def.Art.+ Noun] in BNC are the people (4), the food (2), the state(2), the quality (2), and their normalized frequency (occurrences per million words) in BNC are 0.04, 0.02, 0.02, and 0.02 respectively, whereas in COCA they are the people (17), the day (4), the quality (3), the originals (3), the men (3), and the Japanese (3), and their normalized frequency (occurrences per million words) are 0.04, 0.01, 0.01,0.01, 0.01 and 0.01 respectively and ratio refers to the relative percentage in the two corpora as shown in Table 1. It is also clear that the nouns the people (21), the quality (5), and the day (5) ranked highest in both corpora as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>1: BNC</th>
<th>2: COCA</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
<th>RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 1 The most frequent nouns following the simile “as good as the” in BNC and COCA
A Corpus-based Study of Similes in British and American

Hussein & Sawalha

Table 2 The most frequent nouns following the simile “as good as a(an)” in BNC and COCA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>1: BNC</th>
<th>2: COCA</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
<th>RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>As good as a rest</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>22.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>As good as a man</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>As good as a play</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>As good as a wink</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that the most frequent nouns following the simile construction [As+ good+ as+ 0.Art.+ Noun] in BNC are gold (20), cash (4), people (3) and men (3), whereas the most frequent nouns in COCA are gold (33), men (8), money (7), people (6) and cash (4).

Table 3 The most frequent nouns following the simile “as good as +0.Art.” in BNC and COCA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>1: BNC</th>
<th>2: COCA</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
<th>RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 As good as gold</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 As good as cash</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 As good as people</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 As good as men</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 As good as money</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 As good as chance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last three tables clearly show the most frequent nouns following the simile [As + good + as+Noun] in its various constructions in both BNC and COCA are gold (53), people or the people (30), men (14), money (9), cash (8) and a man (7).
Results related to the second question

Table 4 shows that the most frequent nouns following the simile construction [As+ old + as+ Def.Art+ Noun] are the hills (13), the history (3), and the world (2) in BNC, whereas in COCA they are the hills (18), the world (7), the history (2) and the concept (2). The most frequent nouns in both corpora are the hills (31), the world (9) and the history (5).

**Table 4** The most frequent nouns used with the simile “as old as the” in BNC and COCA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>1: BNC</th>
<th>2: COCA</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
<th>RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 As old as the hills</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 As old as the history</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>6.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 As old as the world</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 As old as the concept</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 As old as the man</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 As old as the game</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to the most frequent nouns used in the construction [As+ old+ as+ Indef. Art.+ Noun], they are a hat (1), and a Pharoah (1) with a very low frequency in BNC, and with a zero frequency in COCA as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5** The most frequent nouns following the simile “as old as a(an)” in BNC and COCA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>1: BNC</th>
<th>2: COCA</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
<th>RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 As old a hat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 As old a Pharoah.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most frequent nouns following the simile construction [As+ old+ as+ 0.Art.+ Noun] are time (4), history (3), human (2) and America (2) in BNC, and time (27), man (7), history (6), human (6) and America (5) in COCA as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6** The most frequent nouns following the simile “as old as + 0.Art” in BNC and COCA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>1: BNC</th>
<th>2: COCA</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
<th>RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 As old as time</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 As old as history</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>6.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 As old as human</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 As old as America</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 As old as man</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 As old as humankind</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 4, 5, and 6 clearly show that the most frequent nouns following the simile [as old as+Noun] in both BNC and COCA are the hills (31), time (31), (the) history (14), (the) man (10), the world (9), human (8) and America (7).
Results related to the third question
The most frequent nouns following the simile construction [As+ white+ as+ Def.Art.+ Noun] in BNC are the snow (1), the towel (1), and the wall(1) in BNC, whereas in COCA it is the snow with a frequency of (8) as shown in Table 7.

Table 7 The most frequent nouns following the simile “as white as the” in BNC and COCA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>1: BNC</th>
<th>2: COCA</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
<th>RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As white as the snow</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As white as the towel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As white as the wall</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to the most frequent nouns following the construction [As+ white+ as+ Indef. Art.+ Noun], they are a sheet (13) and a ghost (3) in BNC and the nouns a sheet (9) and a ghost (6) in COCA as shown in Table 8.

Table 8 The most frequent nouns following the simile “as white as a(an)” in BNC and COCA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>1: BNC</th>
<th>2: COCA</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
<th>RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As white as a sheet</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>6.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As white as a ghost</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 shows that the most frequent nouns following the simile construction [As+ white+ as+ 0.Art.+ Noun] are snow (9), and paper (2) in BNC, and snow (14), chalk (7), and milk (5) in COCA.

Table 9 The most frequent nouns following the simile “as white as+0.Art.” in BNC and COCA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>1: BNC</th>
<th>2: COCA</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
<th>RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As white as snow</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As white as paper</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As white as chalk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As white as milk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 7, 8, and 9 clearly show that the most frequent nouns following the simile [as white as +Noun] in both BNC and COCA are (the) snow (32), a sheet (22), a ghost (9), chalk (8) and finally milk (6).

Results related to the fourth question
Table 10 shows that the most frequent nouns following the simile [As+ black + as+ Def.Art.+ Noun] in BNC and COCA are the night (3), the ace (2), and the devil (2).

Table 10 The most frequent nouns following the simile “as black as the” in BNC and COCA.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>1: BNC</th>
<th>2: COCA</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
<th>RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 As black the night</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 As black as the ace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 As black as the devil</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most frequent noun following the simile construction [As + black + as + Indef. Art.+ Noun] in BNC and COCA is *raven* (2) as shown in Table 11.

**Table 11 The most frequent nouns following the simile “as black as a(n)” in BNC and COCA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>1: BNC</th>
<th>2: COCA</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
<th>RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 As black as a raven</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 As black as a stone</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 As black s storm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 As black as a Luger</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most frequent nouns following the simile construction [As + black + as+0.Art+Noun] are *thunder* (3), *midnight* (2), and *hell* (2) in BNC and *coal* (6), *night* (3) and *midnight* (2) in COCA as shown in Table 12.

**Table 12 The most frequent nouns following the simile “as black as+0.Art” in BNC and COCA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD/PHRASE</th>
<th>1: BNC</th>
<th>2: COCA</th>
<th>PM 1</th>
<th>PM 2</th>
<th>RATIO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 As black as thunder</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 As black as midnight</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 As black as hell</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 As black as coal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 As black as night</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 As black as ebony</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 10, 11, and 12 clearly show the most frequent nouns following the simile [As black as+ Noun] in both BNC and COCA are *(the) night* (7), *coal* (7), *midnight* (4) and *thunder* (3).

**Summary and Conclusion**

In this study both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to understand and analyze the findings and quantitative results generated from the corpus were analyzed qualitatively. Qualitatively analyzing results involved examining the simile forms, the most frequent nouns following the simile construction in both BNC and COCA, and interpreting and explaining them.

Analysis of the data suggests that there are similarities as to the nouns following the different simile constructions in both the BNC and COCA corpora but with different frequencies. For instance, the most frequent nouns following the simile “as old as” in BNC were the hills...
(13), (the) history (6), time (4), human (2) and America (2) whereas in COCA they were time (27), the hills (18), (the) history (8), man (7), the world (7), human (6) and America (5). However, the most frequent nouns following the simile “as old as+Noun” in both BNC and COCA were the hills (31), time (31), (the) history (14), (man) or the man (10), the world (9), human (8) and America (7). Regardless of the high or low frequency of nouns following simile constructions, what is noteworthy here is the number of multiple nouns that can follow a simile form. This shows beyond doubt that there is some but not total consensus among native speakers of English as to what noun should follow the simile “as old as” or other similes for that matter. If the BNC faithfully represents British English use and if COCA faithfully represents American English use, then it can be concluded that native speakers of English opt for the use of the nouns the hills and time more than the nouns the world or America or the concept or the game in the simile “as old as”. But this of course suggests that it is possible to say as old as America or as old as the world in much the same way we say as old as the hills or as old as time which are used but not so frequently by native speakers. What determines the form of a simile seems to be directly related to the locale or geographical area. So in a very cold area such as ice-cold Minnesota, it would not be surprising if people say as white as snow, but in an area well-known for milk production and dairy farming, people may opt for the simile as white as milk.

When similes are taught in the foreign language context or introduced in English literature classes or used in the analysis of literary texts at the college level, students are instructed explicitly to learn similes and use them in much the same way as formulaic expressions, that is in forms which are fixed and not changeable such as, by the way, so far so good, beg your pardon, by all means and see you later. It may not therefore be premature to say that similes like as hard as a rock, as busy as a bee, and as happy as a lark are not the only acceptable forms in English because they can be rendered in other forms such as, as hard as iron, as busy as a beaver or an ant and as happy as a clam. But this of course needs further investigation to confirm the types of nouns following the simile constructions and their frequency as well. In brief, it seems that similes are unlike idioms because idioms are culture-bound and fixed expressions and are unchangeable whereas similes are changeable across language varieties and dialects, so similes in the US may be different in form from those used in New Zealand and in turn those used in New Zealand may be different from those used in the United Kingdom.

The implications that can be drawn from the findings of the study for the EFL learning context is that there may not be only one correct simile form which is given priority over others but rather a number of correct and perhaps equally acceptable forms. Because more than one noun can follow a simile in native English, we believe EFL learners should also be given the opportunity to release their imaginative powers to come up with new simile forms based on their experience, not only in the target language but also in their native language and culture as is the case with native speakers of English who for instance in the BNC were shown to use approximately forty nouns each of which with a frequency of only one following the simile “as good as...”; some of these nouns are, the car, the king, the lab, the team, the tools, the lake, the woman, the Vauxhall, the dinners, the banana and the rest, in addition to a signature, a ride, a pair, a day, a fingerprint, a master, a murderer, a ballet, a caress, a cuddle, a pauper, a seal, a frolic, a giggle, a holiday, a house, a lead, a doctor, a dozen, a slide, a squirrel, a streetcar, a tonic, a week-end, and a moon, and parties, partnership, master, inputs, Nescafe, Duke,
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In COCA there were also ten nouns, namely, image, individuals, the input, the music, the players, the price, the pros, the stones, the sum, and the women following the simile “as good as” and each of which with a frequency of only one.

In addition, in the BNC there were approximately six nouns each of which with a frequency of only one following the simile “as white as”; these nouns are wedding, Cleopatra, death, ivory, marble, and office.

To reiterate, there seems to be no consensus as there is a variation as to what noun should follow a certain simile as shown by the data obtained from the BNC and COCA; it is suggested therefore that this liberal tendency towards the use of similes in native English be extended to the context of English as a foreign language so that students can enrich the language by their creative, innovative and idiosyncratic forming of similes based on the totality of their experience in language and culture.

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References
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Schematic Structure of Discussion of Results Sections in the Field of Dentistry: A Comparison of International and Local English-Medium Journals

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Abstract
This genre-based study investigates the schematic structure of the English discussion of results sections in international and local journals from the field of dentistry. The corpus comprised 26 discussion sections employing Basturkmen’s (2009, 2012) and Yang and Allison’s (2003) moves/steps as a point of departure for analysis. The findings showed that the writers of both groups of texts examined tended to draw on similar rhetorical moves pertinent to achieving the communicative function of the English discussion sections from this discipline. However, some minor differences were also observed at the step level. The findings obtained in the current study are useful particularly for novice non-native-English-speaking writers by facilitating their understanding of the schematic structure of discussion sections in this field, thereby raising their success opportunities in publishing their research articles in prestigious international journals. The study concludes with the limitations and implications of the findings as well as recommendations for future research.

Keywords: discipline, discussion section, genre, move/step analysis, research article
**Introduction**

English has been established as an international language particularly for science and technology (Johns & Dudley-Evans, 1991), and the research article (RA) in English has consequently become the means for scholarly communication and circulation of academic knowledge among researchers from different discourse communities (Swales, 1990, 2004). As a result, the underlying schematic structure of RAs (organization of moves and steps) has been the focus of many genre-based studies since Swales’ (1990) publication of the revised Create a Research Space (CARS) model. The main tenant of Swales’ (1990, 2004) genre analysis approach is that a text within a genre tends to follow a typical textual pattern, comprising a number of specific moves sequenced in a particular order that are also realized by a series of steps. “Move” refers to a discoursal segment that performs a particular communicative function (Swales, 2004) whereas a “step” is defined as “a lower level text than the move that provides a detailed perspective on the options open to the writer in setting out the moves” (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 89). Swales’ (1990, 2004) genre analysis/move analysis framework has been employed by many researchers to investigate RAs or sections of RAs in different academic fields and in different languages (e.g., Basturkmen, 2012; Fakhri, 2009; Hirano, 2009; Kanoksilapatham, 2015; Lim, 2006; Loi, 2010; Ozturk, 2007; Samraj, 2002; Sheldon, 2011; Tessuto, 2015). These genre-based studies and others have shown some significant variations in the schematic structure of RAs due to a text’s purpose and the social expectations held for the text (Basturkmen, 2012). It has been observed that RA writing may vary considerably depending on the intended audience, such as whether the text is for a local or international discourse community (Hirano, 2009). Therefore, the current study aims to investigate the schematic structure of discussion sections of English dentistry RAs published in international journals and a representative sample of discussion sections written by Arab writers in local journals.

The discussion section plays an important role in RAs in that writers need to position their research in relation to other writing in the field, thereby contributing to disciplinary knowledge in their respective fields (Basturkmen, 2012; Holmes, 1997; Peacock, 2002; Yang & Allison, 2003). The main communicative function of discussion sections has been defined as the section in which writers explain “why the results occurred as they did” (Bitchener, 2010, p. 179), compare their results to previous research, and discuss the significance of results. However, the discussion section has been found to be the most challenging part of RAs, theses, and dissertations to write for both native and non-native speakers of English (Bardi, 2015; Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Dong, 1996; Flowerdew, 1999; Swales, 2004). Therefore, the schematic structure of the discussion of the results section has received growing attention in English for academic purposes (EAP) genre-based studies, and this section has been examined in individual disciplines or disciplinary fields (Basturkmen, 2009, 2012; Dubois, 1997; Holmes, 1997; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Lewin et al., 2001; Peacock, 2002; Peng, 1987; Yang & Allison, 2003), including biomedicine (Dubois, 1997), chemical engineering (Peng, 1987), social sciences (Lewin et al., 2001), history, sociology, political science (Holmes, 1997), physics and material science, biology, environmental science, business, language and linguistics, public and social administration, and law (Peacock, 2002). These studies have identified a sequence of moves and steps common to the discussion sections in different disciplines, and the moves and steps identified were ascribed to different frameworks used but not unique to the different disciplinary areas explored (Dubois, 1997; Lewin et al., 2001). In addition, research has indicated that the discussion sections featured the presence of repeated cycles of moves and that
no obligatory moves across the disciplines examined were reported (Holmes, 1997; Peacock, 2002).

Relevant to the current study are the recent studies of Yang and Allison (2003) and Basturkmen (2009, 2012). Yang and Allison (2003) examine the final sections (results, discussions, and conclusions) of RAs in applied linguistics. They observe seven moves for discussion sections sequenced in the following order: providing background information, reporting results, summarizing results, commenting on results, summarizing the study, evaluating the study, and drawing deductions from the research. They further report that, although the same set of seven moves appeared across all final sections, commenting on results was the most frequent and obligatory move and could occur repeatedly in the discussion sections. The two moves of reporting results and summarizing results together occurred less often, although the former occurred in all discussion sections except one. Consequently, Yang and Allison (2003) consider the reporting results move to be quasi-obligatory. The commenting on results move is further examined by Basturkmen (2009) in discussion sections in RAs and master’s dissertations from the field of language teaching. Basturkmen finds that both RA authors and master’s dissertation writers discussed their findings mainly through a series of result–comments sequences where results from their study were discussed one by one or as sets of related results. Most relevant to the current study is Basturkmen’s (2012) investigation of the steps in commenting on results move in the discussion of results section in dentistry RAs. Basturkmen (2012) finds that Yang and Allison’s (2003) moves/steps framework of the discussion of results sections in applied linguistics is mostly applicable because the move/step types identified were similar to those described in applied linguistics (Basturkmen, 2009; Yang & Allison, 2003). In addition, Basturkmen (2012) indicates that the two moves of reporting results and commenting on results are obligatory moves in that they occurred in all the texts analyzed while the other moves are optional. Basturkmen (2009) finds that the writers of dentistry texts in her study drew on the same types of the three steps in commenting on results moves identified in applied linguistics—namely, explaining results, comparing results to previous research, and evaluating results. However, Basturkmen (2012) observes that these three steps of commenting moves were employed in an almost equally percentage in the dentistry texts compared to the applied linguistics texts (Basturkmen, 2009).

Although some studies have identified the schematic structure of RAs written by Arab writers, their focus was mainly on the introduction section in Arabic (Al-Qahtani, 2006; Alharbi, in press; Fakhri, 2004, 2009). It appears that no research has been published comparing the schematic structure of English discussion sections written by Arab writers in local journals with a representative sample of discussion sections in international journals. In addition, only a limited number of studies have explored the difficulties in writing discussions even though many studies (e.g., Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Flowerdew, 1999) have suggested that this section is probably the most difficult to write. In particular, three main difficulties in writing the discussion section have been documented in past studies, including language proficiency difficulties, genre of discussions, and content of discussions (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006). Although the discussions of the language proficiency and the genre issues have been discussed in previous research (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Flowerdew, 1999; Holmes, 1997; Peacock, 2002), it seems that the issue of what content to include in discussions has been under-researched.
Therefore, the current study aims to explore the schematic structure of discussion sections from the field of dentistry from two different publication contexts (i.e., local and international), drawing on relevant existing frameworks of discussion sections provided in Basturkmen (2009, 2012) and Yang and Allison (2003). The study focuses on texts from dentistry because this field is still relatively under-researched (Basturkmen, 2012) and is also of particular interest for pedagogic reasons. Indeed, it is hoped that the obtained results of this study could be employed to raise the non-native English speaking writers’ awareness of the schematic/rhetorical structure that might exist between the discussion sections of local and international journals, thereby increasing their chances to publishing their RAs in prestigious international journals. The remainder of this article is divided into the following parts. The first section provides detailed information on the corpus and analytical procedure adopted for the current study. The second section presents the main findings of the current study. The third sheds light on the discussion of the main findings. The fourth section states the limitations of the study, the implications of the findings, and some suggestions for future research.

**The corpus and analytical procedure**

**The corpus**

The corpus used in the current study comprised 26 discussion sections from RAs appearing in two English-medium journals in the field of dentistry: *British Dental Journal* (BDJ) and *Saudi Dental Journal* (SDJ) (see Appendix [A] for the complete list of RAs). BDJ was chosen as a representative of international journals in the current study because it is one of the leading journals targeting a readership of researchers and practitioners in the field (Basturkmen, 2012). The selection of SDJ was based on a consultation with a professor from the College of Dentistry at King Saud University, who revealed that SDJ is refereed and acknowledged by scholars for its reputation in the respective field. Despite the similarities that might exist between the discussion sections in these two journals and the communicative function they serve, they seem to be different because they are written for different target audiences, as evident from the scope of the topics covered by the two journals. For a valid comparison, the 26 RAs chosen for the current study were written within a one-year time span (i.e., 2015) because research has shown that the schematic/rhetorical structure of RA may change over time (Crookes, 1986).

**Analytical procedure**

The analysis of the 26 RA discussion sections was conducted in several stages. First, the texts were analyzed for some general features, such as their overall organization. This was followed by a detailed examination of RA discussion sections employing Basturkmen’s (2012) framework of moves and steps. Basturkmen’s (2012) framework was chosen because it is the product of an empirical investigation on dentistry RA discussion sections, which is also the focus of the current study. Yang and Allison’s (2003) framework was also drawn on when describing the realizations of some of the moves in the corpus, particularly the deduction from the research move. The final version of the framework used in RA discussion sections in the current study can be seen in Table 1.
Table 1

Final framework of RA discussion sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moves (M)/Steps (S)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(M1) Background information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M2) Reporting results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M3) Summarizing results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M4) Commenting on results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M4-S1) Explaining results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M4-S2) Comparing results with literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M4-S3) Evaluating results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M5) Summarizing the study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M6) Evaluating the study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M6-S1) Indicating limitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M6-S2) Indicating significant/advantage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M6-S3) Evaluating methodology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M7) Deduction from the research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M7-S1) Recommending further research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M7-S2) Drawing pedagogic implications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M7-S3) Implications for clinical practice or policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth mentioning here that, after analyzing the texts, it was essential to involve a second rater for reliability considerations. The second rater, an applied linguistics professor knowledgeable in genre analysis, reanalyzed 50% of the corpus. After the second rater finished coding the sets of texts, we discussed our analyses and debated the disagreements that occurred between us. The second rater mostly agreed with me regarding the assignment of moves; however, the main point of disagreement between the second rater and me was in a very limited number of cases where a sentence contained two moves, as shown in Example (1).

Example (1)  In conclusion, individuals with high levels of dental fear referred for CBT have good outcomes in terms of receiving dental care without the need for sedation. A minority have coexisting psychological problems which should be considered when managing this patient group.

While the researcher assigned the whole segment of text in Example (1) to summarizing the study (M5), the second rater assigned the last part (i.e., “which should be considered when managing this patient group”) to implications for clinical practice or policy (M7-S3). After our discussions regarding how to resolve this disagreement in the assignment of the moves/steps, we both agreed to assign the whole text segment to summarizing the study (M5). The decision reached was based on the idea that, although there were two moves/steps representing two different moves (M5 and M7), the former move appeared to be more salient than the latter; therefore, this segment ought to be assigned to summarizing the study (M5). To sum up, what emerged from our discussions regarding such disagreements was that, when there is more than one move/step, the relevant code to be assigned is the one that seems most salient (Hirano, 2009;
Ozturk, 2007). It should be noted that, as the second rater and the researcher were not members of the discipline under focus, we also consulted a professor from this field to obtain his ‘emic’ accounts (Fetterman, 1998) regarding our analyses of the texts. We used a simple percentage agreement to calculate the inter-rater reliability (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The total percentage of agreements between me and the second rater for all of the texts analyzed exceeded 95%, which is acceptable in qualitative research (e.g., Mackey & Gass, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The analysis was mainly qualitative, but some quantification was used to support observations. It was also agreed that, if a particular move or a representative step used to realize the move occurred in every RA discussion section, this move is regarded as obligatory; if a move occurred in fewer than seven RAs, the move is considered optional, whereas if it occurs in seven to 12 RAs, the move is considered conventional. For the purpose of identification, the RA discussion sections from BDJ were codified as BDJ1–BDJ13 whereas those from SDJ were codified as SDJ1–SDJ13.

Results

This section presents the findings of the analysis of the RA discussion sections terms of the moves and the steps used to realize some of the moves. Some typical examples of the moves and the steps from the texts analyzed will also be provided in this section. Table 2 provides the number of instances of moves (M) and steps (S) in each RA discussion section in BDJ and SDJ, and Table 3 shows the frequency of moves and steps found in the RA discussion sections analyzed in the current study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M1</th>
<th>M2</th>
<th>M3</th>
<th>M4</th>
<th>M5</th>
<th>M6</th>
<th>M7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BDJ1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDJ2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDJ3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDJ4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDJ5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDJ6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDJ7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDJ8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDJ9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDJ10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDJ11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDJ12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDJ13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDJ1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDJ2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDJ3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDJ4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDJ5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDJ6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDJ7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDJ8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDJ9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schematic Structure of Discussion of Results Sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDJ10</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SDJ11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDJ12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDJ13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
Frequency of moves and steps found in two sets of texts analyzed in the current study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moves (M)/Steps (S)</th>
<th>BDJ</th>
<th>SDJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(M1) Background information</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M2) Reporting results</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M3) Summarizing results</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M4) Commenting on results</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M4-S1) Explaining results</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M4-S2) Comparing results with literature</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M4-S3) Evaluating results</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M5) Summarizing the study</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M6) Evaluating the study</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M6-S1) Indicating limitation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M6-S2) Indicating significant/advantage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M6-S3) Evaluating methodology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M7) Deduction from the research</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M7-S1) Recommending further research</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M7-S2) Drawing pedagogic implications</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M7-S3) Implications for clinical practice or policy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As evident in Table 2, M1, which prepares the readers for the report or discussion of the findings [Example (2)], is a conventional move in the sub-corpora. This move was employed in all texts analyzed except in two texts from BDJ and one text from SDJ. M2, which is used to present the results of the study [Example (3)], is an obligatory move as it occurred in each RA discussion section of both sets of texts examined. As for M3, whose function is to sum up of the results of the study [Example (4)], it is an optional as it occurred in only three texts in the two sub-corpora.

Example (2)  The present study provides information about the prevalence and severity of TMDs, based on the FAI, in male university students of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia… (SDJ2)

Example (3)  The results from this study showed that only 39% of digital radiographs were judged to be of the correct density or contrast; 36% were too light and 25% were too dark… (BDJ13)

Example (4)  Overall, the findings of our study tend to indicate that repair of failing restorations, except in cases where failure is due to deep recurrent caries, would be preferential to the replacement of the entire restoration… (BDJ2)

M4 functions principally to establish the meaning and significance of the results of the study in relation to the relevant field. M4 is an obligatory move in the RA discussion sections in the two sets of texts, as shown in Table 2. For the three steps of M4 (i.e., M4-S1, M4-S2, and M4-S3) through which the results of the study are commented, the analysis shows some variation...
regarding the status of these three steps in terms of being obligatory, conventional, or optional. First, M4-S1 is an obligatory step in both sets of texts. M4-S1 is where the RA writers explain their results by making claims or generalizations based on the findings of the study by providing the readers with further explanation or giving the reasons for the observed differences in findings or expected outcomes. To explain their results, writers may use some words indicating either certainty or tentativeness, such as seem, suggest, indicate, and appear; modal verbs such as may, might, would, and could; or phrases such as possible explanation for, it is possible, and may be explained by [Example (5) and Example (6)].

Example (5) These results suggest that the three groups agree on the diagnosis of the malocclusion, but the approach to proper orthodontic treatment seems to be unclear for the pediatric dentists and the general practitioners…(SDJ11)

Example (6) The inhibition in tooth movement may be explained by the ability of strontium to increase osteoblast replication, osteoblast differentiation and bone matrix synthesis and mineralization…(SDJ10)

M4-S2 is conventional step in both sets of texts. M4-S2 allows the writers to compare their study’s findings with those of previous works [Example (7)]. Some distinct linguistic features were used to realize this step, particularly in the forms of “be” plus some adjectives (e.g., be consistent with, be similar to) or certain words or phrases such as agree with, stands in contrast, and lends support to those of. Noticeably, these linguistic signals coexisted with citations.

Example (7) The absence of a gender-based difference in the prevalence of dental anomalies in the present study is in agreement with the findings of others (Ranta, 1983, 1986; Shapira et al., 1999; Ribeiro et al., 2003)…. (SDJ8)

M4-S3 allows the writers to evaluate their results by stating the strengths and weaknesses of the results [Example (8)]. The analysis showed that M4-S3 is optional as this step occurred in only two texts in the BDJ group and none in the SDJ group, as shown in Table 2.

Example (8) …, indicating that our results were statistically reliable. (BDJ5)

M5, which functions to provide the readers with the main findings of the research study, is an optional move in the two groups of texts examined. This move was employed in only one and two texts in BDJ and SDJ, respectively. This move is similar to M3; however, some differences were observed. The major difference is that summary or conclusive words or phrases, such as in sum and in conclusion, were commonly followed by particular statements related to overall results [Example (9)], while those in M3 were followed by specific results.

Example (9) In conclusion, individuals with high levels of dental fear referred for CBT have good outcomes in terms of receiving dental care without the need for sedation. A minority have coexisting psychological problems which should be considered when managing this patient group. (BDJ6)
Writers employ M6 to evaluate the overall study by pointing out the limitations, indicating the contributions or evaluating the methodology. M6 is realized via three steps: M6-S1, M6-S2, and M6-S3. First, M6-S1, whose main objective is to describe the limitations of the research being conducted [Example (10)], was found to be an optional and conventional step in the BDJ and SDJ, respectively, as shown in Table 2. As for M6-S2, which allows writers to point out the strengths of the study that may be significant for applications or implications, the analysis demonstrated that this step was not utilized in both sets of texts examined in the current study. M6-S3, which is used to comment on the strengths or weaknesses of the research methodology [Example (11)], is an optional step in both sub-corpora.

Example (10)  The study limitation includes the limited number of patients as we included only the patients treated by the author team…. (SDJ6)
Example (11)  The strengths of the present study include its large sample size and reasonable response rate…. (SDJ4)

In M7, writers draw inference about the results by proposing areas for further research, drawing pedagogical implications, or drawing implications for clinical practice or policy. M7 is actualized by three steps: M7-S1, M7-S2, and M7-S3. The principal function of M7-S1 is to state some possible directions for future research [Example (12)]. M7-S1 was found to be an optional step in the BDJ set and a conventional step in the SDJ group. Meanwhile, M7-S3, which allows writers to indicate necessary changes for clinical practices or policies [Example (13)], was a conventional step in the BDJ set and an optional step in the SDJ group.

Example (12)  Further research to explore the ability of DH-Ts to manage benign oral lesions is warranted... (BDJ3)
Example (13)  Therefore, clinicians should effectively utilize the biomechanical considerations that influence denture stability, such as muscle tonus, neuromuscular coordination, and tongue, cheek, lip, and jaw to fabricate conventional complete dentures (Chaytor, 2004)… (SDJ9)

M7-S2, which allows writers to state the pedagogical significance of the study [Example (14)], was an optional step in the two sets of texts.

Example (14)  These findings can also serve to guide the design of course content for the proposed master’s degree program, whereby course objectives will be focused in areas where competency levels are lower and importance is ranked higher. (SDJ 4)

Discussion
The current study examined the schematic structure of discussion sections of English dentistry RAs published in two different research communities (i.e., international and local journals), utilizing relevant existing analytical frameworks (Basturkmen, 2009, 2012; Yang & Allison, 2003). The analysis of data revealed that the writers of the two sets of texts tended to draw on the same types of rhetorical moves, but they also employed a few steps to actualize the moves somewhat differently.
The analysis of both groups of texts indicated that commenting on results (M4) and reporting results (M2) are obligatory moves in both sub-corpora analyzed. It is not surprising that M4 is the most repeatedly employed move in the RA discussion sections from the field of dentistry because commenting on the results by explaining, evaluating, or comparing the results with relevant literature is a key communicative function of the RA discussion section (Basturkmen, 2009). This finding lends support to those observed in earlier genre-based studies in that M4 was reported to occur frequently in RA discussions of result sections in different disciplinary areas (e.g., Basturkmen, 2012: dentistry; Kanoksilapatham, 2005: biochemistry; Yang & Allison, 2003: applied linguistics). Meanwhile, it was also expected that M2 would be the second most commonly used move in both groups of texts due to the fact that M4 never appears by itself, but always in conjunction with another occurrence of M2. That is, the result being reported in the discussion section is more likely to be commented upon. Indeed, Basturkmen (2012) observed that repeated sequences of M2 and M4 (result–comment sequences) constituted a major structural pattern in the discussions of result sections in the English dentistry RA. This finding also corroborates previous studies indicating the cyclical nature of components in RA discussions of result sections in different disciplinary areas (e.g., Basturkmen, 2009, 2012; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Kanoksilapatham, 2003; Peacock, 2002; Swales, 1990). The higher frequency of reporting results (M2) in the texts examined and the rare appearance of summarizing results (M3) suggest that the writers of both sets of texts tended to provide individual results or linked results and comment on them alternatively instead of summarizing results and commenting on them, suggesting that this practice could be seen as a disciplinary tendency in the field of dentistry (Basturkmen, 2012).

In addition, the analysis of data has shown that the remaining five moves (M1, M3, M5, M6, and M7) are less common in the two sets of texts, which is consistent with other genre-based studies showing a low occurrence of these moves in the discussion sections (e.g., Basturkmen, 2012; Yang & Allison, 2003). Furthermore, the RA discussions of results sections in dentistry generally opened with M1 and closed with M7. Similar findings were reported in past studies in that discussions of results sections in dentistry tended to generally open with M1 and close with M7 (Basturkmen, 2012), distinguishing these texts from those in social sciences, which generally opened with statements of results (Holmes, 1997).

Some variation was observed between the two groups, as the analysis of data showed. First, although background information (M1) was found to be conventional in both sub-corpora, this move was more common in the BDJ sub-set (28 instances versus 18 instances in the BDJ and SDJ group, respectively). This move could be utilized by the BDJ group writers as a rhetorical strategy functioning as promotion. A similar finding was reported in Basturkmen (2012). This promotional function could also explain the far more common use of comparing results with literature (M4-S2) in the SDJ. The much higher frequency of M4-S2 in the SDJ group texts may be used those writers to show their ability to situate their studies within the existing body of literature in their discipline. Thus, comparing their results could be seen as a promotional function utilized by SDJ writers to highlight the importance of their findings (cf. Hyland, 2002).

Second, the analysis of data indicated that evaluating the study (M6) was an optional move in the BDJ sub-group and conventional in the SDJ set. This variation between the two sub-
sets can be explained with reference to the step-level analysis. Although there is no apparent difference between the two sub-sets of texts analyzed in terms of employing M6-S2 and M6-S3 to actualize M6, M6-S1 (indicating limitation) is used differently in the two sub-corpora, with almost twice as many occurrences of M6-S1 found in SDJ than BDJ, which may account for the variation between the two sets of texts in terms of the employment of M6. In addition, this variation in the use of M6-S1 could also explain the greater number of uses of M7-S1 in the SDJ group. It seems that the writers of these texts first indicate the limitations of their studies; thus, they may think that it is appropriate to propose possible future research directions based on the limitations of their studies. On the other hand, the BDJ writers employed M7-S3 in their texts more than their SDJ counterparts did (15 instances versus 4 instances, respectively), suggesting that the writers of each set of texts in the current study targeted a particular readership of researchers or practitioners in the discipline. It seems that BDJ writers are interested in providing practical implications for clinical practice or policy based on their research findings while their SDJ counterparts are more concerned with recommending possible areas for further research. As for M7-S2, although there are more occurrences of this step in the SDJ sub-set, more than half of these occurrences were used in one RA, suggesting that this variation is not confined to the SDJ texts but may be related to individual writer preferences/idiosyncrasies or to the nature of the topic being discussed.

Conclusion

The current study examined the schematic structure of the English discussion of results sections in international and local journals in the field of dentistry. Overall, the findings indicated that the writers of both groups of texts analyzed tended to draw on similar moves relevant to achieving the communicative function of this RA rhetorical section in the field of dentistry, albeit with a few minor variations between the two sets of texts. The findings suggest that disciplinary practices might override cultural preferences with regard to writing the discussion of the results section in this disciplinary field. The tendency to similarly structure the discussion sections in the two sub-corpora could be the influence of the writers’ educational backgrounds (Al-Qahtani, 2006). In other words, it seems that the SDJ group writers may be aware of the conventions set by the discourse community as a result of obtaining their doctoral degrees from Western universities. The findings of the current study may be beneficial for non-native-English-speaking writers who are increasingly pressured to publish in international journals in the field of dentistry. These writers may find the findings of this study helpful for sensitizing them to the rhetorical features of the RA discussions of results sections. Understanding the rhetorical structures of the different parts of RAs will enable novice writers to organize their RAs in a form that leads to an increased chance for their RAs to be accepted for publication in prestigious international journals in their respective fields. It is evident that the texts collected for analyses in this exploratory study were still insufficient to establish the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future research can use a larger corpus of comparing the discussion sections from this field. The current study focused on the schematic structure of the discussions of results sections in the field of dentistry; therefore, further research could be directed to investigate other schematic sections of RAs in this field (e.g., introduction, conclusion) in order to assess the influence of disciplinary practices and the cultural interventions when writing these RA sub-genres.
Acknowledgment
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Appendix [A]

**Articles from the British Dental Journal**


Therapy at One UK Specialist Unit for Dental Phobia and Outcomes of Treatment. *British Dental Journal*, 219, 501-506


**Articles from the Saudi Dental Journal**


The Relationship between Learners’ Affective Variables and Second Language Achievement

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Abstract
This study examines five affective variables: motivation, attitudes, anxiety, self-esteem and autonomy, with the aim of establishing their effect, together and individually, on learners’ L2 achievement. Data were collected from Saudi university students learning English as a second/foreign language as part of their degree. Data collection was conducted, via a questionnaire and a language test, in two waves – approximately three months apart (N=274 at Time 1, and N=252 at Time 2). Descriptive and inferential analyses of the data confirmed the importance of affect in relation to L2 acquisition: the five affective variables together accounted for between 85% and 91% of the L2 performance variance in our sample. Individually, each of the five variables was found to make a unique contribution to L2 performance, but among them motivation emerged as by far the strongest predictor of L2 achievement; by comparison the effects of the other four on achievement can be described as marginal. This outcome constitutes compelling evidence of the critical role that motivation plays with respect to L2 acquisition generally and achievement more specifically. The study’s findings hold a range of potentially important implications for L2 learning and teaching practices. In light of these findings, EFL teachers are in a strong position to influence the operation of the affective factors by consolidating learners’ autonomy and self-esteem, reducing anxiety, promoting positive attitudes and enhancing learners’ motivation.

Key terms: affect, motivation, attitudes, anxiety, self-esteem, autonomy, EFL teaching/learning
Introduction
It is nowadays widely recognized that the learning of a foreign/second language (L2), especially in adulthood, is a rather complex process involving the interplay of a broad range of biological, cognitive, psychological/affective and environmental variables (Norris & Ortega, 2003), and that they all contribute—to one extent or another—to its product, i.e., the emerging target language (TL) competence.

The role of affect in L2 acquisition is generally acknowledged by most people working in this field. As Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, p. 128) point out, the complexity of the mental operations involved in learning and using an L2 can pose severe challenges to learners’ self-concepts and can lead “to reticence, self-consciousness, fear, or even panic”. They further claim that few other cognitive domains implicate learners’ self-concepts to the same extent.

That said, the magnitude of the emotional response that engaging in L2 learning quite commonly induces in adult L2 learners may not always be truly appreciated. This emotional response, according to Cohen and Norst (1989, p. 61), is “quite unexpected in its intensity and vehemence” and, in addition to apprehension and anxiety, it also often involves embarrassment, resentment, frustration, depression, a sense of inadequacy, a sense of inferiority, loss of control, loss of independence and self-esteem: overall a deeply traumatic experience.(1)

It seems inconceivable that an experience of such nature would not seriously affect learners’ psychological/emotive state of mind, including their attitudes, motivation, self-esteem, self-confidence, autonomy/self-sufficiency, etc., and—by extension—learners’ capacity to perform. This underscores the need for (more) substantive research examining the nature of these variables and their relation to L2 achievement.

The study reported here was specifically set out to examine a group of psychological variables, including attitudes, motivation, anxiety, learner autonomy and self-esteem, and to establish their link to L2 achievement. We have called these “affective variables”, with the proviso that the term ‘affective’ has been used somewhat loosely here as a convenient label for a group of factors closely related to the learner’s self, even though some of these may not strictly be regarded as emotive/affective in the same way as others. It is also important to acknowledge that different theories may not conceptualise these variables in absolutely the same—as discussed a little further down, this is certainly true of Gardner’s Socio-Educational Model which treats (some) attitudes as a component of motivation. The study reported here has not followed a particular theoretical framework, nor has it attempted to provide justification for one theory or another: it has been driven by purely empirical considerations.

Attitudes
Ajzen (1989, p. 241) defines attitude as “an individual’s disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event, or any other discriminable aspect of the individual’s world.” L2 attitudes include attitudes towards the target language (TL), the TL community, the TL culture, the social values associated with TL competence, as well as evaluations of other attitudinal objects, such as teachers, curriculum, and teaching methods (Gardner, 2001); the latter are also commonly referred to as attitudes to the learning situation.
The role that L2 attitudes play in the process of L2 acquisition has been researched quite extensively (e.g., Alrahaili, 2014; Dörnyei, 1990, 1994, 2005; Gardner, 1985, 2001, 2010; Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Yashima, 2002, among many others), and there is a general consensus that attitudes influence L2 achievement, albeit indirectly—via motivation (Gardner, 2010). In Gardner’s Socio-Educational Model, attitudes to the TL and the TL speakers are in fact one of the components of motivation. Even though Dörnyei’s Motivational Self System theory conceptualises motivation differently, he also recognises the important relationship between attitudes and motivation. As Dörnyei (2010, p. 79) puts it, “it is difficult to imagine that we can have a vivid Ideal L2 Self if the L2 is spoken by a community that we despise.”

Positive attitudes to the TL and its speakers, as well as positive attitudes to the learning situation, have consistently been found to be related to higher L2 achievement (Alrahaili, 2014; Gardner, 1968, 2001, 2010; Morey, 1971).

**Motivation**

Historically, the study of L2 motivation can be traced back to Gardner’s research in the late 1950s and early 1960s in Canada. In Gardner’s (1985) Socio-Educational Model, motivation is conceptualised as having three components: motivational intensity, desire to learn the TL, and attitudes toward learning the TL. The Model involves another separate attitudinal component—attitudes to the learning situation, which is treated not as a part of motivation, but as one of its antecedents.

Gardner’s influential Socio-Educational Model (and the related integrative/instrumental motivation dichotomy) dominated the field until the early 1990s after which there has been a shift to cognitive-situated and process-oriented approaches to the study of motivation typically drawing on leading motivation theories from the field of psychology, including theories of expectancy-value, attribution, self-efficacy, and self-worth. This shift marked the emergence of Zoltan Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System theory (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009) which seeks to explain L2 motivation by reference to learners’ selves, more specifically via the interplay between the learner’s ‘ideal self’ and their ‘ought-to self’.

It is not among the goals of this paper to critique the major theories of L2 motivation. It is noteworthy though that, regardless of how motivation is conceptualised and construed, no one seems to deny its critical importance in relation to L2 acquisition. According to Gardner (2001 and elsewhere), motivation is the strongest determinant of L2 achievement. Cohen and Dörnyei (2002, p. 172) agree, claiming that “nothing much happens” without motivation.

**Anxiety**

According to one definition, “[a]nxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Spielberger, 1983, p. 1). The study of L2 anxiety is closely associated with the work of Horwitz and her colleagues (e.g., Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986, as well as subsequent work). Following their pioneering work in the 1980s, the role of L2 anxiety in L2 learning has received a substantial amount of attention by L2 researchers. In their seminal work, Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 128) posit the existence of a specific type of anxiety, Foreign Language Anxiety, which is “a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions,
beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. They define it as a *situation-specific anxiety* (rather than as a stable general personality trait) which is “distinguishable from other specific anxieties” (p. 129).

Studies using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (originally devised by Horwitz) and other specific measures of *L2 anxiety* have found a consistent moderate negative correlation between anxiety and *L2 achievement* (commonly measured via final course grades) (e.g., Anyadubalu, 2010; Atasheneh & Izadi, 2012; Batumlu & Erden, 2007; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997; Hewitt & Stephenson 2011; Horwitz, 1991, 2001; Ito, 2008; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a; MacIntyre, Noels, & Clément, 1997; Mahmood & Iqbal, 2010; Pyun, Kim, Cho, & Lee, 2014; Tallon, 2009; Wilson, 2006; Young, 1991). This negative correlation has been found to hold at various instructional levels as well as with different target languages (e.g., Aida, 1994; Alrabai, 2014a; Coulombe, 2000; Djigunovic, 2006; Rodriguez, 1995; Saito & Samimy, 1996).

There is some evidence of a possible reverse relationship between level of L2 proficiency and L2 anxiety: at least one study (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991a) has linked high L2 proficiency to low language anxiety.

**Autonomy**

The other two affective variables considered in this paper, learner *autonomy* and *self-esteem*, have received much more attention outside of the L2 field (e.g., education, psychology). According to Dickinson (1993, p. 330), *autonomy* is “an attitude towards learning in which the learner is prepared to take, or does take, responsibility for his own learning,” while Holec (1985, p. 180) defines *autonomy* as a capacity “to carry out a self-directed learning programme.”

Autonomy is regarded as a very desirable characteristic of learners, because individuals who take ownership of their learning tend to be more focused and more purposeful, and are as a result more effective and more successful learners (Little, 1991, p. 8). Also learners who actively engage in their own learning tend to have a higher motivation and, ultimately, better achievement (Dickinson, 1995). It has been suggested that autonomy and self-determination particularly promote intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

**Self-esteem**

One researcher defines *self-esteem* as “a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that the individual holds towards himself” (Coopersmith, 1967, pp. 4-5), while another describes *self-esteem* as “an organized configuration of perceptions of the self which are admissible to awareness” (Rogers, 1951, p. 136). As with learner *autonomy*, most of what we know in relation to *self-esteem* comes from research in the fields of education and psychology dating back to the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Self-esteem is regarded as a relatively fixed and stable personality trait—one that is generally resistant to change. Self-esteem operates as a strong determinant of behaviour—individuals typically act in accordance with their self-concept (Fitts, 1965; Miskimins, 1973; Rogers, 1951).
Three hierarchically ordered levels of self-esteem are distinguished: *global, specific* and *task* self-esteem. For instance, an individual may have a self-esteem which is specific to L2 acquisition (which could be similar or different to their global self-esteem). A *task* self-esteem would emerge in relation to a specific learning task (doing a grammar exercise, engaging in a communicative task, a language test, etc.).

Simpson and Boyle (1975) report that *self-esteem* is positively related with performance/achievement. In other words, individuals with a high self-esteem are more likely to be high achievers. It is notable though that the hierarchically lower levels of *self-esteem*, i.e., *specific self-esteem* and (especially) *task self-esteem*, are much better predictors of actual performance than *global self-esteem* (see also Heyde, 1977).

The capacity of *self-esteem* to affect performance/achievement may at least in part be explained via its relation to factors affecting academic performance, e.g. attitudes, motivation, morale, class participation, etc. (Fitts, 1972, pp. 36-42). The level of one’s self-esteem may also impact an individual’s processing capacity (Heyde, 1977, p. 227). Generally, an individual with a high self-esteem is “apt to use his intellectual resources more efficiently […]” (Fitts, 1972, p. 43).

**The learner’s identity/self as the nexus of all affective variables**

Few of the sources reviewed here have failed to note how closely interrelated and interdependent the different affective variables are. High *self-esteem* is typically linked to high self-confidence and to low anxiety. Learner beliefs and *attitudes* are found to be strong determinants of learner behaviour, including *autonomy* (Cotterall, 1995). Clement (1980), in fact, defines L2 *anxiety* in terms of how it relates to learners’ *self-esteem* and self-confidence, while Barksdale (1972) propose that *self-esteem* is a precursor of *motivation*. In addition, it is not unreasonable to expect that positive *attitudes*, especially *attitudes to the learning situation*, are linked to low(er) *anxiety*. Also, achieving high learner *autonomy* would be hard or impossible without high *motivation*.

In view of the fact that, individually and together, these variables form a substantial part of the individual’s identity/self (in the sense of Guiora et al., 1972), their close interrelationship should not really come as a surprise. It is not among the goal of this paper to consider in detail issues of language and identity/the self. No one would dispute, however, that attitudes, motivation, anxiety, self-esteem, independence/autonomy are all very important dimensions of the self, all playing an important role in how the individual interacts and engages with the world around him or her.

The recognition that attempting to learn a new language impacts—to one degree or another—the learner’s identity is not new. Over 40 years ago Guiora et al. (1972, p. 422) emphasised that language is an essential part of the self and that “second language learning in all of its dimensions exerts a very specific demand with regard to self-representation. Essentially, to learn a second language is to take on a new identity” (see also Torrey, 1971). We should add that learning a new language may also involve some loss of identity. It is not inconceivable that many of the emotive/affective/attitudinal problems which have been found to occur in L2 learning arise—at least in part—as a consequence of that.
The last two decades have in fact seen a renewed interest in role of the learner’s identity and related attempts to explain various aspects of L2 learning by reference to the learner’s self/identity. Among them most notable are Oyserman’s (2009) identity-based motivation theory, and—perhaps even more so—Dörnyei’s L2 Motivational Self System theory (Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009).

Affect and L2 achievement

As we noted earlier, two of the affective variables examined in the current study, autonomy and self-esteem, have previously received relatively little attention within the L2 domain, especially the latter, and as a result there isn’t much evidence showing the role these two play in relation to L2 achievement. Based on research in related fields (education and psychology, in particular) it seems reasonable to assume that self-esteem and autonomy are positively related to L2 achievement, but this has not been conclusively established for L2 learning. The other three: attitudes, motivation and—to a somewhat lesser extent—L2 anxiety, have been researched quite extensively, but it should be borne in mind that in many instances researchers have sought to establish how these variables interact with other affective variables (e.g., the formative role of attitudes in relation to motivation, or the relationship between motivation and intended learning efforts) rather than try to establish the effect of these variables on L2 achievement. In those instances in which an attempt was made to link an affective variable to achievement, the criterion measure was almost invariably the learners’ course grades. Course grades, however, may not be the most accurate and transparent measure of L2 competence: certainly far less so than a dedicated language test. According to Steinberg and Horwitz (1986), the use of final grades as a measure of L2 achievement can be blamed for the variability of results reported in the anxiety literature.

It is also noteworthy that there has been very little research examining the specific contribution to L2 achievement of each of the affective variables relative to each other. Put differently, while previous research may have established quite conclusively that affective factors do influence both the process of L2 learning and its product, no one seems to have tried to establish which of the affective factors plays the most important role in relation to L2 acquisition and contributes most to L2 achievement. One possible exception is Gardner and Maclntyre’s (1993) study which did examine a group of variables and found anxiety to have the highest level of correlation with achievement. It should be borne in mind, though, that their research was conceived in a completely different way, that it had rather different objectives, and that the set of affective variables examined in their study was different from the one considered here. We should also acknowledge Djigunovic’s (2006) research examining the relationship between several affective factors and the two L2 productive skills (speaking and writing). However, even though her study conceptualised affect as consisting of different components such as motivation, self-esteem, anxiety, etc., it nonetheless treated affect as a single construct and used a single unified index to establish its relation to L2 achievement. In other words, her results are unrevealing with respect to the relative contribution to achievement of individual variables.
The current study: rationale and objectives

The study reported here has been set out to examine the effect of five affective variables—attitudes, motivation, anxiety, self-esteem and autonomy, on L2 achievement as measured with a dedicated L2 achievement test.

Our study has also been designed to measure the individual effects of the five affective variables on L2 achievement, and thus to establish their influence on achievement relative to each other. Put differently, our study has specifically been designed to address the question: Which of the five affective variables contributes to L2 achievement most?

Method

Design

The study took place in Saudi Arabia during the 2014/15 autumn/winter semester of the Saudi academic year. Three research sites were used: King Khalid University, King Abdulaziz University, and King Saud University. To address our project’s objectives, our study collected two sets of data: 1) questionnaire data relating to the 5 affective variables targeted in this study, and 2) L2 proficiency data obtained via an L2 achievement test. Two data collections were conducted, nearly three months apart: one at the start of the semester (Time 1, or T1) and another at the end of the semester (Time 2, or T2). Once collected, the two sets of data were correlated in order to establish the relationships between individual affective variables and L2 achievement. The study’s design can be conceptualised graphically as in Figure 1.

![Figure 1](image-url)

Figure 1. Affective variables and L2 achievement (measured on two sequential waves).

The study’s design enabled us to examine:
(a) the relative stability of the individual affective factors [T1 affective variables vs. T2 affective variables];
(b) the extent to which individual affective variables correlate with EFL achievement [T1 affective variables vs. T1 L2 achievement; T2 affective variables vs. T2 L2 achievement];
(c) the capacity of individual affective variables to predict L2 achievement overtime [T1 affective variables vs. T2 L2 achievement].

Participants
Participants were male university students from the three Saudi universities above learning English as a foreign language (EFL) as part of their undergraduate program. All were Saudi citizens speaking Arabic as their first language. As Table 1 shows, our participants represented a variety of age groups, EFL learning experiences, and social and regional backgrounds. The overall number of participating students involved in the first data collection (T1) was 274. Due to attrition, the number of students who took part in the second data collection (T2) was a bit smaller: 252; 22 of the T1 students did not take part in, or were excluded from, the second data collection due to a variety of reasons (e.g., dropping the course, being absent, giving invalid responses, etc.). The size of our participant sample seems to be adequate to the purposes of a research like ours.(3)

Table 1
Social Demographic Information for the Participating EFL Learners at T1 and T2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic variable</th>
<th>T1 (N = 274)</th>
<th>T2 (N = 252)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FQ</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-18 years old</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-22 years old</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>84.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-25 years old</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 25 years old</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL learning experience</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>64.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>28.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 15 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of origin</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital city</td>
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<td>31.39</td>
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The Relationship between Learners’ Affective Variables

<table>
<thead>
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<th>FQ</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>FQ</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Western</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>36.13</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>34.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. FQ = frequency, % = percentage.*

**Instruments**

Two instruments were deployed in this research. The first was a dedicated questionnaire containing 58 items designed to collect data in relation to the five affective variables targeted in the current study, as follows:

Motivation: Part A (Motivational Intensity, 5 items) and Part C (Intrinsic Motivation, 7 items), 12 items altogether

Attitudes: Part D (Attitudes towards the English course, 7 items) and Part E (Attitudes towards the English teacher, 14 items), 21 items altogether

Self-Esteem: Part B, 6 items (3)

Learner autonomy: Part F, 9 items

Learner anxiety: Part G, 10 items

A five-point Likert scale ranging from Very Untrue to Very True was used.

Numerous sources were drawn upon for the construction of this instrument (including Al-Shammary, 1984; Horwitz et al., 1986; Pintrich & Groot, 1990; Clément et al., 1994; Dörnyei, 1994; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Schmidt et al., 1996; Gardner et al., 1997; Clément & Baker, 2001; AlMaiman, 2005; Guilloteaux, 2007; and Alrabai, 2011, 2014b). To avoid the risk that limited English competence would compromise some participants’ capacity to respond to all questionnaire items, the questionnaire was administered in Arabic, the learners’ native language. The English version of this instrument can be viewed in the Appendix at the end of this paper.

Data in relation to participants’ level of L2 proficiency were collected via standardised EFL achievement tests routinely administered at each of the three institutions involved in the current research. These were mid-term syllabus-based progress tests. Readers should bear in mind that while the English syllabi across the three institutions are not identical, they are nevertheless very similar to each other.

Each institution designs and administers its own tests, and each of these tests is carefully moderated, piloted before administration, and tested for reliability (typically yielding high reliability coefficients). That said, the tests which were used as a source of our L2 proficiency data were quite similar in content and practically identical in structure across the three universities. Each test targeted the same types of language skills: listening, reading, writing and grammar. With the exception of writing, which involved a single writing task (evaluated holistically), these were discrete item multiple-choice tests marked objectively. In addition to this, the tests were administered in essentially the same fashion across the three institutions: two blocks of 90 min. each: one testing reading and listening, and the second testing grammar and writing, with a 15-min. break in the middle. The maximum score that students could achieve in these tests (at all three institutions) was 25.
Data collection and procedures

The affective variables questionnaire was administered twice: at the beginning (T1) and end (T2) of the semester, during class time. For reasons of anonymity and confidentiality teachers were asked to remain outside of the classroom during the questionnaire’s administration. Participants took between 30 and 40 minutes to complete the entire questionnaire in one sitting.

The achievement tests were also conducted twice: at the beginning (T1) and end (T2) of the semester. They were conducted either a day before or a day after the administration of the questionnaire. Participants completed the two tests routinely in class, as part of their program.

Data analyses

The collected data were subjected to preliminary statistical analyses, such as scale reliability analysis with Cronbach’s alpha as an indicator of internal consistency, item analysis, and normality tests. The latter showed all data to be reliable and normally distributed on all constructs. As can be seen in Table 2, the questionnaire was found to have a reliability index of .91 at T1 and .88 at T2. These values are higher than what Dörnyei (2001a, p. 204) has proposed as the desirable level for internal consistency of attitudinal scales (.80).

Table 2

Cronbach Alphas and Descriptive Statistics for the Affective Variables at T1 and T2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective variables</th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>T2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>α</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. α = Cronbach alpha coefficient, SD= standard deviation.

Frequency counts and measures of central tendency were applied to the L2 proficiency data derived via the two EFL tests to determine our participants’ EFL competence. Multiple regression analyses were performed to establish the capacity of the affective variables under consideration to predict learner achievement. This procedure was further used to identify which of these variables had the greatest impact on learners’ achievement.
Results

L2 achievement

We start with a summary of our participants’ achievement, based on the analysis of the results of the two EFL achievement tests.

Table 3

Learners’ L2 Achievement Levels at T1 (N = 274) and T2 (N = 252)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL</th>
<th>TIME 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>TIME 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FQ</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>FQ</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very high (90-100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (80-90%)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.38%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate (70-80%)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>19.71%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (60-70%)</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>47.08%</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>47.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very low (below 60%)</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>28.83%</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>25.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. FQ = frequency, % = percentage.

Perhaps the most notable aspect of the data presented in Table 3 above is the remarkable consistency of the levels across the two testing events. This finding seems to provide further evidence of the reliability of the tests used as instruments in this study. Other than that, the data in Table 3 show a relatively low level of achievement, with nearly 70% of learners falling within the low-to-moderate range. Also notable is the complete lack of very high achievers, i.e. not a single participant scored within the 90-100% range.

Relationships among affective variables

Inferential statistical analyses were used to examine the relationships among the five affective variables considered in this study. A summary of our findings is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Relationships among the Affective Variables at T1 and T2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective variables</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>T2</td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>T2</td>
<td>T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.533**</td>
<td>.332**</td>
<td>-.255**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are several aspects of the data presented in Table 4 which deserve to be noted. One is that statistically significant correlations (at the 0.01 and 0.05 level) were found, both at T1 and T2, among all of the affective variables examined in this study. Another is in relation to anxiety: in line with expectations, anxiety was found to be negatively correlated with the other affective variables.

It is also interesting to see that both at T1 and T2 the strongest correlation held between motivation and self-esteem ($r = .589$ and $r = .558$, respectively). The anxiety variable scored the weakest correlation with autonomy at T1 ($r = -.136$) and with attitudes at T2 ($r = -.167$). Overall, anxiety’s correlation values were noticeably lower than any of the other affective variables. The 2-wave design of our data collection has provided a valuable longitudinal dimension to our study: one which we very rarely find in other related research. We ran a series of t-tests to establish T1-T2 correlations for the individual variables (e.g., T1 motivation vs. T2 motivation) and thus examine their relative stability over time.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics and t-test Results for the Affective Variables over Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective variables</th>
<th>T1 M</th>
<th>T1 SD</th>
<th>T2 M</th>
<th>T2 SD</th>
<th>$r$</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.405**</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>.064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>.254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>.984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>-.536</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>.593</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data in Table 5 suggest that, as far as our participant sample is concerned, the only truly stable and durable factor among the five variables is motivation. The other four seem to be of more transient nature.

**Relationships between the affective variables and L2 achievement**

We next examined the extent to which the five affective variables considered in this study are linked to L2 achievement. A summary of our findings is presented in the Table 6.

Table 6  
**Correlations between the Affective Variables and L2 Achievement at T1 and T2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective variables</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>T2</td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>T2</td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>.820**</td>
<td>.775**</td>
<td>.755**</td>
<td>.612**</td>
<td>-.393**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.461**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.636**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.532**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.753**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.706**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.** **p < 0.01.

As Table 6 shows, significant correlations were established between each of the five affective variables and L2 achievement—both at T1 and T2. Unsurprisingly, anxiety was again found to be negatively correlated with achievement. It is noteworthy that by far the strongest correlations held between motivation and L2 achievement. Anxiety again came a distant last in terms of the strength of its correlations with achievement.

The longitudinal dimension of our study has also enabled us to examine the relationships between the five affective variables and L2 achievement over time. Table 7 presents the correlation values of T1 affective variables and T2 achievement.

Table 7  
**Longitudinal Correlations between T1 Affective Variables and T2 Achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective variables T1</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achievement T2</td>
<td>.388**</td>
<td>.205**</td>
<td>-.046</td>
<td>.189**</td>
<td>.101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.** **p < 0.01.

It is interesting to note that, while cross-sectionally all of the five affective variables were found to have significant correlations with achievement, longitudinally the effects of anxiety and self-esteem on achievement seem to fade away—below statistical significance. The reader will also note that motivation again has by far the strongest correlation with achievement.
Affective variables as predictors of L2 achievement

Some of our most interesting findings come from the multiple mediation regression analyses that we conducted on our data to examine the affective variables’ capacity to predict achievement. We found that the independent variables (the affective factors) statistically significantly predicted the dependent variable (i.e., learners’ achievement) both at T1 and T2: \( F(5, 268) = 540, p < .001; \) and \( F(5, 246) = 270, p < .001, \) respectively. A summary of our findings is presented in Table 8.

Table 8
Multiple Regression Coefficients for the Affective Variables as Predictors of Learners’ Achievement at T1 and T2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective variables</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( B ) T1</th>
<th>( B ) T2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>.673 (.673^)</td>
<td>.385 (.094*)</td>
<td>.425 (.115*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>.814 (.141^)</td>
<td>.314 (.100*)</td>
<td>.296 (.124*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>.859 (.045^)</td>
<td>-.148 (.089*)</td>
<td>-.162 (.134*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>.890 (.031^)</td>
<td>.218 (.085*)</td>
<td>.184 (110*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>.910 (.02^)</td>
<td>.213 (.087*)</td>
<td>.230 (118*)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \( R^2 \) = correlation coefficient squared, \(^\) = the value of the variable’s individual \( R^2 \), \( B \) = regression coefficients, * = standard error of unstandardized coefficient, all ps = .000.

These results are quite remarkable in a number of ways. Perhaps the most remarkable among them is the magnitude of the affective variables’ effect on achievement: at T1 the five affective variables together explained 91% of the variance in learner achievement, while at T2 that was nearly 85%. The other really striking aspect of these results is the immensely superior predictive power of motivation relative to that of the other four factors: motivation alone explains 67% (T1) and 60% (T2) of the variance in learner achievement. The relative contribution of attitudes, anxiety, autonomy, and self-esteem to achievement, although statistically significant, is quite small.

Again we took advantage of the longitudinal dimension of the study’s design to explore the affective variables’ capacity to predict achievement over time (see Table 9).

Table 9
Multiple Regression Coefficients for the T1 Affective Variables as Predictors of Learners’ Achievement at T2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective variables</th>
<th>( R^2 )</th>
<th>( B ) T1</th>
<th>( B ) T2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>.600 (.600^)</td>
<td>.425 (.115*)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes</td>
<td>.742 (.142^)</td>
<td>.296 (.124*)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>.791 (.049^)</td>
<td>-.162 (.134*)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>.823 (.032^)</td>
<td>.184 (110*)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>.846 (.023^)</td>
<td>.230 (118*)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Relationship between Learners’ Affective Variables  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$B$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation T1</td>
<td>.151 (.151^)</td>
<td>.388 (.237*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem T1</td>
<td>.167 (.016^)</td>
<td>-.150 (.238*)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. $R^2$ = correlation coefficient squared, ^ = the value of the variable’s individual $R^2$, $B$ = regression coefficients, * = standard error of unstandardized coefficient, $ps = .05$.

As can be seen in Table 9, a model with only learners’ T1 motivation and T1 self-esteem as predictors of learners’ T2 achievement was found to be significant ($F (5, 246) = 10.13, p < .05$) explaining 17% of the variance in achievement scores, although motivation again claims the “lion’s share” of the two variables’ effect on achievement.

Discussion

A range of potentially very significant findings emerge from the research data we reported in the preceding section. One is in relation to the magnitude of the role that affect plays in L2 acquisition. Our analyses showed that motivation, attitudes, anxiety, self-esteem and autonomy together account for between 85% and 91% of the variance in our participants’ performance on the language tests (which we have used as a measure of L2 achievement). This is a truly remarkable finding underscoring the tremendous importance of affect in relation to the learning of a second language.

Another truly remarkable result is with regard to the magnitude of the role that motivation plays—relative to the other four variables—in L2 acquisition. As we emphasized in the introductory part of the paper, it seems undeniable that motivation is a major factor in the learning of foreign/second languages, perhaps the most determining one (see, e.g., Gardner, 2001). Our results provide compelling evidence in support of such a view, showing that motivation accounts for between 60% and 67% of the variance in achievement in our sample. The critical role of motivation with regard to achievement is further manifested in the extent to which the current study found motivation to be correlated with achievement: by far stronger than any of the other four. Last but not least, among the five affective variables examined here, motivation emerged as the only truly stable and durable factor, further emphasizing its importance to L2 learning.

As regards the other four affective variables, our study did find that each of them made a unique contribution to L2 achievement, but the magnitude of that contribution can at best be described as marginal. Among them anxiety specifically deserves a brief commentary. It has long been treated as a major force in L2 learning (see Horwitz, 2010 and elsewhere, as well as Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993), but our data tell a different story. Our analyses showed anxiety to have the lowest correlations with L2 achievement: twice as low as the correlations between motivation and achievement, and well lower than the rest of the affective variables. It is also worth noting that over time the link between anxiety and achievement disappeared altogether.

Our results confirm the very close interrelationships among the five affective variables. Statistically significant correlations were found between each two of the variables supporting the idea that they are all dimensions of one encompassing construct: the learner’s self. It is perhaps noteworthy that anxiety showed the lowest levels of correlation with the other variables. This
seems to suggest that, by comparison with the other four variables, anxiety is a less prominent part of the self. Such a view is not entirely implausible given that language anxiety is conceptualised as a situation-specific anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986)—i.e., as a form of affect triggered by a specific aspect of the situation, not an inherent durable personality trait (i.e., a component of the self).

Conclusions and implications

The study presented here set out to examine the effects that five affective variables: motivation, attitudes, anxiety, self-esteem and autonomy, have—together and separately—on L2 achievement. Our study has produced some very robust findings emphatically demonstrating the importance of affect, as a composite construct, in relation to the learning of non-primary languages. Our results also confirm that, individually, each of the five variables affects L2 learning and its outcomes, but their “share” is not equal. Among them motivation has emerged as by far the most important one. Our results in fact constitute compelling evidence of the absolutely critical role that motivation plays with respect to L2 acquisition generally and achievement more specifically. By comparison, the individual effects of the other four affective variables can be described as marginal. This appears particularly true of anxiety which our results have shown to have the weakest predictive capacity among them.

There are a few points that the reader should keep in mind when considering these results and their implications. One is that there exist other well-established forces in L2 acquisition—outside of affect, including a range of social, cognitive, environmental and biological factors. The true impact of affect on L2 acquisition can only be established relative to the impact of other, non-affective, variables.

In the second place, most of the data we have presented here are correlational, and as such they do not strictly allow causality inferences—such data can show a strong link between two constructs, but would not have the capacity to reveal much beyond that. Regression analyses data however can be used to infer causality between constructs, and we do have two sets of data (see Tables 8 and 9)—one cross-sectional and one longitudinal—which clearly show the affective variables’ capacity to determine achievement.

In relation to the last point, it is well established that the relationships between the different affective variables and achievement are almost never uni-directional. Take motivation for instance—we know that while motivation does contribute to achievement, (level of) achievement can in its turn affect motivation. The same is likely to occur with the other affective variables—it seems quite reasonable to expect that high achievement will lead to higher self-esteem, lower anxiety, etc. It is necessary acknowledge that the study presented here has strictly been about the effects of the affective variables on achievement, not the other way round.

With that in mind, our findings hold a range of potentially important implications for L2 learning and teaching practices. In the domain of education (and more broadly) it has long been recognised that while classroom learning is sensitive to quite a large number of social, psychological, environmental and pedagogical factors, the teacher is by far the most critical among them—practically everything that the teacher does (or doesn’t do) in the classroom can have a more or less significant impact on the learning process and, by extension, on its outcomes.
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(Dörnyei, 2001b). Teachers are therefore in a particularly strong position to influence the operation of the affective factors. Through carefully planned and executed behaviours in the classroom teachers can consolidate learners’ autonomy and self-esteem, reduce anxiety, promote positive attitudes and enhance motivation. That said, our study’s findings strongly suggest that most (or, perhaps, even all) of teachers’ efforts should be channelled towards enhancing motivation. Given the robust link that our analyses revealed between motivation and achievement, increasing learner motivation can confidently be expected to lead to improved learning outcomes. The latter may seem like a statement of the obvious, but in practical reality not all teachers choose to undertake deliberate actions towards enhancing their students’ motivation, and many of those who do often lack the knowledge of how to achieve it effectively. This leads us to our next and final point. While it is true that motivation has been one of the most profoundly researched issues in the field of L2 acquisition, the bulk of the research effort seems to have been devoted to developing a theory of L2 motivation. It has only been relatively recently that research has taken a more practical classroom-oriented approach to the study of motivation and has focused on examining teacher behaviours in the classroom (motivational strategies, in particular) designed to boost learners’ levels of motivation (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Moskovsky et al., 2013). In terms of its practical value for classroom language education and its outcomes, this is, in our view, a research direction which deserves to be pursued further.

Notes
Note 1. Based on the results from their study, Cohen and Norst (1989, p. 66) suggest that “[t]he loss of control, of self-esteem involved seems to be of a different order than in the case of other fields requiring cognitive and/or performance effort.”
Note 2. Some have disputed the causality of the relationship between anxiety and achievement, suggesting that anxiety is rather the consequence of low achievement, not its cause (Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002; Ganschow et al., 1994; Sparks & Ganschow, 1991, 1995). Sparks and her associates, for instance, have claimed that low language learning ability generates anxiety. MacIntyre (1995b) disagrees, arguing that anxiety can severely impede L2 performance even in individuals whose high L2 competence is established beyond any doubt.
Note 3. According to Dörnyei (2003, p. 74), for studies using multivariate statistical procedures a participant sample of at least 100 subjects is required.
Note 4. Dörnyei (2002, p. 34) recommends (sub)scales containing between 4 and 10 items; anything shorter would significantly diminish the scale’s psychometric reliability.
Note 5. These values indicate that the regression model is a good fit of the data on which the regression analyses were performed.

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conducted and/or supervised a wide range of projects on issues of second language acquisition. He has authored and co-authored a number of publications in this field of study, including in *TESOL Quarterly, Language Learning,* and *The Modern Language Journal.*

**References**


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Appendix: Affective variables questionnaire

The current research is being conducted to examine the role of affective variables (e.g. motivation, anxiety, attitudes, self-esteem, personality, etc.) in relation to learners’ achievement in a second language. In order to achieve the project’s aims, we are going to ask you a number of questions about your experience of learning English language this semester.

Each questionnaire item has the form of a statement or a question followed by five possible answers.

Example:

1) I like watching movies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY UNTRUE</th>
<th>UNTRUE</th>
<th>NEUTRAL</th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>VERY TRUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Please select just one of these answers, and then move onto the next question.

Part A. Motivational intensity

Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327
Thinking of my effort to learn English this semester, ............................................
1. I have been working hard to learn English.
2. I have been spending a lot of time at home working on my English assignments and preparing for the coming lessons.
3. I have been paying close attention to, and actively participating in, the class discussion.
4. I haven’t spent sufficient time working on my English homework.
5. I haven’t been participating enough in discussions that take place in our English class.

Part B. Self-esteem
In English classes this semester, ..............................................
6. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
7. I feel that I am able to do things as well as most other students.
8. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
9. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
10. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
11. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with other students.

Part C. Intrinsic motivation
Thinking of learning English this semester, I feel that..........................
12. I am enjoying learning English.
13. When English classes end, I often wish they would continue.
14. I would study English even if it were not required by this school/university.
15. I would like to continue to learn English even after I leave this school/college.
16. My goal of learning English is far more than just passing exams.
17. Learning English is a boring activity for me.
18. I wouldn’t study English if I didn’t have to.

Part D. Attitudes towards the English course
Thinking of my English course this semester, ..............................
19. I wish we had more English lessons.
20. English is one of my favourite subjects.
21. I enjoy my English lessons because what we do is neither too hard nor too easy.
22. I would rather spend time on subjects other than English this semester.
23. In English lessons, we are learning things that will be useful to me in the future.
24. In English lessons, we are learning things that will be useful to me in my daily life activities.
25. The content of this English course is a burden for me.

Part E. Attitudes towards the English teacher
Thinking of my English teacher this semester, ..............................
26. My English teacher is linguistically competent.
27. My English teacher is insincere.
28. My English teacher is helpful.
29. My English teacher is considerate.
30. My English teacher is approachable.
31. My English teacher appears hesitant and unconfident.
32. The teaching style of my English teacher is unclear and confusing.
33. My English teacher tolerates his students’ mistakes.
34. I rely a lot on my English teacher to do learning tasks.
35. My English teacher criticizes me when I give wrong answers in the classroom.
36. My English teacher encourages and inspires me to give my best efforts to learning.
37. My English teacher believes in my abilities to succeed in this course.
38. My English teacher compliments me when I give a correct answer in the classroom.
39. If I do well in English this semester, it is because of the efforts and the professional teaching style of my English teacher.

Part F. Learner autonomy
In English classes this semester, ..................................
40. I take part in deciding on the content of our English course this semester.
41. I take part in deciding due dates for assignments and exams in our English course this semester.
42. I easily express my own ideas and participate in the discussions in our English class this semester.
43. The ideas and suggestions I offer in English class are usually welcomed by my English teacher.
44. I feel that other students take part in English class discussions much more than me.
45. Most students don’t participate in the discussions that take place in our English class this semester.
46. I usually take part in choosing the activities that we do in English class this semester.
47. I set clear goals for myself for learning English this semester.
48. I set clear strategies for myself for achieving my goals of learning English this semester.

Part G. Learner anxiety
In English classes this semester, .................................
49. I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in English this semester.
50. I am usually at ease (comfortable) during tests in my English language class this semester.
51. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class this semester.
52. I feel worried about the consequences of failing my language class this semester.
53. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class this semester.
54. I feel confident when I speak in English in my language class this semester.
55. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make in class this semester.
56. I can feel my heart pounding when I’m going to be called on in language class.
57. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in any other classes this semester.
58. I am afraid that the other students in the class will laugh at me when I speak in English.
Abstract
The purpose of this study is to examine the acquisition of English articles by Arabic second language (L2) learners of English as a function of different linguistic contexts contrasted based upon two semantic notions: definiteness and specificity. The participants in this study are 30 adult learners of L2 English whose first language (L1) is Arabic. The data for this study consist of the participants’ responses to a forced-choice elicitation task targeting the use of articles in English. The results show that the learners were more accurate in terms of their article usage in definite contexts than in indefinite contexts regardless of specificity. While advanced learners performed native-like and converged to the target system of articles in English in all of the semantic contexts, low proficiency learners and intermediate learners made several errors, the most common of which was article omission in obligatory contexts. Moreover, the results show that the low proficiency learners fluctuated between definiteness and specificity in the two crucial mismatching semantic contexts: [+definite, -specific] and [-definite, +specific], overusing the indefinite article in the former context and overusing the definite article in the latter context. Unlike the low proficiency learners, the intermediate learners did not fluctuate between definiteness and specificity. The study proposes a development model for the acquisition of the English article system by Arabic learners of L2 English incorporating the Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH) and drawing on the available sources of linguistic knowledge in second language acquisition (SLA).

Keywords: Arabic, articles, definiteness, English, fluctuation, specificity
The Acquisition of English Articles by Arabic L2-English learners

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Introduction and Theoretical Background

A great amount of second language acquisition (SLA) research has reported that the acquisition of the English article system (and article systems in other languages) is problematic for learners of English as a second language (L2) or foreign language (FL), especially for those learners whose first language (L1) lacks an article system or determiners (Ionin, Ko, & Wexler, 2004; Avery & Radišić, 2007; Zdorenko & Paradis, 2007, 2008 and 2012; White, 2008; among several others). The problems L2 learners of English have with the use of English articles fall into different linguistic types, demonstrate various error patterns, and come from a variety of sources.

Ionin (2003) and Ionin et al. (2004) report that two types of errors are commonly committed by English language learners and repeatedly documented in SLA research: article omission and article misuse or substitution; the latter is typically characterized by the overuse of the definite article the to incorrectly replace the indefinite article a (in contexts that require the use of the indefinite article).

In their review of the literature on the acquisition of articles in L2 English, Zdorenko and Paradis (2007, 2008) notice that adult L2-English learners omitted articles in both definite and indefinite linguistic contexts (i.e., used bare nouns) and incorrectly substituted one article in the context of another, especially the for a, and that it is not before late stages of acquisition that adult L2-English learners reach native-like performance on articles and determiners in general, if ever. White (2008) report three kinds of problems with the acquisition of articles: dropping articles in obligatory contexts, incorrect substitution of one article for the other, especially the for a, and ‘oversuppliance’ of articles in indefinite plural contexts, where a zero-article (i.e., bare noun) is required.

There is no unanimous agreement as to what causes the difficulty which L2-English learners have with articles (Zdorenko and Paradis, 2007). However, a few accounts have been suggested to explain the source(s) of this difficulty. In their review of the possible accounts for adult second language learners’ problems with the acquisition of articles, Avery and Radišić (2007) group the sources of difficulty into three major areas: L1 influence, Universal Grammar (UG), and L2 influence (or interference). On the other hand, White (2008) attribute the article errors which L2 learners commit to problems with certain linguistic representations, reporting syntactic, phonological, and semantic accounts. The present study is interested in investigating the third account i.e., the semantic mismatch between L1 and L2 in terms of how two notions are encoded: definiteness and specificity.

Two Semantic Notions: Definiteness and Specificity

Ionin et al. (2004) provide informal discourse-related definitions of definiteness and specificity. For them, the semantic feature [+definite] refers to the state of knowledge shared between the speaker and the hearer, whereas the semantic feature [+specific] refers a state of knowledge held only by the speaker. Clearly, both definitions place an emphasis on the uniqueness of the referent. The following informal definitions are quoted from Ionin et al. (2004, p. 5):

1) If a Determiner Phrase (DP) of the form [D NP] is …
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a. [+definite], then the speaker and hearer presuppose the existence of a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP.
b. [+specific], then the speaker intends to refer to a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP and considers this individual to possess some noteworthy property.

In order to illustrate the semantic distinction between definiteness and specificity and to explain how these notions interact with each other, see the following examples from Lyons (1999, p. 167).

2) Joan wants to present the prize to the winner
   a) … but he doesn’t want to receive it from her. (definite, specific)
   b) … so she’ll have to wait around till the race finishes. (definite, non-specific)

3) Peter intends to marry a merchant banker
   a) … even though he doesn’t get on at all with her. (indefinite, specific)
   b) … though he hasn’t met one yet. (indefinite, non-specific)

**The Article Choice Parameter (ACP)**

In order to account for the variability in the acquisition of articles by L2-English learners, Ionin et al. (2004) propose a semantic parameter – the Article Choice Parameter (henceforth ACP) with two settings as in the following formulation (Ionin et al., 2004, p. 12):

4) The Article Choice Parameter (for two-article languages)
   A language that has two articles distinguishes them as follows:
   The Definiteness Setting: Articles are distinguished on the basis of definiteness.
   The Specificity Setting: Articles are distinguished on the basis of specificity.

According to Ionin and colleagues, a language, which has two articles, will have one value or the other: specificity or definiteness. Ionin and colleagues argue that articles are distinguished on the basis of one – and only one – of these two settings. English has only the definiteness setting of the ACP. English uses the article the for definite nouns and the article a for indefinite nouns regardless of specificity. In other words, definiteness functions independently from specificity in English in terms of article choice as the “conditions on specificity can be satisfied, or not satisfied, in both definite and indefinite contexts.” (Ionin et al., 2004, p. 9) The following two examples from Ionin et al. (2004) show a definite specific article (Sentence 5), and a definite non-specific article (Sentence 6).

5) I’d like to talk to the winner of today’s race – she is my best friend!
6) I’d like to talk to the winner of today's race – whoever that is.

As clear from the above two examples, definiteness is the only crucial factor in the article choice in English. Although Sentence (5) and Sentence (6) differ in terms of specificity (being specific and non-specific, respectively), the appropriate article is the same, namely the definite article the.
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The Fluctuation Hypothesis (FH)

The Fluctuation Hypothesis (henceforth FH), as formulated (the concept of ‘fluctuation’ was first proposed in Ionin, 2003) by Ionin et al. (2004), provides an account for acquisition issues and predicts errors in SLA, incorporating the concept of ‘full access to UG’ and the ‘optional adherence to parameter-settings’ (i.e., the fluctuation between two settings of the same parameter at the same time). In its broad formulation, the FH states:

7) The Fluctuation Hypothesis
   a. L2 learners have full access to UG principles and parameter-settings.
   b. L2 learners fluctuate between different parameter-settings until the input leads them to set the parameter to the appropriate value.

   (Ionin et al., 2004, p. 16)

In the context of the acquisition of L2 article system, the FH makes specific predictions to account for the inappropriate (i.e., ungrammatical or non-target) use of articles in L2 (particularly the misuse of articles) taking L1 background into account in its most recent version. The FH for L2 English article choice states, similar to the Full Transfer/Full Access (FT/FA) hypothesis, that L2 learners have full UG access to the two settings of the ACP (definiteness and specificity), and that L2 learners fluctuate between the two settings (hence, they would go back and forth between the use of the and the use of a) until the input (once sufficient) guides them to set this parameter to the target system value (i.e., definiteness for English).

8) The FH for L2 English article choice:
   a. L2 learners have full UG access to the two settings of the Article Choice Parameter in (2).
   b. L2 learners fluctuate between the two settings of the Article Choice Parameter until the input leads them to set this parameter to the appropriate value.

   (Ionin et al., 2004, p. 17)

According to Ionin et al. (2004), there are two possible scenarios in the FH: fluctuation overriding transfer for both [+article] and [-article] L1 L2-English learners regardless of whether their L1s are [+article] or [-article], OR transfer overriding fluctuation only for [+article] L1 English L2 learners. The FH is similar to the FT/FA in that it incorporates the concepts of L1 transfer, full access to UG, and parameter-setting and resetting; however, the FH predicts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Article Grouping by Definiteness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+specific</td>
<td>+definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-specific</td>
<td>+definite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Article Grouping by Specificity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+specific</td>
<td>+definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-specific</td>
<td>+definite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Article grouping by definiteness in languages like English (Table 1) and by specificity in languages like Samoan (Table 2)

(Quoted from Ionin et al. 2004, p. 13)
fluctuation in article choice for early L2 learners, especially when their L1 lacks articles and L2 has them. So, while the FH makes an explicit prediction about the use of articles by [-article] L1 learners (fluctuation in the absence of L1 transfer), it leaves the door open for two possibilities with [+article] L1 learners: L1 transfer or fluctuation between the two UG-instantiated parameter settings.

Ionin et al. (2004) investigated the acquisition of articles by L1 Russian and L1 Korean (both languages are article-less) intermediate and advanced L2 learners of English using a forced-choice elicitation task and a written production task. Ionin and colleagues did not predict L1 transfer since these two languages lack article systems but rather proposed – according to the FH – that both the L1 Russian and L1 Korean L2-English learners had access to both parameter settings: definiteness and specificity. Assuming that the learners did not know which setting is appropriate for English articles, the prediction was that the learners will fluctuate between the two possibilities until the input guides them to the target setting of the ACP (definiteness for English). The results confirmed their prediction of fluctuation, revealing two types of errors: overuse of the article the with indefinites especially in [-definite, +specific] context and overuse of a with defines, especially in [+definite, -specific] context. Ionin et al. (2004) attribute the committed errors – hence the fluctuation – to an occasional (optional) association of the article the with the feature [+specific] instead of the feature [+definite] and the article a with the feature [-specific] rather than the feature [-definite]. Ionin et al. (2004) concluded that errors in article choice in L2 English are not random but rather reflect “L2 learners’ access to the universal semantic distinctions of definiteness and specificity.” (p. 41)

Snape (2005) examined the acquisition of articles by L1 Japanese (a language that lacks articles) and L1 Spanish (a language that has articles) intermediate and advanced learners of L2 English using the same forced-choice elicitation task from Ionin et al. (2004). Snape predicted that the Japanese learners of English will overuse the definite article in all indefinite specific contexts because their L1 does not have an article system (i.e., fluctuation will override transfer). The results were similar to those of Ionin et al. (2004) in that the intermediate/advanced Japanese learners overused the in the singular and plural [-definite, +specific] contexts but not in the indefinite mass (non-count) noun contexts. The Spanish learners were more accurate and demonstrated less fluctuation. Therefore, Snape (2005) concluded that the Japanese learners fluctuated between definiteness and specificity.

Reid et al. (2006), as cited in Snape et al. (2006), tested 14 intermediate Japanese and nine intermediate Spanish L2-English learners in both the [-definite, +specific] and [+definite, -specific] contexts using the same forced choice elicitation task from Ionin et al. (2004). The results showed that the Japanese learners overused the in [-definite, +specific] contexts and overused a in [+definite, -specific] contexts, meaning that these participants fluctuated between definiteness and specificity as predicted by the FH. By contrast, the Spanish learners did not fluctuate and were as much accurate as the native controls.

In Hawkins et al. (2006), the intermediate L1 Japanese L2-English learners fluctuated between definiteness and specificity in [-definite, +specific] singular and plural count noun contexts by oversupplying the definite article the instead of the correct articles (a for indefinite singular nouns and the zero-article for indefinite plural nouns). In the same study, the L1 Greek
(a language with definiteness articles) L2-English learners did not fluctuate between definiteness and specificity but rather used the correct articles.

Zdorenko and Paradis (2007) report longitudinal data from child learners of English, with both [+article] L1s (Spanish, Romanian, and Arabic) and [-article] L1s (Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, and Japanese). In the early stages of acquisition, the [-article] L1 group omitted articles in obligatory contexts more frequently than the [+article] group did, suggesting that L1 transfer was in progress. Moreover, the results showed that the participants from the [-article] group overused the article *the* in [-definite, +specific] contexts. This behavior (the overuse of *the*) was not uncommon for the participants from the [+article] group, an observation that caused Zdorenko and Paradis (2007) to question the validity of the FH.

In White (2008), the L1 Mandarin learners of L2 English oversupplied the definite article *the* (to replace *a*) with indefinite specific nouns, demonstrating a fluctuation behavior that was predicted by the FH. There were no sufficient contexts of the type [+definite, -specific] in her experiment to examine the other direction of fluctuation – namely the overuse of the indefinite article *a*.

Jaensch and Sarko (2009) examined the use of English articles by L1 Arabic learners of English. Their results showed that the Arabic L2-English learners used the definite article *the* very accurately in definite contexts, suggesting a transfer of the semantic feature ‘definiteness’ from their L1 (Arabic). However, the same learners fluctuated between the definite article *the* and the indefinite article *a* in indefinite specific contexts, a pattern that was not observed for the Japanese learners of L2 German in the same study.

In summary, the findings of several studies of the use of articles by L2-English learners demonstrated fluctuation between the two values of ACP by beginner and/or intermediate learners, whose first language lacks articles. This fluctuation behavior is characterized with the overuse (i.e., oversuppliance) of the definite article *the* in [-definite, +specific] semantic context and, to a lower degree, the overuse of the indefinite article *a* in [+definite, -specific] context. Very few studies examined the use of articles by English language learners whose first language is Arabic. The significance of examining learners with L1 Arabic background comes from the article system of Arabic. Despite being an article language that encodes definiteness, Arabic does not have a morphologically-marked article for indefinite nouns; hence it is not a truly two-article language. Therefore, the present study examines the use of English articles by L1 Arabic learners of English of varying levels of proficiency. In the following section, I briefly review the article system in Arabic.

**Articles in English and Arabic**

As pointed out earlier, English is an article language with two articles that encode definiteness (definite vs. indefinite) but not specificity (specific vs. non-specific). On the one hand, the article *the* is used with definite singular and plural count nouns and mass nouns regardless of specificity (see examples 2a and 2b). On the other hand, the indefinite article *a/an* is used with indefinite singular count nouns regardless of specificity (see examples 3a and 3b).

Arabic, just like English, has only the definiteness setting of the ACP. In other words, Arabic has a grammaticalized way of encoding definiteness but not specificity. This is true for
both Standard Arabic and the vernaculars. Similar to English, definiteness is marked morphologically in Arabic (Watson, 2002). The definite article \textit{al-} is prefixed to common singular or plural nouns and mass nouns to mark definiteness as the following examples show.

9) \textit{al-baytu} kabeerun
   the-house big
   ‘The house is big.’

10) \textit{al-baytu} \textit{al-kabeer}
    the-house the-big
    ‘the big house’

While Arabic does not have a morpheme for the indefinite article, indefiniteness is marked phonologically (only in Standard Arabic) at the end of the indefinite noun. In most Arabic vernaculars (including Jordanian Arabic), indefinite nouns are unmarked morphologically or phonologically. The following example sentences (11, 12) show how Standard Arabic encodes indefiniteness.

11) \textit{Baytun} \textit{indef.} kabeerun
    a house big
    ‘a big house’

12) \textit{yaskunu} fi \textit{baytin} \textit{indef.} kabeerin
    he lives in a house big
    ‘He lives in a big house.’

The following two examples demonstrate how \textit{definiteness} operates independently from \textit{specificity} in Arabic. While example (13) features a definite non-specific noun, example (14) includes a definite specific noun. In both cases, the noun is marked with the definite article (\textit{al-}) regardless of specificity.

13) \textit{uriidu} an \textit{atakallama} ma’ \textit{al-fa’izi} ayyan kan
    1\textsuperscript{st} person want to 1\textsuperscript{st} person talk with def-winner whoever
    ‘I want to talk to the winner whoever he is.’

14) \textit{uriidu} an \textit{atakallama} ma’ \textit{al-fa’izi} huwa Sadiiqi
    1\textsuperscript{st} person want to 1\textsuperscript{st} person talk with def-winner he is my friend
    ‘I want to talk to the winner; he is my friend.’

**Empirical Study: Elicitation Study Of L2 English Article Choice**

The present study examined cross-sectional data from English L2 adults from an [+article] L1 background (Arabic) to address the following research questions (some of the questions were adapted to adult L2 acquisition from Zdorenko and Paradis, 2007).

1) How does English proficiency affect the use of English articles? Will advanced learners reach native-like performance?
2) What type of errors will L1 Arabic L2-English learners make when using English articles? What errors are more common: overuse of *the*, overuse of *a*, or article omission?
3) Will fluctuation override transfer or will transfer override fluctuation? In other words, will the participants transfer definiteness from their L1 (Arabic) into their L2 English? Or will they fluctuate between the two settings of the ACP?
4) If fluctuation takes place, does it result in the same errors reported by Ionin et al. (2004) for [-article] L1s, namely, misuse of *the* in [-definite, +specific] contexts, and misuse of *a* in [+definite, -specific] contexts? This study predicts to see this error pattern at least for the low proficiency L2-English learners.
5) How do the different semantic contexts interact with the accuracy of article use? In other words, is there any specific semantic context where the L2-English learners are more likely to make errors?

**Participants:**

The participants in this study were 30 adult L1 Arabic L2-English learners. All of them were native speakers of Jordanian Arabic (an [+article] language). All of the participants were ungraduated students in the Department of English Language and Literature at Yarmouk University at the time of the study. Therefore, all of the participants were bilinguals in Arabic and English with a length of English language exposure that ranged between 12 years and 14 years. None of the participants stayed in an English-speaking country for more than three months. In order to determine their proficiency levels, all of the participants in this study were asked to complete a 50 multiple-choice-item written proficiency test that was modified from the *Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English (ECPE) 2003-2004* in the English Language Institute in the University of Michigan. The following ECPE grade thresholds were identified for the purpose of classifying the learners into low proficiency (beginner), intermediate, and advanced learners: (≤ 40 = low proficiency, 40 < intermediate ≤ 80, 80 < = advanced).

**Material and procedures:**

The experiment elicited the participants’ use of articles using a forced-choice elicitation task developed after Ionin et al. (2004) and Ju (2000). The task consisted of 50 short English-language dialogues in total (40 experimental and 10 fillers). The target sentence in each dialogue had a missing article. The participants were asked to read the short dialogues and circle the item which they thought to be more grammatical out from three possible items: the indefinite article, the definite article, and the null article (*a*, *the*, __) based on the preceding context. Proper names were excluded from being target nouns (DPs) in the task to avoid the grammatical occurrence of null articles. All of the target DPs were singular and all the target items were always in object position. The elicited data from the task were coded. The analysis targeted article use (instances of *a*, *the*, and Ø) in all contexts.

**Item Types from the Forced-Choice Elicitation Task**

The task included the following four types of contexts as a result of the interaction of the following conditions: definite/indefinite, specific/nonspecific. The following are examples of the four semantic contexts. For the complete list of items, see Ionin et al. (2004).
The Acquisition of English Articles by Arabic L2-English learners

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[+definite, +specific]
Conversation between two police officers
Police Officer Clark: I haven’t seen you in a long time. You must be very busy.
Police Officer Smith: Yes. Did you hear about Miss Sarah Andrews, a famous lawyer who was murdered several weeks ago? We are trying to find (a, the, —) murderer of Miss Andrews—his name is Roger Williams, and he is a well-known criminal.

[+definite, -specific]
Conversation between a police officer and a reporter
Reporter: Several days ago, Mr. James Peterson, a famous politician, was murdered! Are you investigating his murder?
Police officer: Yes. We are trying to find (a, the, —) murderer of Mr. Peterson—but we still don’t know who he is.

[-definite, +specific]
In an airport, in a crowd of people who are meeting arriving passengers
Man: Excuse me, do you work here?
Security guard: Yes.
Man: In that case, perhaps you could help me. I am trying to find (a, the, —) red-haired girl; I think that she flew in on Flight 239.

[-definite, -specific]
Indefinite, narrow scope, no speaker knowledge
In a children’s library
Child: I’d like to get something to read, but I don’t know what myself.
Librarian: Well, what are some of your interests? We have books on any subject.
Child: Well, I like all sorts of things that move – cars, trains. . . . I know! I would like to get (a, the, —) book about airplanes! I like to read about flying!

Results and Discussion

In this section, the results of the present study are presented and discussed. The results are first reported for the whole group of participants across all proficiency levels and all semantic contexts. After this, the result presentation and discussion are broken down by proficiency level and semantic context.

Overall, the results show that the participants were accurate in 73% of the cases (879 correct article choices out of 1,200 possible choices) in terms of their article choice. In other words, the participants made errors in about 27% of the cases (= 321 incorrect choices). As shown in Figure 1, the most common error was article omission (15%) followed by the overuse (i.e., misuse) of the (7%) in indefinite contexts and the overuse of a (6%) in definite contexts.
In terms of semantic context, the participants were more accurate in the definite contexts ([+definite, +specific], [+definite, -specific]) than in the indefinite contexts ([-definite, +specific], [-definite, -specific]) as shown in Table 3 below. The lower accuracy with the article use with indefinite nouns may be attributed to the fact that Arabic, whether Standard Arabic or the vernaculars, does not mark indefinite nouns morphologically.

Table 3 Article Accuracy per Semantic Context (across all proficiency levels)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Context</th>
<th>[+]definite, +specific</th>
<th>[+]definite, -specific</th>
<th>[-]definite, +specific</th>
<th>[-]definite, -specific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy %</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As predicted, there was a strong correlation between English proficiency and article accuracy: the higher the proficiency, the higher the accuracy in terms of article use. Overall, the advanced learners reached native-like performance on articles (96.5%) and were more accurate than the intermediate learners (74%), who in turn outperformed the low proficiency participants (49.5%). As shown in Table 4, this proficiency advantage was consistent throughout all semantic contexts. In other words, the more proficient the participant was, the more accurate he/she was in terms of the use of English articles regardless of the semantic context: ± definite, ± specific.

Table 4 Article Accuracy (%) per Proficiency Level and Semantic Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>[+]definite, +specific</th>
<th>[+]definite, -specific</th>
<th>[-]definite, +specific</th>
<th>[-]definite, -specific</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interestingly, the order of accuracy was the same for the low proficiency and intermediate learners: [+definite, +specific], [+definite, -specific], [-definite, -specific], and [-definite, +specific], from the most accurate to the least accurate. Two generalizations can be captured about all of the participating learners across all proficiency levels. First, the learners were more accurate in the two definite contexts than in the two indefinite contexts. Second, the semantic context [-definite, +specific] was the most problematic for all of the learners. The low accuracy of article use in this semantic context – especially by the low proficiency learners (32.5%) and the intermediate proficiency learners (57.5%) – seems to support the FH, suggesting that the learners may have fluctuated between definiteness and specificity in this context resulting in the high rate of errors. The other crucial context for fluctuation ([+definite, -specific]) was problematic as well – though to a lesser degree than the [-definite, +specific] context – for the low proficiency learners (51.7%) and the intermediate learners (80%). However, this context was more problematic for the learners than the context [-definite, -specific], a context in which fluctuation is not predicted according to the FH. Therefore, we need to examine the distribution of errors (misuse of the, misuse of a, and article omission) in all contexts before we can make any conclusions about whether fluctuation took place or not.

We now turn to the analysis of the different types of article errors for the different levels of proficiency per each semantic context. As shown in Table 5 below, the advanced learners, who performed at a native-like level, committed no errors in the following two semantic contexts: [+definite, +specific] and [-definite, -specific], and they made very few errors in the semantic context [+definite, -specific], where they slightly overused (3%) the indefinite article instead of the target article (the). For the advanced learners, the least accurate context was the [-definite, +specific] context, in which they made errors in 13% of the times: 5% overuse of the definite article and 8% article omission. These results indicate that the semantic context [-definite, +specific] was the only (slightly) problematic context for the Arabic advanced learners of English.

Table 5. Error Type (%) per Proficiency Level and Semantic Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>[+definite, +specific]</th>
<th>[+definite, -specific]</th>
<th>[-definite, +specific]</th>
<th>[-definite, -specific]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = overuse of a, 2 = overuse of the, 3 = article omission (n/a refers to the target article context)

Unlike the advanced learners, the intermediate learners and the low proficiency learners made several article errors in all semantic contexts. The intermediate learners omitted articles in 16.5% of the cases (total = 66 omissions in all contexts), with 70% of these articles being omitted in the two [-definite] contexts. The low proficiency learners omitted articles in 25.5% of the cases (total = 102 omissions in all contexts), with 63% of the omitted articles being in the two [-definite] contexts. In other words, the low proficiency learners and the intermediate learners together were responsible for about 97% of the article omission errors in the data. As
pointed out earlier, the high rates of article omission by the low proficiency and the intermediate learners in the indefinite contexts may be attributed to the lack of a morphological marker of indefinite nouns in Arabic. In other words, the high rate of article omission errors in indefinite contexts by these learners suggests an L1 transfer, whereby the learners transfer the absence of a morphological marker for indefinite singular nouns from their L1 Arabic into their L2 English.

In one of its two scenarios, the FH predicts fluctuation in the [+definite, -specific] and [-definite, +specific] semantic contexts (but not in the [+definite, +specific] and [-definite, -specific] contexts) as a result of the interference between the UG notions of definiteness and specificity. To put this in more concrete terms, the prediction was that the learners will overuse the article a in the [+definite, -specific] context and will underuse the article the in the [-definite, +specific] context. Indeed, the results show that the low proficiency learners overused the indefinite article in 33% of the [+definite, -specific] contexts but underused the same article in only 10% of the [+definite, +specific] contexts, suggesting that the indefinite article a was occasionally associated with the feature [-specific]. Similarly, the low proficiency learners overused the definite article in 33% of the times in the [-definite, +specific] contexts but underused the same article in only 22% of the times in the [-definite, -specific] contexts, suggesting that the definite article the was occasionally associated with the feature [+specific].

The fluctuation was less pronounced, if any, for the intermediate learners, who overused the indefinite article equally (8%) in each of the two definite contexts: the [+definite, +specific] context and the [+definite, -specific] context, suggesting that specificity (±specific) did not play a role in the article choice at this level of proficiency. As for the indefinite contexts, the intermediate learners overused the definite article in only 8% of the [-definite, +specific] contexts and in about 13% of the [-definite, -specific] contexts, again showing a very little influence of specificity.

A further interesting result of this study is the high rate of article omission errors in the low proficiency and intermediate learners’ data. Not only did these learners – unlike the advanced learners – omit articles in all semantic contexts, but they also omitted articles more frequently in the [-definite] contexts than in the [+definite] contexts. On the one hand, the low proficiency learners omitted articles in 35% of the times in the [-definite, +specific] context (but only in 25% of the times in its definite counterpart context: [+definite, +specific]) and in 30% of the times in the [-definite, -specific] context (but only 15% in its definite counterpart context: [+definite, -specific]). On the other hand, the intermediate learners omitted articles in 35% of the [-definite, +specific] contexts (but only in 8% of the definite counterpart contexts: [+definite, +specific]) and in 15% of the [-definite, -specific] contexts (but 12% in the definite counterpart contexts: [+definite, -specific]). These results reveal that the feature specification of definiteness (+definite vs. -definite) rather than specificity (+specific vs. -specific) is the crucial factor in article omission. As pointed out earlier, the high rates of article omission errors in the indefinite contexts compared with the omission rates in the definite contexts suggest a strong L1 (Arabic) influence whereby the learners transfer the zero-article for indefinite singular nouns from Arabic into their interlanguage English.

Conclusion

This study examined the acquisition of the English article system by Arabic L2-English learners in four linguistic contexts contrasted based on the semantic features: ±definite and ±specific. The theoretical framework of this study was the Fluctuation Hypothesis (FA), which
incorporates the Article Choice Parameter (ACP). The most important results of this study are summarized below.

There was a strong correlation between English language proficiency and the use of English articles by the Arabic learners with the advanced learners almost having converged to the target system of articles in English in all of the semantic contexts examined in this study. The low proficiency learners fluctuated between definiteness and specificity in the two crucial mismatching semantic contexts: [+definite, -specific] and [-definite, +specific], overusing the indefinite article in the former context and overusing the definite article in the latter context. However, the intermediate learners did not fluctuate between definiteness and specificity. Contrary to the results of previous studies (e.g., Snape, 2005), article omission in obligatory contexts – and not article overuse – was the most common error among the low proficiency and intermediate learners. The fact that Arabic beginner and intermediate learners of English omitted many articles in the indefinite contexts, regardless of specificity, provides evidence in support of L1 transfer or, to use Ionin et al.’s (2004) term, that L1 transfer overrode fluctuation.

The fluctuation behavior of the low proficiency learners and the L1-driven omission of articles in obligatory contexts by both the low proficiency and intermediate learners – combined together – suggest a development model for the acquisition of English articles by Arabic L2-English learners. This model makes use of the three available sources of linguistic knowledge in SLA – namely, L2 input, L1 transfer, and UG (see Ionin et al., 2008 for a discussion of the interplay of these sources). Early in this acquisition path, I propose, fluctuation and L1 transfer operate simultaneously, resulting in two types of errors: *a/the* overuse (source is UG-based fluctuation) and article omission (source is L1 transfer), hence the poor performance on articles by beginner learners. This stage is followed by a stage where the input starts guiding the learners to the appropriate value of ACP – hence they stop fluctuating (resulting in fewer overuse errors) but still omit articles in obligatory contexts. The final stage is one where the fine input processing guides the learners to reach target-like performance.

The pedagogical implications of these results point to the importance of incorporating the concept of *specificity* alongside the concept of *definiteness* in English language teaching curricula, especially for early learners. Classroom input should provide learners with comprehensible input (Krashen, 1981) through meaningful contexts (similar to the pragmatic contexts in this study) in order to trigger the setting of the ACP to the target value in English (i.e., definiteness). Finally, classroom input should provide learners with sufficient input about the use of indefinite articles with indefinite singular count nouns in order to trigger a shift from the use of a zero article with such nouns.

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References


Exploring Authorial Presence through the Use of First Person Pronouns: Evidence from a Saudi University

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Abstract
Authorial presence in academic writing is a fluid and multi-faced concept with its construction a troublesome challenge for both L1 (first language) and L2 (second language) writers of English. Authorial presence is particularly challenging for NNSs (Non-Native Speakers) who tend to avoid overly presenting their ideas, expressions and thoughts in their writing. This paper uses a specialized corpus of 45 student essays from a female multi-disciplinary university in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to identify and examine the presence and use of first person pronouns in shaping the author’s presence in academic writing. Findings show that learners use a wide range of first person pronouns to show their presence in academic texts and that these pronouns partner important verb, noun and prepositional phrases to achieve varying degrees of authorial power and presence. The paper concludes with pedagogic implications and suggestions for EAP (English for Academic Purposes) writing instructors who hope to tackle the use and function of first person pronouns more confidently in their classrooms.

Keywords: authorial presence, Arab learners, corpora, academic writing
1. Introduction

1.1 Problems students face with authorial presence

Authorial presence in academic writing is defined as the degree of author visibility or “authoritativeness” that writers are prepared to show when supporting and expressing their attitudes, judgements and assessments (Navratilova, 2013). Hyland (2005) believes successful academic writers adopt a point of view and in order to make that view heard or their presence felt, they need to develop a writer-reader dialogue. This dialogue or interaction is achieved in two overlapping ways: “Engagement” where writers connect with readers and recognize their presence by including them as discourse participants and focusing their attention on certain parts of the text and “stance” or textual voice where writers show their own judgements and opinions. Engagement is achieved by using reader pronouns (e.g. you), personal asides (the writer interrupts the flow of the text to comment on the developing argument), appeals to shared knowledge (assuming writer and reader share the same knowledge), directives and asking questions. In contrast, stance is achieved through hedging, attitude markers and self-mention (Hyland, 2005). Hyland (2005) notes that the linguistic choices a writer makes are often deliberate and the presence or absence of explicit author reference is a writer’s conscious choice to show a particular stance in the text.

Authorial presence is seen as a moving concept with writers changing their presence within or across different texts. The challenge of creating a presence in written texts is relevant to both first language (L1) and second language (L2) speakers of English but is particularly challenging for L2 writers (Hyland, 2002a). L2 writers have mixed beliefs about showing strong authorial presence in their texts with some believing it is too strong a role for them to adopt and many believe, from teacher instruction, it should not be overused (Hyland, 2002a; Sanko, 2014). L2 writers also view academic writing as stylistically difficult enough without the added burden of showing their presence in it (Clark, 1992, cited by Tang & John, 1999).

The influence of L2 writers’ deeply ingrained cultural values and personal experiences also complicate, confuse and influence the degree of authorial presence (Ivanic & Camps, 2001; Hyland, 2002a). Ivanic and Camps (2001) and Hyland (2002a) note that some cultures are uncomfortable giving their opinions and having a voice. Hyland (2002a) makes reference to the collective culture in Asian countries where people are not normally expected to critique respected professionals nor deviate from commonly held beliefs.

In a similar manner to Hyland (2005), Tang and John (1999) note that certain linguistic features and devices can play a key role in the degree of presence the author adopts with the choice of these features revealing how writers see themselves in a text and how they view the writing task. This includes the use of passivisation and nominalisation as well as the use of first person pronouns. First person pronouns have been extensively studied in L2 contexts from a frequency perspective with some students avoiding their use (Chang & Swales, 1999) while others overuse them and produce texts that are overly conversational (Sanko, 2014). The role of first person pronouns to achieve different degrees of authorial presence has included studies spanning different L1s, disciplines and contrasts between L1 and L2 use (Chang, 2015; Harwood, 2005; Hyland 2001, 2002a & 2002b; Kuo, 1999; Martinez, 2005 & Tang & John, 1999).
2. How first person pronouns achieve authorial presence

2.1 Uses from ‘expert’ writers

The literature differentiates between ‘expert’ and ‘novice’ writers with ‘expert’ writing considered to be writing done by scholars or advanced undergraduate or graduate writers. ‘Expert’ writers contrast with ‘novice’ writers who are early undergraduate students (Chang, 2015). Research on pronoun use in ‘expert’ writing far outweighs that of ‘novice’ writing and has focused on genres such as journal articles and postgraduate theses from various disciplines. Studies such as: Harwood (2005), Hyland (2001; 2002b), Kuo (1999), Luzon (2009) and Rezvani and Mansouri (2013) have all studied ‘expert’ writing and found a wide range of pronoun uses. Pronouns have been used to: State a goal, state knowledge claims, state hypotheses, state results and findings, express opinions, hedge claims, propose theories, give reasons or indicate necessities, organise a text and construct the author’s identity as a member of a particular discourse community (Hyland, 2002b; Kuo,1999 & Luzon, 2009). Kuo (1999) highlights that these functions vary in their power with functions such as giving reasons, stating knowledge claims and proposing theories stronger than functions that merely organise the text and that the writer modifies these functions at different times in the text.

2.2. Uses from ‘novice’ writers

In contrast to ‘expert’ findings, the research conducted on ‘novice’ writers is numerically limited but provides an interesting insight into how ‘novice’ undergraduates use first person pronouns in their writing. The taxonomy summary in Table 1 details the previous findings on how L2 novice writers use pronouns in their academic essays.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>Assumes the writer and reader share the same knowledge and discourse community</td>
<td>The differentiation of British &amp; American English causes us to ponder about the right form of standard English (Tang &amp; John, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tang &amp; John, 1999)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide/Commentator</td>
<td>The writer guides the reader through the essay and as a commentator the writer may give extra explanation or introduce the essay’s purpose.</td>
<td>As we examine the various classes of loan words from French, we can see the different ways French civilisation and culture has influenced English (Guide). (Tang &amp; John, 1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chang, 2015; Ryoo, 2010; Tang &amp; John, 1999)</td>
<td></td>
<td>To prevent school bullying, I have two suggestions towards school system (Commentator). (Chang, 2015).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kuo (1999)'s reference to degrees of power is also developed by Tang & John (1999)'s continuum of authorial presence which found that learners were not confident enough in their writing and rarely used the strongest functions of ‘opinion-holder’ and ‘originator’. Learners were wary of critiquing someone else’s views and then moving on to give their own opinion on the issue. Tang & John’s (1999) findings support those of Chang and Swales (1999) whose students were also uncomfortable using personal pronouns in their writing and viewed their use as exclusively the right of experienced scholars. Tang and John’s (1999) findings also support the view from students that academic writing is confusing and that the conflicting views from

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Architect</strong> (Tang &amp; John, 1999)</td>
<td>Organizes, structures and outlines the material in the essay.</td>
<td><em>I</em> will concentrate on the period Renaissance and its influence on the English language (Tang &amp; John, 1999)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opinion holder</strong> (Tang &amp; John, 1999)</td>
<td>The writer shares an opinion, view or attitude.</td>
<td>Looking back at Kashwant Singh’s words, <em>we</em> can describe from this period that English did indeed absorb the language it came into contact with (Tang &amp; John, 1999)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Originator/giving opinions &amp; making claims</strong> (Ryoo, 2010; Tang &amp; John, 1999).</td>
<td>The writer formulates thoughts and ideas in the writing – creating the content.</td>
<td>To <em>me</em> the phrase embodies the whole evolution process of the language to its present day status (Originator) (Tang &amp; John, 1999)).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stating a goal or purpose</strong> (Ryoo, 2010).</td>
<td>The writer outlines the goal or purpose of the essay.</td>
<td><em>I</em> have 3 suggestions here to make a better university (Ryoo, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information/ experience provider</strong> (Chang, 2015; Ryoo, 2010).</td>
<td>The writer gives factual, hypothetical, emotional or cognitive experience.</td>
<td><em>I</em> heard some university have good systems to help those students (Ryoo, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stating a desire</strong> (Ryoo, 2010)</td>
<td>The writer states a future desire regarding the development of the topic.</td>
<td><em>I</em> want our university to have many public relations to high school students (Ryoo, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expressing self-benefits</strong> (Ryoo, 2010).</td>
<td>The writer highlights the benefits received from writing the essay</td>
<td>Because of this assignment, <em>I</em> had a chance to think about it (Ryoo, 2010).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
different instructors on pronoun use fail to increase their confidence in academic writing (Hyland, 2002a).

On the other hand, Tang and John’s (1999) findings contrast heavily with those of other scholars including Chang (2015); Ryoo (2010) and McCrostie (2008). McCrostie’s (2008) learners used personal pronouns more frequently than NSs (Native Speakers) but their use declined as students moved through their academic studies leading McCrostie (2008) to view their overuse as a developmental problem. However, in contrast to Tang and John (1999), Ryoo’s (2010) students were comfortable using pronouns to give opinions on the work of others and their own opinions of the topic.

Table 1 highlights a marked difference in the functions used in ‘expert’ writing and ‘novice’ undergraduate writing with pronoun use much narrower in scope in ‘novice’ writing than the uses found in ‘expert’ writing. This is evidenced by the noticeable absence of functions such as: comparing approaches, giving reasons and stating knowledge claims which were found in Hyland (2002b); Kuo (1999) and Luzon (2009). Table 1 indicates that the findings of Chang (2015); Ryoo (2010) and Tang and John (1999) are more likely to be found more frequently in the present study because the genre specific uses from research theses and papers are not applicable to the genre of essay writing (Chang, 2015).

While Table 1 highlights the lack of consensus on the pronouns found in student essay writing there are also differences in the terminology used to document pronoun uses. The different terms from different scholars share some similarities with Tang & John’s category of ‘guide’ equivalent to Chang and Ryoo’s ‘commentator’ role. However, the apparent overlap in Tang and John’s explanation of the ‘originator’ makes other similarities difficult to note. The functions of ‘opinion-holder’ and ‘originator’ are defined separately in their continuum but are then discussed together in the findings with the findings for ‘originator’ not made clear from those of the ‘opinion-holder’. Similarly, there appears to be overlap between the ‘guide’ and ‘architect’, a point they also note and the examples given seem to demonstrate very similar functions. In agreement with Chang (2015) these issues highlight the need for clearer more distinguishable functions which will assist instructors in teaching the different uses to learners.

This previous research on ‘novice’ L2 writing suggests educators and researchers need to understand where ‘novice’ writers currently are in their writing proficiency in order to help them ultimately reach ‘expert’ level. Therefore, examining L2 writing serves as a way of findings gaps and then working on bridging those gaps through instruction and encouraging independent study.

Previous L2 research all focused on small groups of Asian learners and while very insightful, it highlights the need to investigate authorial presence with a greater range of L1s, learner groups and classroom settings given the cognitive, social and cultural factors that are involved in writing. One such group worthy of study is those who have Arabic as their native language because they represent a group that traditionally struggle with academic writing (Crompton, 2011; Khuwaileh & Shoumali, 2000). They also represent a learner group who are traditionally seen as knowledge receivers but not knowledge synthesizers with strong critical thinking skills. These learners also face the expectation of learning by memorization and show little engagement with the content being learnt (Shukri, 2014).
2.3 Research purpose and relevance
The present study uses a specialized learner corpus of English essays written by female Arab learners at an English-medium university in Saudi Arabia to investigate how students use the first person pronouns: “I”, “we”, “us”, “me”, “my” and “our” to achieve authorial presence and how these pronouns perform different functions. The functions of these pronouns will also be subject to linguistic analysis to see if they appear alongside different linguistic patterns. The identification of the different pronoun functions and their linguistic clusters or patterns enables instructors to build these into their teaching of EAP writing courses and provide learners with a greater array of linguistic tools to express themselves and strengthen their writing ability.

2.4 Research Questions
The research has the following exploratory questions:
1. How frequently do the first person pronouns: “I”, “we”, “us”, “me”, “my” and “our” appear in the learner corpus?
2. What are the roles and functions of the first person pronouns? Are there any differences between the pronouns’ roles and functions?
3. What linguistic patterns occur alongside these pronouns?
4. 3. Methodology
3.1 Writing classes at the university
Students are required to take academic English writing courses as a mandatory requirement of their degree programmes. These courses focus on writing essays, research proposals and papers. The course under study involved intensive essay writing over one 15 week semester. Students were required to write the following essay types: Cause and effect, comparison and contrast, classification and process analysis. The study focuses on cause and effect essays because they were a core component of the course and illustrate a typical expository essay written on the course as a whole. Student assessment consisted of in-class timed writing, portfolio and homework tasks and a final essay and related presentation. The portfolio tasks involved analysing texts in terms of how writers show engagement with their audience and how they show themselves in their writing. Students planned, drafted and edited their essays before submitting them for grading. All essays had to be a minimum of 500 words and follow a 5 paragraph structure and include references in APA (American Psychological Association) style.

3.2 Participants
Participants were in their first or second year of their major programs. They represented various disciplines including law, architecture and digital media. All students were native Arabic speakers with Saudi Arabian, Egyptian and Syrian nationalities all represented. Students’ exposure to English outside class took the form of social media interaction, listening to music and watching movies. The students had very little exposure to formal academic English outside the classroom and had previously only written English dialogues and stories. Students’ overall proficiency level was deemed to be high Intermediate based on their level of study and given the fact all students had previously studied and passed the university’s Preparatory Year Program (PYP), which provided them with intensive skills-based instruction.
3.3 The value of corpora and NNS texts to EAP courses

The use of NS texts in corpus creation and for studying linguistic features has been welcomed and supported with Krishnamurthy and Kosem (2007); Luzon (2009) and Thompson (2006) all believing NS texts to be good models for NNSs who aspire to become ‘expert’ writers in their academic communities. However, the use of NNS texts is also important as they can provide vital information on what is problematic for learners and what specific areas they need to improve on (Luzon, 2009). I take the view that NNS texts can be used as an initial point of discovery which helps identify where learners are in their writing proficiency and then NS texts can be used to guide NNSs in their quest to become expert writers in their discourse community or discipline. NNS texts equally hold immense potential in helping instructors deliver classes that target identified weaknesses and aid further writing development.

3.4 Corpus creation

Participating students were asked to read and sign a British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) influenced consent form. The consent form reassured students that their participation was voluntary, it would not affect their grade in any way and they were free to withdraw from participating at any time.

Throughout the semester students were asked to submit their uncorrected draft essays by email. Students decided on their topic by using one of the prompts provided in the essay guidelines (See Appendix A). After submission, the essays were ‘cleaned up’ to remove the final reference list, to avoid the inaccurate inflation of the frequency list, and their front covers which included student names and identification numbers, which were not appropriate since essays were to remain anonymous in the corpus. The use of full texts as opposed to sections of a text has been debated however the corpus used full texts to give a potentially fuller linguistic analysis (Thompson, 2006). The essays in the corpus had a range of grades from A+ to C- with no submissions awarded a ‘D’ grade or lower. The grading rubric is detailed in Appendix B. The grading rubric reflects the course learning outcomes in that students were expected to build a coherent argument throughout their essays. The final corpus consisted of 45 essays which were converted to plain text files (.txt) and analysed using Mike Scott’s WordSmith version 6.0 (n.d).

3.5 Procedure

All occurrences of the first person pronouns were obtained using the ‘wordlist’ function of WordSmith which produced a frequency word list (See Appendix C). The ‘concordance’ function in WordSmith produced a concordance list for each pronoun which allowed each pronoun to be coded in its naturally occurring context. The entries for each pronoun were coded into distinct functions based on the taxonomies of Chang (2015); Ryoo (2010) and Tang and John (1999) in Table 1. In alignment with Chang (2015) and Tang and John (1999), the ‘essay commentator’ and ‘representative’ both include more than one identifiable function. The ‘essay commentator’ includes introducing the essay’s organisation, the essay topic and goal and providing further explanations (Chang, 2015). The ‘representative’ includes the assumption of shared knowledge and that the writer and reader share the same discourse community (Tang & John, 1999). The reason for grouping uses under an umbrella term like ‘representative’ is to make it easier to teach the uses to students as separate groups (Chang, 2015). The ‘cluster’ and ‘patterns’ functions were used to determine the linguistic patterns that appear with the pronouns with the pattern function detailing the collocates (words that are often found together) and their
frequencies. The cluster function builds on this by providing a more detailed look at the relationships between words and shows multi-word units or “lexical bundles” which can highlight the semantic prosody (positive or negative connotations) associated with these bundles (Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad & Finegan, 1999).

4. Results & Discussion

4.1 Word types

The wordlist from the 45 essays produced the following descriptive picture:

**Table 2**

*Descriptive statistics for the learner corpus*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Type/Token ratio</th>
<th>STTR</th>
<th>Mean word length</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23,473</td>
<td>3,378</td>
<td>14.65</td>
<td>46.22</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>1,367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The tokens show the total number of words in the corpus. Types represent the total number of different word types with the type/token ratio signalling how varied the vocabulary use was. Both the types and type/token ratios are low meaning this learner group uses a narrow range of vocabulary. The Standardized Type/Token Ratio (STTR) provides a comparison of all the essays included in the corpus despite their varying word counts. The STTR ratio and the mean word length also show students have a narrow vocabulary range and prefer to use short, repetitive words.

**4.2 The frequency and use of pronouns**

The corpus shows that all of the pronouns appear in varying degrees of frequency. The most commonly used pronoun was “I” with 146 occurrences followed by “my”, “we”, “our”, “me” and “us” with 68, 66, 35, 29 and 26 occurrences respectively (See Appendix 3). However, the relative frequencies of the pronouns are: 42.22%, 28.89%, 46.67%, 26.67%, 26.67% and 28.86% respectively (See Appendix C). These frequencies show that while there are more instances of “I”, “we” appears in more texts showing individual writers used it more than “I” overall. It also highlights that individual writers may use “I” far more frequently than “we” within a single text.

**Table 3**

*A summary of authorial presence roles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>My</th>
<th>We</th>
<th>Our</th>
<th>Me</th>
<th>Us</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Essay Commentator</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Stating a desire</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Giving an opinion/making claims</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When coding the data not all occurrences were used to show authorial presence. This was most evident with “us” because student errors in punctuation meant the occurrence of US to mean U.S (United States) was present in the data. In a similar manner, two occurrences of “my” were not used to show presence but to show possession:

(1) “I need to buy and collect books to build my own personal library” (Text 5).
(2) “I was with my sisters in a café shop, I heard sound of gunfire” (Text 16).

These examples highlight the complexity of coding from a corpus and the need for manual coding even if computer-aided software is used because in this case “US” was wrongly classified.

4.2.1 Essay commentator

The essay commentator was shown by “I” in a signposting attempt to tell the reader what will be discussed in the essay or to refer back to points the writer previously made:

(3) “Thirdly, the last effect I will discuss in this essay is having a good or better mood” (Text 33)
(4) “All what I wrote above are just about student” (Text 22).

“We” was also used to refer back to what was said before:

(5) “In the end, we conclude that television has had an impact on our daily life” (Text 45).

“We” was also used to refer back to what was said before:

(5) “In the end, we conclude that television has had an impact on our daily life” (Text 45).

The commentator is an important function as it shows the writer has a clear understanding of the essay’s goal and direction. In addition to this, the ability to remind the reader of points already made is crucial to building an argument throughout the paper and making sure the argument flows smoothly. When “I” was used in this function, it clustered with “will” to signal what the essay intended to cover. When “we” was used, it clustered and partnered phrases such as: “In this essay we”, “we can say that” and “in the end we” where the writer treats the reader as sharing the reading experience and through other past tense verbs such as “discussed” suggests the two parties have equal status and the action is shared. These show different approaches to the essay with some writers using “I” in an assertive role to demonstrate what they achieved in the essay while the use of “we” suggests an almost shared responsibility between the reader and writer.

Students also used “my” to state the goal of the essay in a similar fashion to those instances found by Ryoo (2010):
(6) “In my essay I am going to talk about the causes of why students cheat” (Text 37).

This occurrence shows the writer takes responsibility for the essay and takes ownership of it more than the use attributed to “we”. Both Chang (2015) and Tang and John (1999) found evidence of these pronouns being used in this role. However, while Tang and John (1999) view the ‘guide’ or commentator as a weak function, I believe this is an essential function that students must be taught because it reminds the reader of key points, focuses on what comes next and moves the reader through the essay and continually builds an argument.

4.2.2 Stating a desire
Stating desires was shown by the use of “I”. Students used these pronouns to state present or reflective desires or needs related to their topic:

(7) “I wish I could stop being addicted to caffeine products” (Text 31).

Example 7 also suggests that the phrase: “I wish I could...” functions as a way of reflection at the end of the point the writer makes. Example 7 uses “I” to perhaps signal to the reader that this example is highly personal and that the writer engages with the task through personalization. In personalizing the task and topic perhaps the writer also makes the topic more tangible for the reader to understand. When “I” was used to state a desire, it clustered or patterned emotion or state verbs such as “want”, “need” or “wish” in the present tense. This represents a narrow range of verbs but also shows writers did not explicitly express desires in the future as no future state verb forms were found with the pronouns.

4.2.3 Giving opinions/making claims
Giving an opinion or making a claim was shown by “I”, “my” and “me”:

(8) “In my opinion, the long time spent in watching TV could be replaced by another useful thing” (Text 6).
(9) “In conclusion, I feel it is a must for every person who loves knowledge and research” (Text 5).
(10) “For me, I previously did not like to work in a group” (Text 16)

Giving opinions/making claims was not as frequent as other functions and while, Chang (2015) and McCrostie (2008) found the clusters and patterns of “I think” and “I feel” common, they were much less common in this study with 7 and 3 occurrences respectively. The more popular “I feel” was used to show the writer’s opinion as was “I think”. However, “I feel” occurred in the initial sentence position and was followed by “it” on 3 occasions suggesting that writers follow the pattern of making a point and then giving their opinion on it. In contrast, “I think” occurred in different positions namely the initial and middle position and was followed by either “that” or a countable noun such as “grades” to show the writer’s personal opinion. The clusters and patterns associated with “my” indicate that it was used with the countable nouns of “opinion” and “perspective” to show the writer’s opinion. This alongside the instances of “think” and “feel” shows that students use a richer range of expressions to show their opinion than those found in previous research (McCrostie, 2008). It also suggests that students not only rely on Sanko’s (2014) colloquial “in my opinion” but use other terms such as
“perspective” in their writing. The low frequency of giving an opinion or making a claim was also found in Tang and John’s (1999) study where students were reluctant to give their opinions, go against the teacher or challenge written authority. The low occurrence of giving opinions or making claims suggests that students are reluctant to explicitly show a strong stance or position in their writing. This low presence needs addressing because the ability to critique and challenge others’ work is an essential academic skill for success (Hyland, 2005; Shukri, 2014).

4.2.4 Experience/information giver

The experience/information giver was the most popular with all pronouns except “our” and “us” performing this function. This was not surprising given that undergraduate students have underdeveloped academic skills and rely on their own personal experiences to give supporting information. The results show a clear distinction between the pronouns being used to talk about past and present experience:

(11) “I was with my sisters in a café shop, I heard sound of gunfire” (Text 16).

(12) “In summer vacations, we gather our neighbourhood children and manage a summer camp for them” (Text 2).

(13) “This movie taught me how to solve problems in different ways” (Text 16).

The clusters and patterns also revealed that students used the past simple clusters “When I” and “I was” to signal the use of past or present experience to support the main points of the essay. In a similar manner “me” was also found with the present verbs “tell” and “makes” and the past irregular verbs of “gave” and “taught”. “My” was also used and clustered countable personal nouns:

(14) “My family used to run reading contests during summer vacations at home” (Text 23).

“My” also clustered or patterned other countable nouns such as: “studies”, “apartment”, “family”, “brother” and “university” to indicate the giving of experience supports the essay’s main points and shows, like stating a desire, that there is a high degree of personalization in the essays presumably because of their reliance on experience as supporting information. This function was not found by Tang and John (1999) but occurred frequently in McCrostie’s (2008) and Ryoo’s (2010) studies. The presence of this function may be task and genre dependent because if students do not make reference to other authority or are prevented from using sources they are forced to rely on personal experience.

4.2.5 The representative

The representative was performed by “we”, “us” and “our” and its high frequency is not surprising since it is the safest option for novice writers to show authorial presence in its weakest form (Tang & John, 1999). The representative showed variation with students sometimes using pronouns to talk about the population at large and what we all share in common or a much narrower use was found to refer to a more specific discourse community:
Students also used pronouns to show the assumption of shared reader and writer knowledge:

(17) “We all know the saying “too much of something is never good for you” (Text 12).

These examples show writers choose to target a general or specific audience with knowledge assumptions depending on the intended audience. The high frequency of the representative shows students attempt to show engagement through these pronouns and treat readers as discourse participants who engage, through the text, in a dialogue with the writer and this feature is one of the hallmarks of successful academic writing (Hyland, 2005).

The use of “us” also shows engagement as writers view themselves as equal in the essay process. The writer by using “us” suggests this essay is a shared experience in that both the writer and reader are, by reading, learning about the topic. “Our” alongside “us” did not display lexically rich clustering or patterning with “our” used with plural nouns that demonstrated personal shared knowledge or commonalities between the reader and writer such as “our families”, “our children, “our daily lives” and “our world”. The cluster and patterns of “on us” and “for us” reveal the common use of “us” + prepositions to signal assumed shared knowledge and shared discourse communities. This common occurrence contrasts with the other pronouns which occur alongside verb and noun phrases.

4.2.6 The absence of functions

There were no occurrences of the architect or stating a benefit which were found in previous studies. The absence of the architect may be due to its closeness in description to the guide, a point also noted by Chang (2015). The lack of stating a benefit suggests that students did not use pronouns to reflect on the task in their writing. This may be culturally bound as students coming from a traditional Saudi education system may not have experience of showing their thoughts in writing (Shukri, 2014).

5. Conclusions and pedagogical implications

The study found that students used the pronouns to show different degrees of authorial presence. Students most frequently used “I” to give information or experience. The other pronouns were used to commentate, give opinions/make claims, give experience or information, state a desire and act as a representative. The pronouns all partnered different nouns, verbs and prepositions with “us” and “our” the least lexically rich with more preposition patterns than noun and verb patterns. The findings also show differences in how the writer perceives their relationship with the reader and how confident they are in communicating their intended meanings. The uses of “I” and “we” showed a tendency to either take responsibility for the information or share that responsibility with the reader.
Although the essay topics were similar to Tang and John’s (1999) in that students had to choose topics from a designated list, students had to engage with the task by using both their own knowledge and information from sources they had read. Given this, there is a surprising lack of evidence showing that students used pronouns to challenge or agree with the sources. This apparent lack of critical awareness may be linked to the group’s culture in that they are often seen as knowledge receivers rather than original thinkers or critique the information they receive (Shukri, 2014). However, further research with the data may show critical awareness through the use of other linguistic features. The need to acquire strong critical skills is particularly important at the university under study as many go from a course of basic essay writing to writing research papers where the dynamics shift from relying on using personal experience to using and critiquing academic sources for their own research. The option of using pronouns to critique sources should be taught early in students’ academic lives to give them a wide range of linguistic options in their writing. Students’ awareness of correct pronoun use and balancing personalization and source use can be increased by analysing sample target texts and using consciousness raising tasks with corpus data from ‘expert’ writing to provide guidance to students (Luzon, 2009).

This study produced a small corpus of essays and the results may serve as a catalyst for future research that spans different gender investigations, different proficiency levels, different grades and possibly sub-corpora that longitudinally track learners’ pronoun use as they advance through their academic studies and they may receive more instruction on the conventions of academic writing (McCrostie, 2008). Similarly, research should be conducted on students when they have more task and topic freedom and it should be recognized that since they were being graded, they may have felt insecure about their writing and avoided giving their opinions. Also, this study could not use a larger ‘expert’ writing reference corpus to compare its findings given that ‘expert’ writing does not usually include cause/effect essays. This comparison would have further validated the study’s findings as well as provided students with examples of model pronoun usage.

About the Author:
Ms. Lee McCallum is an EdD candidate at the University of Exeter and currently lectures in Saudi Arabia. She has wide ranging teaching and assessment experience from Europe and the Middle East. Her research interests include: testing, corpus linguistics and L2 writing.
References


Harwood, N. (2005). Nowhere has anyone attempted...In this article I aim to do just that. A corpus-based study of self-promotional I and we in academic writing across four disciplines. *Journal of Pragmatics, 37*, 1207-1231.


Appendices

Appendix A – Essay Prompts & Guidelines

This essay will account for 10% of your final course grade. Please read the instructions below carefully.

Choose one of the topics below and write a cause or effect essay. Your essay should be at least 500 words and include references to materials you have read.

1. The influence of a book or movie on your life
2. The effects of the pressure on students to get good grades.
3. The effects of peer pressure (pressure from friends)
4. Why some students cheat
5. The effects of music downloading on the music industry

Submission is via Moodle
Your essay must have a front cover which is typed, and include your full name, ID number and section number.

Late submission will be subject to a deduction of 5 marks per late day (including weekends).

Appendix B - Essay Grading Rubric
Table 4

Grading rubric for students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background/History</td>
<td>Well-developed introduction engages the reader and creates interest. Contains detailed background information. Thesis clearly states a significant and compelling position.</td>
<td>Introduction creates interest. Thesis clearly states the position.</td>
<td>Introduction adequately explains the background, but may lack detail. Thesis states the position.</td>
<td>Background details are a random collection of information, unclear, or not related to the topic. Thesis is vague or unclear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis Statement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion effectively wraps up and goes beyond restating the thesis.</td>
<td>Conclusion effectively summarizes topics.</td>
<td>Conclusion is recognizable and ties up almost all loose ends.</td>
<td>Conclusion does not summarize main points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONCLUSION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAIN POINTS</strong></td>
<td>Well-developed main points directly related to the thesis. Supporting examples are concrete and detailed. The text is developed with a consistent and effective point-of-view, showing the story in detail.</td>
<td>Three or more main points are related to the thesis, but one may lack details. The text shows events from the author's point of view using some details.</td>
<td>Three or more main points are present. The text shows the events, but may lack details.</td>
<td>Less than three main points, and/or poor development of ideas. The text is undeveloped, and tells rather than shows, the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANIZATION</strong></td>
<td>Logical progression of ideas with a clear structure that enhances the thesis. Transitions are mature and graceful.</td>
<td>Logical progression of ideas. Transitions are presented equally throughout essay.</td>
<td>Organization is clear. Transitions are present.</td>
<td>No discernible organization. Transitions are not present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STYLE</strong></td>
<td>Writing is smooth, skilled, and coherent. Sentences are strong and expressive with varied structure. Diction is consistent and words well chosen.</td>
<td>Writing is clear, but sentences may lack variety. Diction is consistent.</td>
<td>Writing is clear, but sentences may lack variety. Diction is appropriate.</td>
<td>Writing is confusing, hard to follow. Contains fragments and/or run-on sentences. Inappropriate diction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MECHANICS</strong></td>
<td>Punctuation, spelling, capitalization are correct. No A few errors in punctuation, spelling, capitalization. (3)</td>
<td>Punctuation, spelling, capitalization are generally correct.</td>
<td>A few errors in punctuation, spelling, capitalization. (3)</td>
<td>Distracting errors in punctuation, spelling, capitalization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling, punctuation, capitalization</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GRADING

13-15 points (A-A+)
10-12 points (B-B+)
7-9 points (C-C+)
4-6 points (D)
0 points (F)

Appendix C– Pronoun frequency

Table 5

Pronoun frequency in the corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Texts</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>THE</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>AND</td>
<td>687</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>TO</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>OF</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>IN</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>68.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>IS</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>97.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>THAT</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>97.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10…</td>
<td>FOR</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21…</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55…</td>
<td>MY</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57…</td>
<td>WE</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99…</td>
<td>OUR</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131…</td>
<td>ME</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148…</td>
<td>US</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students’ Attitudes towards Extensive and Intensive Reading and Instructors’ Motivational Strategies

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Abstract

This paper analyses Kuwaiti undergraduate students’ attitudes towards extensive and intensive reading, and the strategies instructors employ to motivate their students to do the required reading. Reading is the principal method of acquiring knowledge which enables students to learn about themselves and the world around them. Unfortunately literature and teachers’ accounts illustrate a lack of habitual reading in Gulf Arab society (Shannon, 2003). The study used qualitative research methods to assess students’ and instructors’ perspectives; the student participants completed questionnaires and the instructors were interviewed. Findings of this research suggest that college students in Kuwait do intensive reading when reading is a compulsory component of the course, but not necessarily enjoy doing it. Instructors all agree that Kuwaiti students read less than an average college student and have almost no interest in reading for pleasure. The study is expected to help practitioners to have a better understanding of their students’ strengths and weaknesses in reading and make the necessary changes in the curriculum to create more opportunities and instil a greater interest in reading.

Keywords: extensive reading, intensive reading, reading habits of college students
Introduction

Reading is not only a way of acquiring new information and knowledge; it also builds maturity and widens awareness of contemporary issues (Kim & Anderson, 2011). In their study with adult readers, Kirsch and Guthrie (1984) find that reading also contributes significantly to job success, career development, and ability to respond to change. Reading is also regarded as one of the most important components in language learning. Especially when learners choose the text themselves, their motivation and confidence increase, which creates a more positive attitude towards reading and language learning, making students more effective language users (Blair, 2009).

Reading is a complex process and reading habits take time to develop. Shen (2006) identifies reading habits, as how often, how much, and what the readers read. A good reading habit is important for the development of personalities and mental capacities. By reading books frequently and having a good reading habit, the reader is able to analyse others’ ideas, which helps one think more critically (Cunningham & Stanovich, 2001).

Reading has traditionally been divided into two types: intensive and extensive. Extensive reading entails learners reading as much as possible, for the purpose of pleasure or information, and is usually self-selected (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009) whereas intensive reading may be described as the practice of particular reading skills, language features and close linguistic study of text. Intensive reading is predominantly used in English language teaching (ELT) throughout the world (Erfanpour, 2013). The general understanding, particularly among ELT practitioners, is that reading comprehension can be achieved by using both reading approaches in a complimentary way. For example, where extensive reading is encouraged, the teacher may have all the students read the same text so they can discuss the topic together or learn a specific skill such as writing an outline. In a class where intensive reading is mostly used, students may be asked to read texts of their own choice to report back on, in either an oral or written format.

Despite the importance of cultivating a healthy reading habit, recent research suggests that a growing number of young people do not read for pleasure. Furthermore, literature confirms a lack of reading culture or habitual reading in the Gulf Arab society: the average Arab child reads “six minutes” a year in comparison to 12,000 minutes his or her Western counterpart spends reading, according to the Arab Thought Foundation’s 4th annual cultural development report (Al-Yacoub, 2012; Maqbool, 2015). The same report also adds that an Arab individual on average reads a quarter of a page a year compared to the 11 books read by an American and seven books by a British person. Another survey on reading habits in the Middle East, in April 2011, reaches similar conclusions. Only 1 in 5 read on a regular basis and among those under 25 — nearly 65 per cent of the 3,667 questioned, about 1 in 3 seldom or never read a book for pleasure (Al-Yacoub, 2012).

The lack of enthusiasm for reading among Arabs could also be observed in ELT classes. The place of English in the Arab countries is important as it is appreciated as the language of wider international communication and of business and technology. Also Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries’ learners of English enjoy an advantage over many of their fellow Arabs as they use English in their daily lives because of the multinational and multilingual nature of the residents. However, despite the extensive use of English as a means of communication,
many Kuwaiti and other Gulf Arab students experience difficulties in learning English. English language teachers in Kuwait and in other GCC countries say that many students struggle to read at a level of proficiency appropriate to their current and future needs.

The problems of Arabic learners of English with English reading comprehension are documented by some data taken from the IELTS Annual Review of 2010 and 2011 (See Table 1). The data show that mean scores on reading tests were low for test-takers with Arabic as their mother tongue. The mean scores obtained by GCC students on both reading tests were the lowest among 40 countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IELTS mean band scores for GCC Countries</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kuwait 2010</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kuwait 2011</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Oman 2010</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oman 2011</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Qatar 2010</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Qatar 2011</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KSA 2010</strong></td>
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<td><strong>KSA 2011</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UAE 2010</strong></td>
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<td><strong>UAE 2011</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Researchers looking into the reasons for the low reading proficiency level of Arabic learners of English cite some major factors such as lack of a ‘reading culture’ at home, in school and in the wider community; native language reading standards; cultural schemata; methods of teaching; backwash from testing; and learner motivation, interest and attitude (O’Sullivan, 2009). Also, experts define the keys to building reading comprehension as exposure, practice, and frequency of repetitions, nevertheless the oral culture which Arab children come from does not encourage them to read enough to develop strong literacy skills. While explicit instruction is supportive, text structure knowledge is indispensable for reading fluency and is an outgrowth of extensive reading experience (as cited in Bendriss & Golkowska, 2011).
In addition to little support for extensive reading at home and at school, and lack of critical reading skills, researchers frequently cite diglossia (having two dialects) and late exposure to Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as some of the reasons why Arab children find it difficult to develop reading competence (as cited in Bendriss & Golkowska, 2011). Horn (2015) states that despite the existence of MSA, different peoples in different countries use their own distinctive vernaculars (collectively referred to as Dialectal Arabic, or DA), which are grammatically and lexically less complex. DA has an exclusively oral form and is hardly ever written, which, according to Horn (2015) creates an obstacle in the process of reading acquisition. Arab children spend the first years of their lives with their families who do not speak to them in MSA. Thus, children encounter some difficulties when they start to read and write as they suddenly have to cope with a language that is syntactically, lexically, grammatically and phonologically different from theirs (Abu-Rabia, 2000). Unlike children from England, for example, who can expect to hear the same sentences they read in an English book or newspaper from their parents, Arab children start their schooling with the impression that reading is an academically arduous task, disconnected from the verbal reality of their world.

**Purpose of the study**

Reports like the one prepared by the Arab Thought Foundation (Al-Yacoub, 2012; Maqbool, 2015) and personal experiences of English and language teachers in Kuwait and in other Arab countries imply that many students struggle to read at a level appropriate to their current and future needs. However, there is a lack of literature in students’ reading interests in Kuwait or the Gulf region and very little is known about the college students’ reading habits. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyse the reading habits of Kuwaiti college students in an effort to understand the main reason behind their reluctance to read generally and in English. The study will try to answer the following questions:

- What are the Kuwaiti undergraduate students’ attitudes towards extensive reading?
- What are the Kuwaiti undergraduate students’ attitudes towards intensive reading?
- Do the Kuwaiti undergraduate students’ attitudes towards extensive and intensive reading show similar patterns?
- What strategies do teachers employ to motivate their students to do intensive reading?

**Method**

The study used a qualitative research design in both strands. The qualitative data collection tool used in the first strand of the study was a questionnaire that contained 5 open ended questions requiring students to give short answers. The participants were 54 students – 20 male, 34 female – who took ENG 112 (Freshman Composition 2) from the author of the research. Besides writing a research paper, intensive reading is also a major component of this course and students are asked to read some essays, participate in class discussions, present their interpretations, and learn some key words related to the essays. Their comprehension of the reading texts is assessed through biweekly quizzes. The student papers were anonymous in order to encourage them to write their true feelings regarding the reading component of the course and their attitude toward reading in general. The questions were as follows:

1. Did you enjoy reading stories as part of your Freshmen Composition (Eng 112) course? Please explain why or why not.
2. Did you study for the quizzes? How long did you spend every week on average to read the story and study the vocabulary?
3. a. Other than schoolwork, do you read at home in your free time? If yes, how often?
   b. What do you read? Can you name some of your favourite books/ authors or anything that you read?
4. How does reading make you feel?

In the second strand of the study eight instructors who taught ENG 112 during the time of the study were interviewed regarding their students’ attitudes towards reading and the strategies the instructors adopt in the classroom to motivate them to read. All of the instructors had experience teaching writing and reading skills to nationalities other than Kuwaiti, therefore they were able to make comparisons based on their personal teaching experiences.

The questions that were conducted to instructors were as follows:

1. What are your experiences and impressions about Kuwaiti students' reading habits?
2. What are the causes of these reading habits?
3. What are your solutions to overcome the problems encountered in reading classes?
4. What is your approach towards the use of technology in reading classes?

In the first strand, student papers, and in the second strand interview texts were coded and categorically analysed. The raw data was converted into categories by identifying and underlining key words and phrases reflecting student attitudes and instructors’ perspectives.

Qualitative research findings and their interpretation were created by analysing the views of participants under certain categories. Due to the word count limitations of the article, only a few direct quotes were taken for each main theme to ensure internal reliability. No corrections were made in student quotes and even faulty uses of language were preserved.

**Researcher’s Role**
In qualitative research, the “researcher is the instrument” (as cited in Golafshani, 2003); therefore, explicitly identifying oneself assumes an importance that it might not have in quantitative research. In this study, the researcher has been familiar with the reading habits and attitudes of Kuwaiti undergraduate students and she included her own students as well as her colleagues’ students. Due to previous experiences, she may bring certain biases to this study. Although every effort has been made to ensure objectivity, these biases may shape the way she views and understands the data she collects and the way she interprets participants’ experiences.

**Findings of the First Strand**

1. **Overall perceptions of the intensive reading component**
   The first question of the qualitative survey was: “Did you enjoy reading stories as part of your Eng 112 course?” The question also asked students to give a brief explanation as to why they enjoyed or did not enjoy the experience. Out of 54 students, 23 students said they enjoyed the reading component of the course, whereas 22 of them said they did not enjoy it. Six students said they partially enjoyed reading the assigned essays.
The most commonly expressed reason for liking the reading component is ‘the essays and stories were very interesting’. This was mentioned by almost all the students who said they enjoyed the compulsory reading component of the course.

The second major reason for enjoying the experience was more pragmatic, as some students had positive perceptions due to the contributions of the reading component to their language skills, such as reading, vocabulary and learning new things. Most students mentioned both reasons, and the following student quotes could give good examples to see this combined reason clearly:

“I enjoyed reading stories as part of my Eng 112 course because they were really interesting and it helped me learn new words and with my writing skills” (St 3).

“Yes I enjoyed reading stories as part of my coursework because I found them very interesting, different, and new themes and genres. In addition the stories were very beneficial and useful as I learned some lessons from them” (St 1).

“I actually enjoyed reading the stories because it taught me a lot of different vocabulary. Plus it is a fun way of getting grades and it also pushed me into reading more than I already do” (St 9).

Another reason expressed by a few students was “reading gave them a break from other courses”. Although this was expressed by only three students, it was nice to see that for some students intensive reading had the same effect as extensive reading and they did not see reading only as a course requirement.

“I took 5 subjects this term which is quite a pressure on me; taking English and reading stories made me take a break from all the pressure I was in” (St 22).

“Yes because it gave me a break my other classes and it was different, plus I really liked half of the short essays” (St 16).

Almost half of the respondents (22 students) gave a negative response to the same question and said they didn’t enjoy reading the essays in the course. The major reasons given for not enjoying this experience were: they don’t like reading anyway, the essays were hard to understand, long and boring, they have more important courses, exams etc. to study, and they like reading other genres, i.e. the essays were not their type of reads. The student quotes below clarify the reasons for the negative perceptions:

“Well, not that much. I do not like reading in general. Moreover, most of the stories weren’t very appealing to me” (St 49).

“Honestly I found the stories really long and I found it difficult to remember some details in the story” (St 50).

“No, I didn’t enjoy reading the stories because most of them are boring and long. I have other exams like accounting and Math to prepare for that is why reading a story is a waste of time.” (St 44).
“I didn’t really enjoy this stories because these kind of stories are not my favourite. I like reading fantasy books, I don’t like reading real life and hard stories that I don’t understand” (St 36).

Six students said they sometimes liked reading or liked some of the essays they had to read. Their reasons were similar to the negative responses: stories were long, boring and difficult.

“Sometimes yes and sometimes no because the stories were sometimes not that interesting for me because I feel like we must read it to get grades, but I wish it was enjoyable too” (St 24).

“Sometimes I enjoyed it, but sometimes I didn’t because I don’t understand the words” (St 30).

Responses to the first question asking about their attitude towards the intensive reading requirement of the course show that half the students enjoyed reading the essays in the textbook, but unfortunately half of them did not due to their busy schedule, boring essays and a lack of reading habit. A minority sometimes enjoyed reading the texts, the reasons for not reading all of them were similar to those who did not enjoy the experience, such as not finding them all interesting and not wanting to spend too much time on English and reading.

2. Student perceptions of their study time for the quizzes.

Students were assessed biweekly through vocabulary and comprehension tests related to the essays they were assigned. This component comprises 20% of the coursework and to pass the course students need to study for the tests. This question asked whether the students studied for the quizzes and if they did, how long they spent to read the story and study the vocabulary.

Interestingly, the number of students who said they studied were 37 out of 54, which shows a higher number than the ones who enjoyed reading the essays. 37 students read all the essays and studied the vocabulary lists. Most of them spent an average of one to two hours reading the story and studying the unknown words. The shortest time spent is 30 minutes, the longest time is three to four days.

The quotes taken from students are given below to describe their perceptions of study times:

“Yes, during the quizzes I study hard to get good grades. Usually I spend 3-4 hours” (St 29).

“I studied for the quizzes the day before. It didn’t take me too long to read the story. I only read it the night before and I went through the vocabulary fast” (St 42).

“I studied for all the quizzes we took. I spent 3-4 days for reading the stories and one day for the quizzes” (St 17).

Sixteen students said they sometimes studied. These students said they sometimes forgot they had a quiz. When they studied, they scanned the essay and glanced at the vocabulary list. They asked their friends about the highlights of the essay.

Students who said they studied for some of the quizzes are quoted below:
“Yes, sometimes an hour for the vocabulary and when I have a lot of work I just took a look at them” (St 32).

“Actually I do not always study for the quizzes. If I study for the quiz, I only study for the vocabulary and it take half an hour. Sometimes I read the story but not completely” (St 38).

“Sometimes. The quizzes were on Sunday which is the first day after the weekend. I play video games and relax on weekend and forget about the work I have to do which sometimes makes me forget to study” (St 28).

“I study the vocabulary and get just highlighted information of the story” (St 40).

Only one student acknowledged that he or she did not study enough for the quizzes.

“Most quizzes I did not study for it because I always forget about it and most of the stories are long” (St 33).

The numbers and student quotes show that whether they liked it or not, most students prepared for the essays either by reading the essay thoroughly for days or just scanning the highlights and glancing at the vocabulary. Very few students said they did not do enough work regarding the quizzes.

3. Student perceptions of their extensive reading habits

The third question in the questionnaire wanted to find out about students’ extensive reading habits and attitudes. Most students said that they read the compulsory essays and only half of them said they enjoyed reading them. The purpose of this question was to see whether they read when there is no external requirement or pressure. This question has two sections, a. “Other than schoolwork, do you read at home?”, and b. “Please name some books and/or authors you read”

a. Do they read?

Thirty nine students said they read at home in their free time. 15 students responded negatively to this question.

Eleven students said they read in English, ten prefer reading in Arabic and six of them read in both languages. The frequency of reading ranges from one to two hours every day to sometimes and once a month. Most students expressed a preference for online reading rather than reading printed materials. Some quotes below from “reading students” can give us an idea about undergraduate students’ voluntary reading attitudes and habits:

“I read at home a lot, mostly Arabic because I am fascinated by the Arabic language. I read poetry, literature, novels and educational books as well. I read at least 2 books a month, but I read many articles, something close to 3-4 articles a week” (St 37).

“I read in the social media in both languages, newspaper, sometimes magazines and stories” (St 45).
“I tend to read more at home in my free time. I normally read more in English than I do in Arabic because my education and interest was in English. My reading time is for about four to six hours a week” (St 22).

“Yes I actually read English books mostly, but if I consider reading online then yes I do read a lot. But the books, to me it depends on my mood if I wanted to read or not” (St 9).

“I read quite a lot. I have to finish a book or two each day. Even in my breaks I read, it became a habit and I can’t stop reading. I prefer English more than Arabic. Usually or every day, so basically reading became a part of my life” (St 41).

Fifteen students expressed that they don’t read other than schoolwork in their free time. Some students explained why they don’t read and what they do alternatively. The most common reason for not reading is that they find reading books boring. Most of the students who responded negatively associate reading with books only and say they don’t read books, but they read articles or newspapers online, although the question does not explicitly ask them whether they read books or something else. Students who don’t read have other pastime activities, most of which are taking place in front of a screen.

“No, I have better things to do at home” (St 53).

“No, I am wasting my time by watching TV or doing something” (St 47).

“No, I never read any books or poems at all, neither in English or Arabic. Reading is my least preferable thing to do. I only read if I am forced to, i.e. because it is important for my studies” (St 49).

“I do not read books other than schoolwork. But when I read, I like to read articles online, articles that are scientific attract me. Articles about new inventions also attract me. If I saw any topic while scrolling down the pages that I am on, and the topic was eye catching I would directly go into it, no matter if it was in English or Arabic (St 31).

b. What do they read?

Students who expressed a liking for reading in their free time mentioned some genres and/or some book titles and authors. The reading list could be summarized as follows:

**Genres:** Literature (novels, stories, poems), Newspapers, Magazines, Blogs, Islamic books, Biographies / History

**Book titles / authors:** Harry Potter, Twilight, The Secret, Hunger Games, Danielle Steel, Agatha Christie, Fifty Shades of Grey, Stephen King, Jane Austen.

These are some frequently mentioned genres, names and titles that are elicited from student responses. The list shows students prefer reading popular and trendy books, best-sellers and also online reading materials such as newspapers and magazines. Islamic books and Quran are also mentioned by students who expressed a preference for reading in Arabic.

4. Student perceptions of their feelings towards reading

When students were asked to express the way they feel about reading, 37 out of 54, approximately three quarters of them, expressed a positive attitude towards reading. The majority
of the students like reading and they feel reading makes them happy, calm, and relaxed. They also feel “more sophisticated, confident, and more knowledgeable as a result of reading” (St 37).

“The moment you open the page and escape from the world into a story that is more interesting, get to the characters’ world” (St 10).

However, 16 students expressed a negative attitude towards reading and they said they find it boring and a waste of time, they get sleepy when they read, and they think reading is a hard work.

When reading is a compulsory component of the course, Kuwaiti undergraduate students read more than they normally do, but half of them don’t enjoy doing it. Other than textbooks, they also read magazines, newspapers, and literature. The majority prefer English to Arabic. Around a quarter of the students find reading quite boring, but the majority of them find reading inspiring, they see it as a sophisticated activity, particularly if they like the reading material.

Findings of the Second Strand

1. Experiences and impressions about Kuwaiti students’ reading habits

All the instructors that were interviewed agreed that Kuwaiti students are not motivated to read and they have little interest in reading for pleasure. All instructors have teaching experiences outside Kuwait (mostly the USA, England, and Egypt) and they stated that Kuwaiti students read less than an average college or high school level student they have taught. Three instructors pointed out the differences between girls and boys and added that two genders behave very differently in their reading habits.

“One day one of my students said I am wasting my life reading. That tells you the attitude of students here. ... They tell me they have better things to do than reading” (P 3).

“The general attitude is ‘why are we doing it? It is not necessary’”(P 2).

“(Referring to the male students) they are almost proud of telling you that they don’t read, they say things like ‘this is the longest essay I have ever read’. I don’t understand why they want to embarrass themselves saying such things” (P 4).

2. Causes for the lack of motivation to read

The instructors gave various reasons for the lack of motivation their Kuwaiti undergraduate students have. The list below shows the commonly mentioned reasons:

- It is an oral culture, not reading-writing. The culture does not value reading as much as speaking.
- Global decline in reading as a result of an interest in technology & online activities
- They are not trained to read, no emphasis on reading in family or in school.
- They are not motivated to learn anything because they are financially sated.
- They don’t find the essays and themes interesting

Some direct quotes taken from interviews exemplify the perspectives of instructors:

“Possibly the materials they read aren’t that interesting to them. The texts from our books tend to be Western based, except for “The Telephone” which has somewhat Arab culture in
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it. Students still were not enthusiastic to read it and even discuss it. Yet, with this being said, they read on their mobiles all day long when it comes to social media. Possibly because it is interesting to them” (P 7).

“This is not a reading culture, it is an oral culture but I remember from my father who used to teach at Kuwait University 20-25 years ago that Kuwaiti students were more committed to education and they would read whatever they were assigned. They have changed a lot. I think there is a change in the younger generation and now they are more computer and technology oriented. They may read something on the internet, but not in the book. I think this is a global thing” (P 3).

“If you drive a Maserati and are just back from the Maldives, you wouldn’t have the intrinsic motivation to read more and succeed at college. They think they will inherit the father’s business and that’s it” (P 4).

As pointed, the major cause for the lack of motivation to read is the cultural and social emphasis on speaking and listening rather than reading and writing. However the latest developments in technology have also impacted the already low levels of interest, diverting young people’s attention to online activities.

3. Solutions to overcome this problem
Strategies adopted by the instructors could be listed as below:

- Grading (quizzes, presentations, participation in discussions are rewarded and graded)
- Interactive & Oral Discussion
  - One student presents the essay and the rest of the class assess, ask questions
  - Teacher asks thought provoking questions
  - Team work, pair work, competition
- Connecting
  - Find texts that match their background/interests,
  - Finding themes in the texts that may attract interest
  - Coming up with supporting materials depending on gender and background of students
- Reduce the fear of reading
  - Using traditional strategies, skimming, scanning, finding the main idea etc.
- Read it in class (open your books and read silently)

Some reading instructors have made the following comments:

“I try to get students to find the connection in the stories they read with what relates to them in their lives. I try to get them to think about what the author is trying to get across and why the subject is important” (P 7).

“They have to read the essay and have the quiz. I also ask 2-3 students to do a presentation on the essay and I tell them the rest will have to ask questions to the presenters, they have to participate. Everybody gets evaluation sheets; they have to evaluate the presenters. They write comments, what they have missed, what they have
misunderstood, so it becomes a very interactive activity. Reading becomes an oral discussion and they respond more to oral activities. I am not only grading them but also allowing them to use their oral skills. This strategy is working very well because 70% of them come to class prepared” (P 3).

“I force them to read, many often we read in class. If the stories are not very long, I give them a limited amount of time and we do silent reading or I give them quizzes. This is the only thing I could do” (P 4).

4. Role of technology in reading classes
When interviewees were asked about the role of technology and their attitude towards the role of technology in the classroom, they generally made comments related to their students’ interest in reading online. Very few of them gave details about what they themselves do to increase students’ attention to the reading assignment in hand. Some examples are given below:

“Students do like to use their IPads. Many students have asked if the textbooks have an e-book that they can download easier. Technology has helped the fact that they use it for their own entertainment such as Facebook, Twitter and so on. They do read for entertainment purposes, but not necessarily in English” (P 7).

“I tried to find some thought-provoking, discussion questions, I posted them on the portal and I graded the classroom discussions. At least I accomplished them to open up the book and read that part of the essay. I always try to empathise with my students, “read the assignment, come to class, sit down, answer the comprehension questions...” I find it boring and I try to spice the lesson up and in this case technology comes handy. Even simple things like opening a Wikispace on the portal and asking them to respond to the question... interactive discussions increase their motivation to get involved in the text assigned” (P 5).

“If students are required to follow a line of argument through sustained multi-paragraph prose then I don’t see technology helping to that. Technology and instructional material have compounded the MTV generation words ...until reading looks like your bulletin board... That reading will not achieve the kind of reading ability they need. It dazzles, it keeps them busy like Fisher-Price toys dangling over the baby’s crib. If that is still what we expect them to do, I can’t see technology is helping us with that” (P 1).

Results and Discussion
Research carried out around the globe show similar results in undergraduate students’ reading attitudes and habits. Malaysian Polytechnic students spend quite a significant amount of time surfing the Internet, playing computer/mobile games and other technology-related activities compared to reading. Reading is only regarded as a minor activity during their leisure time. They also feel that there are other ways to learn new things than by reading as they find reading boring and not motivating (Annamalai & Muniandy, 2013).

A study done on 395 American college students showed that a staggering 62% of the students surveyed spend an hour or less reading their assigned materials and only 6.1% spend more than one hour reading. Only 24.8% of the participants complete assigned readings before class. Approximately 89% of the students in the study believed they could receive a C or better
without completing any of the assigned readings (Baier, Hendricks, Gorden, Hendricks, & Cochran, 2011).

A study on three Swedish universities with 1200 students demonstrates that many students report some degree of non-compliance with reading assignments and a small group of students express active resistance to completing reading assignments. Although textbooks were perceived as valuable, students reported a preference for learning course content from other resources, such as lectures and lecture notes. Textbooks were perceived as alternatives, rather than complements, to attending class (Pecorari, Shaw, Irvine, Malmstrom, & Mezek, 2012).

Research studies seem to demonstrate that college students are not necessarily good readers. Even though college students are often required to read advanced academic texts, they are not necessarily equipped to evaluate and synthesize the information (Kim & Anderson, 2011). What is more, there is a global reluctance to read printed materials. Students prefer spending time on online activities. They read more when the reading material is online, as it is always accessible, there is no risk of losing the book / printed material. They could access anywhere and anytime, which provides them with a great flexibility.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings, with this new generation of college students, course designers should make modifications in the way courses are delivered. First of all, if they want to encourage students to read, reading must be compulsory component of the course as students feel obligated to read to get good grades. However, keeping in mind that online course materials attract more student interest than printed materials, faculty members should incorporate Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into course format, and keep up with the latest technological innovations in education. The design and presentation are also of great importance in keeping the students’ interest. Interesting and useful reading materials should be accessible online as young people are mostly interested in the World Wide Web, social networking, blogging, etc.

While adapting education systems to the constantly developing technological advancements, training of educators is of great importance. Teachers should be encouraged to utilize online texts. Students stated that motivation by teachers is effective in developing reading habits.

The author would like to conclude the paper by citing a student who seems to have summarized the motto of this generation in his response: “Reading books: sucks, Reading online: rocks!”

About the Author:
Inan Deniz Erguvan received her PhD in Educational Administration in Marmara University, Istanbul in 2010 and joined Gulf University for Science Technology, Kuwait in 2010. Dr Erguvan’s research interests mainly lay within educational administration, in particular higher education management. She analysed the impact of privatisation of higher education institutions for her dissertation and she is making cross cultural analysis on this phenomenon. She has also worked on topics such as internationalization of universities, the use of internet communication technologies in the ELT classroom, and reading habits of undergraduate students.
References


Language Learning Strategies for English Writing: What Can Be Learned from Syrian University Students

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Abstract
This mixed-methods study attempts to investigate the Syrian students learning strategies with respect to learning English writing. The study enquires into an under-researched, if researched at all, context; that is English-major students and non-English-major students at two universities in Syria. One significant aim for carrying out this research is to help learners at the tertiary level ponder over why a certain strategy can be appropriate, or in fact inappropriate, to use at a certain point of their learning. This is why the research in hand has not confined itself to the mere elicitation of strategies used, but went beyond that to evoke why the reported strategies have or have not worked for the learners. The study has succeeded in extracting 13 strategies which, although context-specific, can be applicable to other contexts. The findings of this study have been related to three main areas often discussed in the literature of language learning strategies, i.e. learner autonomy, effective language learner and teacher development.

Key words: language learning strategies, Syrian university students, writing strategies, mixed methods research
1. Introduction

The view of the language learner has become much wider in its scope now than it was in the past. The learner is no longer an inactive performer who is supposed to act in response to the requirements of the teacher or the syllabus. Rather, the learner is “a problem solver and reflective organiser of the knowledge and skills on offer in the language exposure and required for effective language use” (McDonough 1999: 2). Language learning strategies (LLSs) can provide myriad of means to enable the language learner to achieve these ends. It is further believed that LLSs are amongst the most influential factors in the process of learning a foreign language. They can effectively assist foreign/second language learners in mastering different language skills on both levels, receptive and productive (O’Malley & Chamot 1990).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Language Learning Strategies Definitions in the Literature

The concept of strategy is not easy to define (Ellis 2015; Griffiths & Incecay 2016). In the literature, some view the concept as somewhat “fuzzy” (Ellis 1994: 529), others as “elusive” (Wenden 1991: 7) and another group finds it “fluid” (Gu 2005: 2 cited in Griffiths 2008: 83). However, several attempts have been made to define it (Cohen 2007; Cohen 2011; Davies 1995; Griffiths 2008; Jones 1988; Oxford 1990; Schmeck 1988; Weinstein & Mayer 1986 to name just a few). Ellis (1994: 532-533), nonetheless, realises the difficulty of phrasing a complete definition of the term. Therefore, he opts for listing the characteristics of strategies in a way considered one of the most comprehensive approaches to define learning strategies; the present study adopts this view of strategies:

1. Strategies refer to both general approaches and specific actions or techniques used to learn an L2.
2. Strategies are problem-oriented – the learner deploys a strategy to overcome some particular learning problem.
3. Learners are generally aware of the strategies they use and can identify what they consist of if they are asked to pay attention to what they are doing/thinking.
4. Strategies involve linguistic behaviour (such as requesting the name of an object) and non-linguistic (such as pointing at an object so as to be told its name).
5. Linguistic strategies can be performed in the L1 and in the L2.
6. Some strategies are behavioural while others are mental, thus some strategies are directly observable, while others are not.
7. In the main, strategies contribute indirectly to learning by providing learners with data about the L2 which they can then process. However, some strategies may also contribute directly (for example, memorisation strategies directed at specific lexical items or grammatical rules).
8. Strategy use varies considerably as a result of both the kind of task the learner is engaged in and individual learner preferences.

In fact, Ellis (1994) is not the only researcher to avoid defining the term “strategies”. Macaro (2006) also gave up trying to define it in favour of listing its main characteristics.
2.2. **Effective Language Learners and the Use of LLSs**

Studies which were conducted in the 1980s and 1990s in addition to some conducted more recently have shed light on the significance of using learning strategies in the context of learning a foreign language. Rubin (1987) and Green & Oxford (1995) come to the conclusion that effective learners implement particular sets of strategies that help them in maximising their achievement in second language learning. In fact, a number of studies (e.g. Chamot & El-Dinary 1999; Griffiths 2013; Macaro 2001; Nunan 1997; Oxford & Burry-Stock 1995) emphasise that there is a positive correlation between the use of strategies and foreign/second language learning achievement and motivation. One factor that can help explain this positive correlation is that learning strategies help extend the process of learning well beyond the confines of language classes in formal or informal education; the underlying belief here is that, alone, classrooms are not enough to enable achievement of fluency and competency in a foreign language. To this end, Fedderholdt (1998) argues that language learners who are able to implement a wide variety of LLSs can better improve their language skills than those who are not.

2.3. **Language Learning Strategies and Learner Autonomy**

Shifting the focus of learning from what to learn to how to learn shows a close link between learning strategies and one of the most sought after aspects of learning in general, and language learning in particular; that is learner autonomy (where learners become self-responsible for their learning). Oxford (2001) argues that the use of learning strategies can well lead to self-management and self-reliance in language use and in language learning. Put differently, learning strategies are necessary components for learner autonomy. Further, Oxford (2008) explains how the concept of learning strategies and tactics overlaps with the concept of learner autonomy. She maintains that learner autonomy entails, at least partly, decisions made by learners on the use of certain learning strategies and tactics that pertain to the confronted tasks and to their goals.

3. **Significance of the Study**

3.1. **The Syrian Context as a Research Focus**

The importance of this study lies in the fact that it is conducted in the Syrian tertiary context which no previous research, to the best knowledge of the author, has explored yet. One significant aim for carrying out this research is to help learners at the tertiary level orchestrate their strategy use more effectively and to assist them in calculating why a certain strategy can be appropriate to use at a certain point of their learning. This has been worked on through investigating why the reported strategies have or have not worked for the learners. In other words, the aim here is to show learners how to avoid one characteristic of less proficient language learners, i.e. using strategies desperately without recognising “how to identify the needed strategies” (Oxford 2008: 51).

3.2. **Alternative Method for Data Collection to Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)**

It is very uncommon to find a study about LLSs that does not refer to the SILL; this study is no exception. In fact, the SILL, developed by Oxford (1990), has been the most commonly used scale to measure learners’ use of LLSs in English as a second language (ESL) and English
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as a foreign language (EFL) settings (Dörnyei 2005 LoCastro 1994; White, Schramm & Chamot, 2007). Nonetheless, there are two main issues to relying on the SILL for data collection in the Syrian context. First, some concerns are voiced in the literature about the sensitivity of the SILL to the learners’ concerns in EFL contexts as the SILL was developed in an ESL context (Locastro 1994; Locastro 1995). Second, although the SILL is capable of producing standardised data, which can be very helpful in providing group summaries, quantitative data or statistical treatment, it does not allow space for learners’ creative responses (Oxford 1993) which are much sought after in this study.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Methods in LLSs

Researchers studying LLSs normally list seven research methods: oral interviews, written questionnaires, observation, verbal reports, diaries and journals, and recollection studies (Cohen 2011; White, Schramm & Chamot, 2007; McDonough 1999). It is important to keep in mind when carrying out a research in this field that it is a real challenge to design a study investigating the use of LLSs with a good level of accuracy (Cohen 2011). In fact, an analysis of the aforementioned methods shows advantages and disadvantages to the use of each method (Cohen 2011; Cohen & Scott 1996; Oxford 2011). This has led the researcher to consider a mixed-methods approach in order to minimise such real challenges. To this end, McDonough (1999), after listing the research methods in LLSs, puts forth that, individually, each method has its own problems. He continues to say that using only one of the methods can be dangerous as it can predetermine the kind of results the researcher would obtain. Therefore, McDonough (1999) and Oxford (2011) suggest a way out through triangulating a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in order to stabilise the data and interpret it more credibly; this is why a mixed-methods approach is adopted for the purpose of this research.

4.2. Research Design

As the mixed methods approach is adopted in the present study, semi-structured interviews are combined with a self-administered questionnaire to seek answers for each of the following research questions:

1. What strategies do Syrian English-major students and non-English-major students believe were/have been: 1) useful and 2) not useful (if any) for them in developing their English writing, during their university years, inside and outside the classroom?

2. What strategies do Syrian English-major students and non-English-major students believe were/have been or would be/would have been useful in developing their English writing during their university years, inside and outside the classroom?

4.3. Interviews

Because of their flexibility and fluidity, the interviews were semi-structured guided by the following questions:
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RQ1:
● Which good strategies help/helped you improve your writing?
● Had you tried using strategies in the past and then realised they were not useful? If yes can you tell me about them?

RQ2:
● What problems do/did you want to overcome in writing?
● Can you now think of strategies you could have used to help you overcome these problems?
● What advice would you give Syrian learners to overcome similar problems?

4.3.1. Participants in the Interviews
A total of eight Syrian EFL learners from Damascus University and Aleppo University were interviewed for the qualitative part of the study. These eight learners were three English-major students: two males and one female (all graduates) and five non-English-major students: two males and three females (three graduates and two students in their last two years of their academic study). They were a convenience sample not easily found because of the volatile situation and the difficult time Syrians were experiencing inside and outside Syria. Their ages range from 21 to 29 years old.

4.4. Survey Questionnaires
The data generated from 14 interviews have not been seen to provide a satisfactory level of understanding of the research inquiry. Therefore, it has been necessary to complement and verify the findings of the interviews through administering a questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed utilising the data generated from the interviews, as an analysis of the interviews preceded the formation of the questionnaire. Through this analysis, the researcher has been able to extract the strategies reported to be used by the learners and their views about the effectiveness of using them. Next, the researcher listed the strategies in a logical, easy-to-follow order, asking the respondents to rate the level of usefulness of each strategy for first and second year Syrian university students, and to add any comments they want about each strategy (optional). At the end of the list of strategies for each skill, the respondents have been given the opportunity to add any other strategy they wanted to add, with how useful they think these strategies are.

4.4.1 Participants in the Questionnaire
A total of 72 EFL learners from Damascus University and Aleppo University participated in the quantitative part of the study. These 72 learners were 40 English-major students (24 males and 16 females) and 32 non-English-major students (19 males and 13 females who major/majored in different academic fields of study e.g. chemistry, bioengineering, computer engineering, economics, Islamic law, psychology and sociology). Using an online survey has enabled me to reach out to Syrian learners who are disseminated around the globe, e.g. in Syria, the United Kingdom, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, India and South Korea. The age range of the participants was between 20 and 31.
5. Findings

In this section, the strategies reported to be used by the Syrian learners are listed in groups. This is followed by the students’ views about each strategy (negative or positive) as expressed in the interviews. After that, the data collected through the interviews will be triangulated with the questionnaire findings. When I present the findings obtained from the questionnaire below, for ease of reading, I will only present what the majority (over 50%) of the respondents said. Also, when I state that the majority of respondents found a certain strategy useful, ‘useful’ will include ‘very useful’ as well; similarly, ‘not useful’ will include ‘not that useful’ as well as ‘not useful at all’. Moreover, when a sequence of the questionnaire results confirms (or disconfirms) the findings of the interviews, I will comment on them as a group rather than separately.

5.1. Writing Learning Strategies

5.1.1. Meaningful Practice

Table 1 Meaningful practice in writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Mentioned by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Keep practising writing on a regular basis.</td>
<td>Abeer, Lina, Faez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Write a diary in English, even if you do not write much.</td>
<td>Maha, Kamal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Interviews:
  Lina said she could not emphasise enough the significance of practice in improving writing (no. 1): “Practice is what makes the difference between a novice and an expert writer. Being regular is also a key. I used to practise writing before exams and felt it was getting better but, alas, I did not practise regularly”. When talking about strategy 2, Kamal found out that keeping a diary in English had a beneficial impact on his writing, even though he started with writing “only one sentence, like a wisdom or saying of the day”.

- Questionnaire:
  89.5% of the 38 respondents agreed that strategy 1 was useful: (60.5% very useful; 29% useful). A total of 79% praised strategy 2 as effective: (21.1% very useful; 57.9% useful). The findings in the interviews and questionnaire were consistent in relation to these strategies in that they were in favour of using them.

5.1.2. Cooperation

Table 2 Cooperation in writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Mentioned by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Find a good book that teaches English writing and study it with a friend or a group of friends.</td>
<td>Subhi, Lina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Correspond online with friends in writing.</td>
<td>Laila, Mubeen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Share what you write with friends especially those who are more experienced English writers.</td>
<td>Maha, Abeer and Subhi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interviews:
Subhi stressed the importance of studying a good guide to English writing with a friend or a group of friends (no. 3); students who learn writing following this method benefit immensely from exchange of knowledge, styles and comments. More importantly to Subhi, studying with a friend can “keep you from getting bored and considerably reduce the pain of learning writing”. Laila corresponded with non-Arab friends via e-mail (no. 4). She found that very productive in terms of improving her style and avoiding. Also, by virtue of learning from the e-mails of the non-Arab friends, she found that she could avoid awkward writing structures resulting from thinking in Arabic when she wrote. Moving to strategy 5, Maha believed that sharing what she wrote with a friend was a highly effective strategy: “I had a-one-year-ahead friend. […] She used to read what I write and correct me or present new ideas”.

Questionnaire:
Sixty point five percent, 60.5%, of the respondents approved of the usefulness of strategy 3: (18.4% very useful; 42.1% useful). Seventy eight point nine percent, 78.9%, of the respondents considered strategy 4 useful: (44.7% very useful; 34.2% useful). Strategy 5 was favoured amongst 76.3% of the questionnaire respondents: (34.2% very useful; 42.1% useful). These percentages show that these strategies were not only recommended in the interviews but also in the questionnaire.

5.1.3. Organisation and planning

Table 3 Organisation and planning in writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Mentioned by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Keep a small notebook beside you whenever you go and write down anything interesting you read or hear in English.</td>
<td>Maha, Abeer and Kamal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Overcome “writer’s block” by focusing on the pre-writing stage, where you brainstorm ideas and plan your writing.</td>
<td>Subhi, Faez</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interviews:
Abeer used to keep a small notebook beside her at all times so she could write down anything interesting she read or heard in English (no. 6): “A good part of writing is about inspiration and using powerful expressions. As I wanted to be good at writing, I could not let them go after I was lucky to come across them”. On the other hand, Faez discovered, after he finished his study at university, that one reason behind him finding writing problematic was ignoring the pre-writing stage (no. 7). He stressed that: “the pre-writing stage where I would brainstorm ideas, write an outline and put the key words I was going to use could have immensely helped me to overcome writer’s block and focus my attention on the writing process and techniques rather than on the ideas and words”.

Questionnaire:
The use of strategy 6 was valued as useful by 71.1% of the respondents: (29% very useful; 42.1% useful). The supporters of strategy 7 constituted 81.6% of the overall respondents: (29% very useful; 52.6% useful). Consequently, both of these strategies were perceived as effective in the interviews and the questionnaire as well.
5.1.4. Writing Quality Enhancement

Table 4 Writing quality enhancement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Mentioned by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Use reading to become a better writer. The more you read, the better a writer you will become.</td>
<td>Abeer, Laila and Subhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Develop your academic writing through reading academic works, e.g. journal articles.</td>
<td>Abeer, Lina, Kamal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Find a book that teaches how to complete the writing tasks in English international tests, learn the strategies and rules it gives and study the good writing samples it presents.</td>
<td>Laila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Join active websites or forums where you can show your writing to other members.</td>
<td>Subhi, Mubeen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Always refer to grammar books to study the rules of writing and structure.</td>
<td>Mubeen (negative)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Interviews:**
  
  Abeer emphasised the role of reading in making her writing better (no. 8): “because when I used to read a lot, good parts of the language of the book used to stick in my mind unconsciously. So, I started writing in a better way than I used to, and I could feel I was incorporating stuff from a certain book I have read”. Also, Abeer pointed out that her writing used to sound informal. However, by resorting to reading academic writing, she improved in that aspect (no. 9): “I worked on how I structure my sentence to avoid sounding informal […]. What helped me a lot […] was reading more academic works like journal articles”. Speaking about strategy 10, Laila highlighted the importance of finding books that teaches how to complete the writing tasks in English international tests. These books normally present very practical writing strategies and rules. They also provide many good writing samples that can be imitated. Subhi said that if he was to give an advice to a first-year student concerning developing their writing, he would recommend a strategy that he did not recognise its importance when he was a university student; he would recommend joining active websites or forums where learners can write and show their writing to other members (no. 11): “this is a very good advice because they would not only practise writing but also they would get different types of feedback from different people”. When it came to strategy 12, Mubeen first thought that the more he referred to grammar books to study the rules of writing and structure and do more grammar exercises, the better his writing would become, “but shortly afterwards I realised that this was not the case because the study of grammar became an end instead of a means to an end, which was improving writing”.

- **Questionnaire:**
  
  All the questionnaire respondents, 100%, viewed strategy 8 positively: (79% very useful; 21.1% useful). In relation to strategy 9, the questionnaire findings showed that 94.7% of the respondents found it useful: (52% very useful; 42.1% useful). The use of strategy 10 received the support of 86.9% of the questionnaire respondents: (31.6% very useful; 55.3% useful). Seventy six point three, 76.3%, of the respondents rated strategy 11 as useful: (34.2%
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very useful; 42.1% useful). The questionnaire findings showed 60.5% of the respondents in favour of using **strategy 12**: (26.3% very useful; 34.2% useful). The questionnaire respondents strengthened the recommendations to implement strategies 8, 9, 10 and 11 mentioned in the interviews. However, the negative attitude in the interviews towards **strategy 12** was contradicted in the questionnaire.

### 5.1.5. Maintaining a Positive Attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Mentioned by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Just write. Hold the pen. Nobody is going to judge you for what you write.</td>
<td>Maha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Interviews:**
  Maha strongly suggested that first- and second-year students should “just write” and not worry about what they produce as no one would judge them for what they write (**no. 13**).

- **Questionnaire:**
  The positive view of **strategy 13** in the interviews was not so strongly supported in the questionnaire with 55.3% of the respondents in favour of using it: (21.1% very useful; 34.2% useful).

### 6. Discussion

#### 6.1. The Potential Impact of LLSs: Learner Autonomy, Effective Language Learning and Teacher Development

Most observers and practitioners in the EFL/ESL context believe that helping language learners learn how to learn is crucial for maximising their achievement and for pursuing lifelong learning. In fact, “[m]any current national curricula point to a need to develop learner autonomy in language learning” (Macaro 2001: 20). Nonetheless, there is little consensus about how autonomy can be promoted and how teacher development can be supported so that this end can be attained (Benson and Voller 1997). The findings of this study, whose sample is taken from students at two Syrian universities, support the LLS literature contending that using LLSs is closely linked to promoting learner autonomy.

In fact, the data has shown that the Syrian learners have implemented certain learning strategies (usually a few) in order to rely on themselves and compensate partly for the shortcomings in the Syrian tertiary education system in relation to learning English writing; this was often expressed in the interviews and comment boxes in the questionnaire. Further, in accordance with Oxford’s argument (2001), it is fairly easy to notice that these strategies have led or have the potential of leading learners to more self-management and self-reliance in language learning and in language use; in other words, the use of learning strategies may well help university students function more effectively in their learning of English writing with an adequate level of learner autonomy. Therefore, it may be the case that a purposeful implementation of the learning strategies uncovered throughout the study can be justifiably suggested as a solution to get learners involved actively (O’Malley et al. 1985; Macaro 2001) and self-directedly (Oxford 1990) in the process of learning. This goes to say that, by virtue of
implementing the writing strategies detailed here, productive learning independence can be instilled in learners at the tertiary level who tend to get stereotyped as passive, teacher-dependent in their approach to learning English writing.

A dissection of the root of the problem of the adoption of a passive approach to learning English writing may show that university learners in Syria or in similar learning environments cannot be fully blamed for that as their English teachers are also responsible. English teachers should always think of ways through which they can pass over the learning responsibility to the learners and encourage them to accept it; LLSs are perfect examples of these ways (Macaro 2001; Cohen1998). Cohen (1998: 21) maintains that “language learning and language use strategies can have a major role in helping shift the responsibility for learning off the shoulders of the teachers and onto those of the learners”. Therefore, if the policy makers in Syria, or similar EFL context, take into account the results of this study, it can constitute a reference to educators who want to learn more about how to engage their learners more actively in the process of learning English writing.

7. Conclusion
The two main purposes for carrying out this research have been:
1) identifying the strategies, both useful and not useful, used by Syrian English-major students and non-English-major students to improve English writing skills during university years, inside and outside the classroom;
2) investigating the strategies which the same sample of Syrian learners of English believe have been or would have been useful in developing their writing skills during their university years, inside and outside the classroom.

The research data have been collected using semi-structured interviews (a total of 8 interviewees) and an online survey questionnaire (a total of 72 respondents). The qualitative and quantitative data generated have been triangulated and analysed in depth. The outcome achieved has been 13 language learning strategies related to learning English writing.

About the Author
Hazem Abo Helal is a current PhD candidate at the University of Southampton, UK. His PhD project focuses on teachers’ beliefs and practices with regard to academic English speaking at a university in the UK. His research interests include language learning strategies, teacher education, and teacher cognition.

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Formulaic Language for Improving Communicative Competence

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Abstract
English as a foreign language (EFL) learners’ communicative competence presents a challenge for both students and instructors. Being communicatively competent leads the language user to avoid any kind of breakdown of communication; thus, reaching fluency which is the main aim of foreign language learners (EFL learners). The acquisition of the notion of formulaicity provides a great deal of help for EFL learners to achieve native-like language proficiency and that is the main hypothesis of this study. The main aim of this research is to draw learners’ attention towards formulaic language and to investigate its effects on their communicative competence. To achieve this purpose, the present research is designed to answer the following questions: (1) what is formulaicity? (2) Is the acquisition of formulaic language important for EFL learners to reach communicative competence? (3) Is designing a course for this subject helpful to reach learners’ language aims? An experiment is conducted through a pre and a post test in addition to the treatment of six sessions of instruction to carry out the comparative study using the paired t test result as statistical proof. After the comparison of the pre-test and the post test, the results revealed a substantial progress for the experimental group’s communicative competence and thus their conversational competence as well. As a result, formulaic language needs to be an essential part of EFL learners’ curriculum according to its variation and enormous effects on learners’ communicative competence in both writing and speaking skills.

Keywords: communicative competence, EFL learners, fluency, formulaic language, language acquisition
Introduction

Formulaic Language for Improving Communicative Competence

Being communicatively competent is the main aim of EFL learners; to do so, teachers provide their learners with more exercises focusing on grammatical accuracy through writing tasks. Nevertheless, students aim to be competent in their writing and speaking skills with the use of more complex word forms and combinations to appear fluent and reach a native-like proficiency. High achieving EFL learners actually use some formulaic expressions without knowing the category of the sequence be it correct or wrong. Most of EFL learners try to breakdown formulaic sequences to simplify the meaning of the sentence which is the first mistake they do in addition to the translation to the mother tongue as another strategy adopted by the learners in order to comprehend the meaning of the sentence. This puts the EFL learner in an awkward position where neither the meaning is clear nor the sentence structure is saved.

Erman & Warren (2000) calculate that nearly 58% of the language they analysed as formulaic. But still, there is no consensus over a satisfactory definition of formulaic language. However, scholars tend to put a scope on the notion of formulaicity as prefabricated chunks of language that are acquired, memorised, and then retrieved whole from memory at the time of use (Wray, 2008). As a result, the researchers propose to give more importance to formulaicity in the shape of a course for this subject where students are first introduced to formulaicity as a notion; second, to acquire the functions of prefabricated chunks of language and finally to learn new kinds of formulaic sequences and put them into use. The researchers prove through statistical data/results that this process, as short as it seems, helps learners enhance their communicative competence and avoid any breakdown of communication caused mainly by misunderstanding of formulaic language. Thus, allocating a course to this subject for the long run and not just an experiment, as shown in this research, will definitely support the students’ language learning process in order to achieve a native-like proficiency.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Formulaic language

The notion of formulaicity receives an enormous deal of focus during these last few years. In research, for example, investigators are studying this subject from different perspectives and in relation to various fields. The main reason for this interest is that language is not considered as a group of individual words anymore, but most of it is a group of multi-word sequences. In their analysed data, Erman & Warren (2000) estimate that a variety of word sequences constitute 58.6% of the spoken English discourse and 52.3% of the written discourse.

Up till now, there is diminutive consensus on a fixed definition for formulaic language to follow as a model or “a referential definition”, for the reason that scholars, professors, and investigators differ on what they consider formulaic. Additionally, these formulae are labelled differently as a result of the disagreement on a “referential definition” of formulaic language; as: lexical bundles (Biber et al., 1999; Biber, Conrad, & Cortes, 2003, 2004, Cortes, 2004; Hyland, 2008ab), clusters (Scott, 1996), formulaic sequences/formulae (Martinez & Schmitt, 2012; Schmitt & Carter, 2004; Simpson-Valch & Ellis, 2010; Wray, 2002, 2008), sentence stems (Pawley & Syder, 1983), fixed expressions (Moon, 1998), prefabricated units/prefabs (Bolinger, 1976; Cowie, 1992) and lexical phrases (Nattinger& DeCarrico, 1992) and collocations (Altenberg, 1993; Howarth, 1998) as well as n-grams (Stubbs, 2007)in the field of
computational/corpus linguistics (as cited in Assassi, 2013). This variance in labelling formulaic sequences can stand as a positive aspect for researchers as it is widely investigated and arouses the interest of many applied linguists around the globe. Another reason comes above the variation of labels of prefabricated chunks of language is what Pawley & Syder (1983 as cited in Hsu, 2014) in the following:

Put forward the possible explanation that adult native speakers have thousands of “lexicalized sentence stems” and other formulaic strings at their disposal and suggested that L2 learners may need to get familiar with a similar number of them for native-like fluency. (p. 116).

There is no single definition that stands as a reference, agreed upon, or can be used by researchers as a model. Nevertheless, Wray (2002) provides a general definition that spotlights the essential aspects of formulaicity for us, like form and identification of prefabricated units. She identifies a formulaic sequence as:

A sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar. (p. 9).

As far as our study is concerned, and by taking a close look into this definition for what benefits EFL learners, we can notice that wholeness is the main characteristic of these prefabricated chunks of language. More specifically, the holistic processing of formulaic sequences starts from acquiring, memorizing, and then retrieving them holistically without generation or grammatical analysis. This process seems easier for EFL learners as it does not require extra grammatical processing. This is supported by Pawley & Syder (1983) who see that creatively-generated strings of language are more difficult to process than formulaic chunks. This is because the EFL learners become familiarised with the notion of formulaicity as a condition. The latter reduces the processing load and facilitates reaching communicative competence and becoming fluent.

1.1.1 Between formulaicity and Idiomaticity

As far as EFL learners are concerned, formulaic sequences are a fixed string of words that needs to be memorized as a single chunk. For them, and without recognizing the different types of formulaic sequences, it is understood that this type of word formation is an idiom. Fernandez-Parra (2008b) declares that Formulaicity is a fuzzy phenomenon that partially overlaps with some lexical forms and may include other lexical forms (p. 52). In other words, idiomatic expressions are just a type of formulaic language as a notion that holds the characteristics of many other types like collocations and phrasal verbs. Assassi (2013) states that “all the expressions traditionally termed idioms may be included as a subclass of formulaic language” (p. 14). To sum up, the fixedness of the sequence’s components and its acquisition, memorization, and use as a single chunk of language is what mainly characterises all formulaic sequences (idiomatic expressions included). The semantic aspect of idiomaticity is what marks out idiomatic expressions from other lexical bundles. Lewis (1993) clarifies that in “just” some cases of formulaic expressions “the meaning of the whole is not immediately apparent from the meaning of the constituent parts” (p. 98). As an example, we can say that: alongside idiomatic
expressions there can also be collocations (e.g. teething problems), conventionalized greetings (good morning, safe journey), and many other expressions. Also, “kick the bucket”, “good morning”, “fish and chips”, “first thing tomorrow”, “thanks a million”, “money talks”, and “safe journey”, are all considered to be formulaic expressions, but only “kick the bucket” may be considered as an idiom (Assassi, 2013).

1.1.2 The Categorization of Formulaic Sequences

To follow up what we have mentioned in the previous part, alongside idiomatic expressions, there are other word formations that are considered as ready-made utterances (formulaic sequences). Worth mentioning: collocations, set phrases, phrasal verbs, and even preferred ways of saying things (Wray, 2008).

The divergence on a specific categorization of formulaic sequences followed the disagreement on one referential definition. Many scholars refer to different classifications of these non-compositional utterances. From another perspective, the following figure by Fernandez-Parra (2008b) draws an example of a distinction between what is considered formulaic and what is not, taking into consideration one-word and multi-word expressions we use on a daily basis.

**Figure 1. A distinction between formulaic sequences and other lexical forms** (Fernandez-Parra, 2008b, p.52).

In the figure above, we focused more on the most used formulaic sequences by EFL learners according to (Wray & Perkins, 2000; Wood, 2002). Phrasal verbs like “carry out” are considered to be formulaic, while “take out” is not. This gives us the idea that not all similarly structured expressions (phrasal verbs) are considered prefabricated, or hold the label of formality. In the same vein, some lexical bundles that are not highly specialized or technical, yet often encountered, like “terms and conditions, code of practice” are considered formulaic in nature. To conclude, many scholars differ in what they consider formulaic; however, EFL
learners can depend on other characteristics like the function of the expression (discussed later) rather than focusing just on the form to notice these formulae.

**1.1.3 The Different Parts of Formulaic Sequences**

As it is a vast flourishing field of research, formulaic language is still controversial in terms of consensus. Wood (2015) believes that formulaic sequences are characterized by their multi-word form as a first criterion in noticing these formulae in addition to the holistic acquisition-memorization-use, and the single meaning or function. Thus, he ignores one-word expressions that are considered to be formulaic by Fernandez-Parra (2008a) as mentioned above.

Away from this “Formulaic Paradox”, researchers agree on some other specific parts of formulaic language to meet their requirements. Wray & Perkins (1999; 2000) Shmitt & Carter (2004) Terkourafi (2006) and other scholars, interested in this field of study, consider idioms and collocations to be formulaic more than any other forms as they meet the formulaicity requirements as mentioned earlier. For this reason, the researchers focus more on these formulae within the experiment and all the practical part of this study. From another viewpoint, other expressions tend to be more or less prefabricated and ready-made chunks of language that can be considered formulaic. Worth mentioning, songs/lyrics, routines, prayers, and even preferred ways of saying things, as far as they are related to Wray’s perspective on formulaicity stating that these formulae, are known, repeated, memorized and regained whole from memory at the time of use as a single block.

**1.2 Communicative Competence**

As far as EFL learners are concerned, being communicatively competent is the main aim of their language learning process. In other words, communicative competence stands as a correlation between accuracy and fluency; that is to say, language learners can be competent language learners/users not only by acquiring grammatical structures and the strict part of the language, but also by learning the working aspect of language use. Hymes (1972) defines communicative competence as “the competence of language use appropriate to other participants of the communicative interaction, and appropriate to the given social context and situation” (p. 68).

The researchers follow Hymes’ perspective on the subject matter since it comes for modern language learning against the Chomskian perspective of competence and performance. Scholars find that Hymes’ communicative competence, as a modern standpoint, is a superior model of language teaching/learning (Assassi, 2013). This model is adopted by instructors and researchers who seek new directions towards a communicative era in teaching foreign languages. Our case, as an example in Algeria since the latter is adopting the CBA (Competency Based Approach), comes as a follow up to the communicative approach; thus, communicative competence is a must for a successful language learning process.

**2. The study**

**2.1 Statement of the Problem**

EFL learners tend to be more communicatively competent because it is the first aim of any language learners. Most of the learners find problems in keeping a smooth flow in conversations and avoiding any breakdown of communication. Additionally, they face difficulties in understanding some prefabricated chunks of language, especially the ones that do
not show a clear meaning within the formula components like idioms. These formulae stand between EFL learners and reaching fluency and being communicatively competent.

2.2 Research Questions
This research tackles the following questions:
- RQ1: What is formulaic language and what does it include?
- EQ2: How is formulaicity related to communicative competence?
- EQ3: How can EFL learners be familiarized with formulaic expressions?

2.3 Research Hypotheses
This study is based on the following hypotheses:
- Formulaic language is more than just idiomatic expressions.
- Formulaicity helps EFL learners reach fluency and be communicatively competent.
- EFL learners should be familiarized with the notion of formulaicity first, and then use a great deal of native-speakers input.

2.4 Research Aims
The present research aims mainly at drawing learners’ and teachers’ attention to the notion of formulaicity and its effect on their teaching/learning process. It also aims to:
- clarify the notion of formulaicity,
- distinguish the classes of formulaic language, and
- show the positive impact of formulaicity on learners’ communicative competence.

2.5 Research Methodology
To fulfil the research objectives, the investigator set a design that is based on an experimental strategy supported by a quantitative approach to collect and analyse data as they are used mostly together in research design. To support this perspective, Phakiti (2014) states that “An experimental research design has been known to reside within a quantitative research methodology that is often adopted in language learning research” (p. 22). The following part provides more details on the research design.

2.6 Research Approach
In order to reach the research aims, and according to the study requirements, the researcher uses a quantitative approach to collect and analyse numerical data. Specifically, it mainly helps the investigators to draw a link between the two research variables and the degree of the effect of formulaicity on communicative competence. Additionally, it numerically shows the progressive performance scale as a result of the instruction process.

2.7 Research Strategy
The researcher chose the quasi-experiment strategy of research since it is the most suitable for this kind of study. According to Phakiti (2014) “experimental research is a useful research methodology for those studies that aim to address a causal-like relationship” (p. 22). Also, this investigation tended to extract feasible and valid data to raise accurate outcomes. As the study practical part deals with groups, the experiment helps the researchers understand more the causal-like relationship between the research variables (ibid), and that is the main aim of the study. In the same breath, the inquiry attempts to find out the relationship between formulaic
language and communicative competence rather than describing the two variables; thus, the causal-like relationship.

2.8 Population and Research Sample
The subject of the study (formulaic language) is a complex matter to deal with in EFL; thus, the researchers chose first year master students for their significant knowledge of some subclasses of formulaic sequences like idiomatic expressions, in their pragmatics and oral expression sessions. The investigators selected, non-randomly, 15 Master One English language students from the Department of Foreign Languages in the University of Biskra (Algeria). The chosen sum (15 participants) presents an acceptable amount from the whole section (population: 145) to conduct an experiment. Our non-random research sample choice comes as a result of the volunteering nature of the participants.

2.9 Research Instruments and Data Collection Procedure
In terms of compatibility with our research design, both approach and strategy, the investigators used a test provided for experiment group. All the participants were tested in their formulaic language knowledge (pre-test) to collect the data needed to design a number of sessions that stand as a treatment for the experiment group. Finally, the post-test was used to conduct a comparative study of both test results in order to prove whether or not there was an improvement on their performance using formulaic sequences while communicating.

3. The Experiment Phases
The first phase was mainly dedicated to the pre-test. Students were tested about their general knowledge of formulaic knowledge and its different subclasses. This test provided us with data that helped to design our treatment of six instructional sessions for both information delivered and activities.

The second phase was concerned with launching the treatment of six sessions. The students attended these sessions where they were instructed on the subject of formulaicity. The sessions’ content included the notion of formulaicity, subclasses, functions, and some relevant activities.

On the third phase, participants took the post-test on the same classroom they used to be instructed in to avoid any kind of confusion or change of the learning setting/context. The researchers collected all the data that is used in a comparative study with the data collected from the first phase (pre-test).

- Conducting the T-Test
More statistical proof was needed to validate or reject hypothesis 2. Consequently, a paired t-test (as the numerical data was taken just from one sample subjects who have been measured at two times point). This t-test was adopted to provide more validity to our research outcomes. The t-test was conducted to compare the mean of the pre-test to the mean of the post-test. The two measurements are, as usual, before and after the treatment intervention.

Additionally, the t test is used to confirm the relationship between the research variables; in this research, we will use it to confirm the effect of the independent variable which is formulaicity on the dependent variable that is EFL learners’ communicative competence.
As a statistical test, its main aim is to calculate the probability that the results may have occurred under the null hypothesis; if the calculated probability is less, or equal to 0.05 the null hypothesis will be rejected to the alternative hypothesis; thus, the final results will be considerable (Chelli, 2012 as cited in Assassi, 2013). The following measures are taken into account:

- **Paired t–test to check the hypothesis**
  By taking into consideration that 0.05 as a p value which means that the only 5% of the results is due to chance while 95% are likely to be sure. so the small probability (p) value proposes that the null hypotheses is probably not going to be true. The smaller it is , the more convincing is the rejection of the null hypothesis.
  Degree of freedom suitable for this t-test is $f= N-1$ (N = the total number of participants).
  The steps followed bellows (Chelli, 2012, p. 239; & Miller, 2005, p.92-93) are used to calculate the paired t-test for this experiment:

  - Calculating the mean of score pairs (pre-test & post test scores) $\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$
  - Calculating the Variation of the experimental group ($S^2=\frac{\sum X^2}{N}$)
  - Finding the critical value of the t test: $t = \sqrt{\frac{\sum d^2}{N}}$ 
    
    $S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum X^2}{N}}$

4. **Discussion of the Experiment Results**

As expected, the scores of the pre-test were not satisfactory. The highest frequency was 9/20 which was realised by five students. The scores were between 6/20 and 13/20. The overall mean was calculated 4.83 and the standard deviation 2.57. These results came as statistical proof that most of our students have difficulties in identifying and extracting the accurate meaning of formulaic sequences. This has stood as valuable information to be used as a base ground for the treatment process.

During the treatment phase, students came to realise, just after the first session, that formulaic language represents more than just the traditional idiomaticity. Students learnt new combinations and language chunks that are ready-made expressions which should be acquired, memorized, and used as a whole at the time of use. Also, that these formulae do not often bear their meaning on the surface level of the structure. The latter came as a conclusion of the 5th session entitled “Formulaic Language Acquisition Strategies”. This helped them reinforce their knowledge on the general notion of formulaicity and the types of input they should be exposed to in order to enhance their communicative competence through formulaicity. As a result, hypothesis 1 and 3 were confirmed.

The post-test scores were considerably higher; they were between 12/20 and 19/20. Four students had 15/20 as the highest frequency noted. 11 students had good marks (15/20 and above). The overall mean was determined 7.8 and the standard deviation was 3.9.
As a result, we can notice a great deal of improvement in our EFL learners’ formulaic language acquisition that helped them add fluency to their language accuracy to construct a solid communicative competence. Thus, hypothesis 3 was confirmed while hypothesis 2 was partially confirmed.

- Testing Hypothesis 2 Using the T-Test

As stated earlier, this statistical test was conducted to study the hypothesis 2 which implies that: Formulaicity helps EFL learners reach fluency and be communicatively competent.

A null and an alternative hypothesis were formulated from hypothesis 2 in order to reject the first or prove the second using the results from the t-test:

**H0** = Implementing that formulaic language does not affect EFL learners’ communicative competence.

**H1** = Implementing that not mastering the concept of formulaicity will affect negatively EFL learners’ communicative competence.

- The calculation of the degree of freedom:
  
  
  \[ df = N-1 \]  
  
  (\(N\) = number of pairs “scores per each participant = 15)  
  
  \[ df = 15-1= 14 \]  
  
  so, 14 is the degree of freedom  
  
  The “p” value (probability value is given as \(0.05 = 5\%\))

After formulating both null and alternative hypothesis, and in order to reject the first or prove the second, we have calculated the t-test; but before that, we analysed the difference between the mean of both tests (pre test & post test). The results are shown in (Table 1) below:

**Table 1. The calculation of the mean difference and the squared mean difference for both pre and post tests of our study sample’s scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Experimental Group</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Pre-test mean</th>
<th>Post-test mean</th>
<th>Difference between matched scores (d)</th>
<th>Difference between matched scores squared (df²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>-5.5</td>
<td>30.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>06.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>-4.5</td>
<td>20.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>06.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>-3</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
<td>12.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
<td>06.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
\sum X = 117 \quad \sum d = 44.5 \quad \sum d^2 = 147.75
\]
- “d”: is the mean difference between pre and post test mean.

The table displays the calculations of the mean difference “d” and the squared mean difference “d²” that will help us in calculating the t test which will be introduced in the next part.

- **Calculating the t-test**

Calculating the mean of score pairs (pre-test & post test scores)

\[
\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N} = \frac{117}{15} = 7.8
\]

Finding the critical value of the t test:

d: is the mean difference between pre and post test mean.

Given that:

\[
Sd = \frac{\sum d^2}{N}
\]

\[
Sd = \frac{147.75}{15} = 9.85
\]

\[
t_{n-1} = \frac{\bar{X}}{Sd} = \frac{\sum X}{\sum d^2} = \frac{\sum X}{Sd} \frac{\sqrt{N-1}}{\sqrt{N-1}}
\]

\[
= \frac{117}{15} \frac{\sqrt{15-1}}{9.85} = \frac{117}{15} \frac{\sqrt{15-1}}{9.85}
\]

\[
= \frac{117 \times 14}{15 \times 9.85} = \frac{437.58}{147.75} = 2.96
\]

\[
t = 2.96
\]

According to the findings above, the t-test result found is **2.96**. Based on the degree of freedom of **14 (N-1=14)** is greater than **1.76** (check the table below).
As a result, we accepted the alternative hypothesis (H1) which states that if EFL learners do not master the concept of formulaicity, this will affect negatively their communicative competence. On the other hand, we rejected the null hypothesis (H0) that implements that formulaic language does not affect EFL learners’ communicative competence; consequently, we confirmed that the treatment we implemented including thorough information on formulaicity, its theoretical part (definition, nature, boundaries and kinds); and the practical part (teaching students ways and strategies to follow in order to simplify their path in noticing, understanding, memorizing and more importantly their use of formulaic language), has positively affected EFL learners’ communicative competence and made them reach, to a certain extent, naturalness of speech while using formulaic sequences. Hypothesis 2 was confirmed.

Pedagogical Implications

Through the data collected and analysed, we proved that formulaicity is one of the main factors affecting EFL learners’ communicative competence. The treatment intervention that included 6 sessions of intensive instruction on the subject of formulaicity had a positive influence on learners’ perception of those formulae. Consequently, the notion of formulaicity in
addition to its subclasses and the strategies used to notice, memorize, and retrieve any ready-made chunks holistically at the time of use, should be implemented in the EFL learners’ syllabus as a separate module. For sure, this is the researcher’s first pedagogical recommendation since it provides more language practice for learners inside the classroom.

Secondly, our research outcomes should motivate teachers to implement formulaic sequences in their lessons; here, we pinpoint oral expression teachers as they deal with several topics and communicate more with students. Finally, and as far as EFL learners are concerned, there should be more language practice and conversations improvisation between peers out of the classroom. On the same lane, exposure to native talk through TV (movies/shows) or Radio is highly recommended, as native speech contains a great deal of formulaic sequences. Of course, this would teach learners more of language practice aspects like tone and speech pace. The accurate pronunciation and expressions’ meanings according to the context are significant factors affecting the understanding of formulaic sequences, and pragmatic proficiency. This leads the learner directly to communicatively competent.

Conclusion
Formulaic language has become the centre of attention for more instructors, scholars, and researchers for its relatively significant effect on EFL learners’ fluency, fluid connected speech and communication. The latter is mainly the aim of EFL learners during their educational careers. Thus, much emphasis is put on this matter in our research for the reason of simplifying the learning process of our learners. To sum up, the results obtained from this research encourages first, further researches on the subject to create more strategies and teaching methods for these formulae; and second, to attract instructors’ and learners’ attention towards the acquisition and use of these sequences accurately to vary/develop the teaching content, and to reach communicative competence respectively.

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References


The Effect of Reading-Writing Integration on Jordanian Undergraduate Students’ Writing Performance

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Abstract
Writing is one of the main academic skills that undergraduate students need in pursing their disciplines. Many researchers emphasize the importance of integrating reading with writing as the two skills involve similar cognitive processes. The current study aims to examine the effect of an instructional program based on reading-writing integration on Jordanian undergraduate EFL students’ writing performance and explore their attitudes concerning the effectiveness of the instructional program in developing their writing skill. To collect the data, three instruments were utilized: pre and post writing tests, a writing rubric and an interview. The study used a quasi-experimental design. The subjects of the study were 50 undergraduate EFL students from Philadelphia University in Jordan divided equally into a control group and an experimental group. The findings reveal that there is a significant differences at $\alpha=0.05$ between the two means of the two groups at the writing post-test due to the instructional program in favor of the experimental group. Furthermore, the instructional program has a positive effect not only on students’ overall writing performance, but also on the writing sub-skills: focus, development, organization and language. The program affected students’ attitudes positively. Curriculum designers and instructors should integrate these two skills in the textbooks and teaching.

Keywords: EFL university students, reading-writing integration, writing performance
Introduction

The writing skill need to be taught properly from the early stages of learning English at school. Writing is not only a means to express oneself ideas and feelings, it facilitates the acquisition of other study skills that the students need in their academic settings such as synthesizing, analyzing and criticizing (Rao, 2007). Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (1998) confirm that writing provokes thinking, so it can be used to facilitate the learning of any subject. Lerstrom (1990) asserts that personal success requires the mastery of many skills; among these are good writing skills.

The advent of the communicative approach in the seventies of the last century is a paradigm shift in language learning which emphasizes integration of Language skills as one of its basic tenets. Brown (2001, p.233) highlights the importance of skills integration stressing that “rather than being forced to plod along through a course that limits itself to one mode of performance, students are given the chance to diversify their efforts in more meaningful tasks.” He adds that most of the time one skill reinforces the other. For example, we learn to write by examining what we read, and we learn to speak by modeling what we hear. Since such integration is significant, many researchers report the reciprocal effect of reading and writing (Grabe, 2001; 2003; Hirvela, 2004; Tuan, 2012).

Second-foreign language acquisition research advocates the necessity of reading writing integration. Tierney and Pearson (1983, p.568) state that “we believe that at the heart of understanding reading and writing connections one must begin to view reading and writing as essentially similar processes of meaning construction”. In reading, readers manipulate their prior knowledge, their strategies and the information in the text to construct their own meaning. Similarly, writers are engaged in a gradual process to construct the intended meaning. Being similar processes of meaning construction, it is assumed that reading and writing have a reciprocal effect (Grabe, 2001; 2003; Hirvela, 2004; Tuan, 2012). Improvement in one skill will result in enhancing the proficiency of the other (Hirvela, 2004).

Many researchers’ studies show that integrating reading with writing improves learners’ writing proficiency (e.g., Almansour & Alshorman, 2014; Sanchez, 2009; Tuan, 2012; Yoshimura, 2009). Pedagogically, reading can be integrated with writing through various teaching practices such as extensive reading, using models, rhetorical reading and voluntary reading (Tsai, 2006). Hao and Sivell (2002) confirm that teaching writing apart from reading may obstruct writing improvement. Reading provides students with information of different topics to implement in their writing, text structure, English expressions, vocabulary, and language forms (Tuan, 2012).

Grabe (2003) confirms the positive effect of reading on writing performance in terms of language, organization and content. Reading provides students with the opportunity to examine the correct use of grammar, how to compose sentences and how the sentences are logically connected to form texts. Brown (1987, p.331) asserts that “reading a variety of related types of text enable students to gain more insights not only about how they should write, but also about the subject matter that will be the topic of their writing”. In the same line, Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) believe that readers, as they read, must tackle different types of knowledge that they can implement in their writings. These include orthography, words, morphosyntactic information,
cohesive devices, text structure and typographical information such as capitalization, paragraphing and punctuation.

Problem and questions of the study

At the university level, to be a successful student, one needs to be equipped with certain skills. Among these skills are reading, writing, critical thinking, and oral presentation. Although these skills are very important for university students, university instructors rarely teach them (Bean, 1996). Even for courses which are supposed to teach reading and writing such as English skills courses, they still follow traditional techniques in teaching them. The current approaches in teaching language emphasize the integration of reading and writing, yet instructors still teach them separately (personal observation). It is also noticed that Jordanian students at the secondary stage have difficulties in the writing skill (Al-Emami, 2009; Al-Makhzomi, 1986; Al-Mashaqba, 2012; Al-Nethami, 2009), so these students finish their secondary education and join the universities not ready for the writing demands especially when English is the medium of instruction in many university specializations.

In the researchers’ quest for a solution, reading writing integration is used as a strategy to improve students’ writing skill. Thus, the study aims to answer the following two questions:

1. To what extent does the reading-writing instructional program develop students’ writing skill?
2. What are the students' attitudes concerning the effectiveness of the instructional program in developing their writing skill?
3.

Significance of the study

The study addresses a significant strategy in teaching foreign language which is skills integration. The researchers hope that the present study provides insights into this important field because, according to the researcher's best knowledge, such research studies in Jordanian EFL context are few. Furthermore, the instructional program which is designed for this study includes a variety of activities that can be helpful for English language university instructors who are interested in the integration of reading and writing. They can use such activities in their courses. EFL textbook writers and curriculum designers may also find practical implications for reading and writing instruction.

Sampling, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis

The participants of the study consist of 50 Jordanian undergraduate EFL students enrolled in English Skill (102) course offered by the language center at Philadelphia University during the first semester of the academic year 2015/2016. Two sections are chosen purposefully. The two 25-students sections are assigned randomly as a control and an experimental group. The control group is taught the material in the textbook; whereas the experimental group is taught the reading-writing integration program which is designed by the researchers. The participants of the study are taught the reading texts and the writing lessons of four units from Unlock 3: Reading and Writing textbook.

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researchers designed pre and post writing tests to measure the students’ writing performance before and after the treatment. They are designed according to the four types of essay that the students have learned during the semester.
The Effect of Reading-Writing Integration on Jordanian Alqouran & Smadi (descriptive, argumentative, problem solution and cause and effect essay). In each test, students are asked to choose one of four topics (each topic represents one type of essay) and write a complete essay. To correct the pre and post writing tests, an adapted version of Wang and Laio’s rubric (2008) is used (Appendix A). The researchers adopted three criteria of Wang and Laio’s rubric (focus, development, and language) whereas they developed the forth criterion (organization).

The researchers designed the instructional program which was implemented during the first semester of the academic year 2015-2016. During the semester, students met in three 50-minutes lectures a week. The instructional program consists of eight reading texts and four writing tasks (four units) from Unlock 3: Reading and Writing textbook. They were taught interactively using different reading and writing activities.

To investigate further the effectiveness of the instructional program, the researchers held semi-structured interviews. After implementing the program, 18 students from the experimental group were interviewed individually for 15 minutes. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed for frequent themes.

To answer the research questions, means, standard deviations, adjusted means and ANCOVA are used to find out whether there are any significant differences in the students' writing performance due to the instructional program.

Validity and reliability of the instruments

In order to judge the validity of the writing tests, the rubric scale, the instructional program and the interview, a jury of nine professors from Yarmouk University and Philadelphia University were asked to provide their feedback concerning their suitability to the purposes of the study; they looked into their language and their content. Their suggestions (e.g., clarifying the instructions of some activities) were taken into consideration in the final versions of the instruments.

In order to establish the reliability of the writing tests, they were applied to thirty students of a pilot study group. Reliability was measured by the test-retest formula using the Pearson reliability coefficient. The obtained values were (0.87) for focus, (0.85) for organization, (0.88) for development, (0.83) for Language, and (0.89) for the overall test. All calculated values are considered acceptable to achieve the purpose of this study.

To ensure the reliability of the rating, students’ writings were evaluated by the researcher and another experienced rater independently using the writing rubric. Inter-rate reliability was measured by averaging the scores given to each student by the two raters. The raters' agreement was 0.90.

Findings of the study

To answer the research question concerning the effect of the reading writing instructional program on students’ writing performance, means and standard deviations of the students’ scores on the writing pre and post-tests are calculated. The results are presented in Table 1.
Table 1 Means and standard deviations of the students’ pre-/post-writing performance test scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Strategy</th>
<th>Pretest (Covariate)</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows observed differences between the students’ mean scores in writing performance on the post test, in favor of the students in the experimental group. To determine the statistical significance of these differences (at $\alpha \leq 0.05$), ANCOVA is used to compare the participants’ performance on the writing post-test after excluding the students’ scores on the writing pre-test as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Results of ANCOVA of the students’ scores on the writing post-test after excluding the students’ scores on the writing pre-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial $\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest (Covariate)</td>
<td>116.63</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>116.63</td>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>13.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Strategy</td>
<td>286.08</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>286.08</td>
<td>17.96</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>28.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>732.78</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1105.29</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows a statistically significant effect (at $\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the students’ mean scores on the writing performance post-test due to the instructional program. To determine the group with the significant difference, the adjusted means and standard deviations of the students’ writing performance post-test scores are calculated, as shown in Table 3.
Table 3 Adjusted means and standard deviations of the students’ post-writing performance test scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>14.69</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>19.54</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that there is a significant difference in favor of the experimental group due to the instructional program (reading writing integration) compared with the control group. The practical significance of the treatment (as show in Table 2) is 28.08 which signals a moderate effect of the treatment.

To investigate further the effect of the program on students’ writing sub-skills (focus, development, organization and language), means and standard deviations of the students’ scores on the sub-skills (focus, development, organization and language) in the pre-/post-writer performance tests are calculated due to the teaching strategy. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Means and standard deviations of the students’ scores on the sub – Skills in the writing pre-/post-writing tests due to the teaching strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing:</th>
<th>Teaching Strategy</th>
<th>Pretest (Covariate)</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Pretest (Mean)</td>
<td>Std. Dev.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 shows observed differences between the students’ mean scores in writing sub-skills on the post test as a result of the differences in the teaching strategy. To determine the statistical significance of these differences (at \( \alpha \leq 0.05 \)), ANCOVA is used to compare the participants’ performance on the writing sub-skills in the post-test after excluding the students’ scores on the writing pre-test as shown in Table 5 (see Appendix B).

Table 5 (appendix B) shows a statistically significant difference (at \( \alpha \leq 0.05 \)) in the students’ performance on the writing sub-skills on the post-test due to the teaching strategy. To determine the group with the significant difference, the adjusted means and standard deviations of the students’ sub-skills scores in the writing post-test are calculated, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Adjusted means and standard deviations of the students’ sub – skills scores in the writing post-test due to the teaching strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Teaching Strategy</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Integration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 6 shows significant differences in performance on the writing sub-skills in the post writing test between the experimental (reading writing integration) group and the control group in favor of the experimental group.

To answer the second question, the responses of the interviewees are studied and analyzed carefully; they show positive attitude toward the program. The following themes have been identified:
1-Most students confessed having a negative attitude and low motivation toward the writing skill before the program, yet their motivation increased and their attitude changed positively through the program. They became more confident to write and their writing ability gets better.

2- Most of the students acknowledged the effectiveness of the program on these writing microskills: spelling, punctuation, grammar, paragraphing, and capitalization.

3- Most of the students asserted that the program helped them to better produce and organize the ideas to create coherent texts.

4- Many students reported that the program positively affected their reading comprehension because integrating writing with reading eases comprehension and enhances it.

**Discussion of the findings, conclusions and recommendations**

The findings of the study demonstrate statistically significant differences in the overall writing performance and the writing sub-skills performance in favor of the participants in the experimental group. This confirms the effectiveness of the reading writing integration as a catalyst for writing performance. The instructional program has a positive effect on students’ writing performance.

This positive effect could have resulted from the explicit activities that the students participated in during the program. These activities provide students with the opportunity to grasp the high and low level skills of writing as they read the texts. During the program, students plunged in different reading activities such as having reading models for the writing tasks and analyzing them, allowing students to read their own writings and reflect on them, allowing students to read for each other and reading some of the students’ works and assessing them collaboratively. All these activities enable students to see clearly how successful writers construct their writings and how they can improve their writings. Instead of teaching reading and writing skills separately, students are taught the two skills in an integrative way allowing them to see the two sides of the coin. For example, during the program students are continuously asked to write the main idea and the supporting ideas of the paragraphs. As they perform such tasks, they realize that, in writing, each paragraph should include one main idea which is almost presented in the topic sentence and elaborate on it using the supporting sentences. In addition, having a visual image using the reading models as they perform the writing tasks allow students to remember easily how they should write.

Furthermore, having reading models in front of the students as they perform the writing tasks seem to enhance students’ self-confidence which affects positively their learning atmosphere and subsequently their writing performance. To add more, the activities included in the program asked students to look carefully into the organization of the ideas within and between paragraphs, the construction and the arrangement of the parts of the essay, and the use of vocabulary and cohesive devices in the texts. Learning all these features in context, the reading texts, helped students employ what they have learned in their writing.

The findings of the study warrant the following conclusions:

1- The treatment has brought about improvement in the students’ writing performance which may signal a positive relationship between the integration of reading and writing on one hand and their writing performance on the other.
2- In the interview, students reported the gains in their writing performance. This includes the improvement in the high level skills such as organization and ideas and low level skills such as spelling, grammar, paragraphing and capitalization.

3- The treatment has brought about gains in students’ attitudes toward writing and their motivation. The students reported that having reading models eases writing and makes it more interesting. It also enhances their self-confidence.

4- The treatment seems to bring about gains in students’ reading comprehension. Students reported that their reading comprehension was also positively affected as a result of the integration of the two skills. Being involved in different writing activities related to the reading texts enhances their comprehension.

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers present the following recommendations

1- Reading-writing integration should be enhanced. EFL teachers should design proper reading-writing activities to increase undergraduate EFL students' writing skills. It is better to teach these two skills in an integrative way instead of teaching them separately.

2- Curriculum designer should consider the importance of such integration in designing EFL textbooks.

3- More research needs be carried out on the effect of reading-writing integration on reading comprehension. Future research might also involve a larger sample in other EFL contexts and other genres.

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References


The Effect of Reading-Writing Integration on Jordanian Alqouran & Smadi


### Essay Writing Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>scores</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong> (5 marks)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Precisely addressing the topic or claims.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Addressing most of the topic or claims.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Addressing the topic or claims adequately, but sometime straying from the task.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Inadequately addressing the topic or claims.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Having problem in focus or failing to address the topic or claims</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development</strong> (5 marks)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Well developed; using specific appropriate details, examples and explanations to support the topic or claims and illustrate ideas.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Developed; using appropriated details, examples and explanations to support the topic or claims and illustrate ideas.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Limited development; using some details or examples to support the topic or claims.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Using inappropriate or insufficient details to support the topic or claims and illustrate ideas.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>Using few or irrelevant details to support the topic or claims or illustrate ideas.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong> (10 marks)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong> (2 marks)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Effective introduction (skillfully orients the reader to the topic/claims by including excellent lead (background information) and a structural sentence that previews the structure of the essay).</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate introduction (orients the reader to the topic/claims by including adequate lead (background information) and a structural sentence that previews the structure of the essay).</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Limited introduction (partially orients the reader to the topic/claims by including background information but a structural sentence is not included.)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal or inadequate introduction (inadequate lead, no structural sentence is included).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>****Thoroughly develops the topic /claims with relevant body paragraphs and strong topic sentences.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops the topic /claims with body paragraphs and topic sentences.</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superficially develops the topic /claims with body paragraphs, attempts topic sentences.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coherence &amp; Cohesion (4 Marks)</td>
<td>Conclusion (2 marks)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Creates cohesion through skillful use of transition words, phrases, and clauses within and between paragraphs; logical progression of ideas from beginning to end.</td>
<td>Strong conclusion (follows from and effectively supports the topic or claims presented, reflects the writer’s point of view).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Creates cohesion through transition words, phrases, and clauses within and between paragraphs; adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end.</td>
<td>Adequate conclusion (restates the topic, follows from and supports the topic or claims presented.).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Creates some cohesion through basic transition words, phrases, and clauses within and between paragraphs; uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end.</td>
<td>Weak conclusion (mostly repeats the topic sentences).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Uses limited and/or inappropriate linking words, phrases, or clauses; little or no organization of ideas.</td>
<td>Inappropriate or no clear conclusion.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Conclusion (2 marks)</th>
<th>Coherence &amp; Cohesion (4 Marks)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inadequately develops the topic/claims with minimal body paragraphs and unclear topic sentences.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong conclusion (follows from and effectively supports the topic or claims presented, reflects the writer’s point of view).</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate conclusion (restates the topic, follows from and supports the topic or claims presented.)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak conclusion (mostly repeats the topic sentences).</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate or no clear conclusion.</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
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<th>Language (5 marks)</th>
<th>Coherence &amp; Cohesion (4 Marks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>a. Perfect or near perfect language (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, capitalization.)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Language is almost accurate, contains few errors.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Language is fair with some errors that do not impede readability.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Language is inappropriate with obvious errors that impede readability.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Language is poor, contains serious and pervasive errors.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In argumentative essay, an effective introduction should also include a thesis sentence (a sentence in which the writer expresses his position of the argument (for or against)).

** In argumentative essay, relevant body paragraphs means two paragraphs (one argues for the claim, and another argues against the claim).
### Appendix B

#### Table 5. Results of ANCOVA for students’ scores on the post-tests of sub-skills of writing separately due to the teaching strategy after excluding the students’ scores on the pre-test.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<td>4.25</td>
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<td>5.62</td>
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</table>
The Rise of the Underdog: The Anti-hero in Two Plays by Sadallah Wannous

Samar Zahrawi
Department of Foreign Languages
College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas, USA

Abstract
Sadallah Wannous (1941-1997), the leading Syrian dramatist, reflected in his plays the condition of the downtrodden fellow-countrymen. He captured the essence of the average Syrian citizen, not as an innately timid soul, but as one cowed by political and economic oppression. This paper provides a case study of two anti-heroes; Hanzala in Hazala's Journey from Unawareness to awakening (1978) and Farouk in A Day of Our Time (1993), who go on two journeys of discovery of the roots of their problems. The journeys in both cases lead to awakening and protest. This study attempts at analyzing the significance of the underdog figure in the light of dramatic and textual analysis and Wannous's own views communicated in his non dramatic writings and the interviews he gave in his lifetime. As a result, the author of this paper concludes that Wannous' anti-heroes delineate the collective psyche of the oppressed civilians. The awakening process delineated in the said plays is an attempt to raise political awareness in the masses of Wannous’s audience.

Keywords: anti-hero, political theater, protest, Syrian drama, Wannous.
Introduction
The Middle East witnessed the onset of massive protests against various regimes in several Arab countries in 2011. The people's quest for democracy and freedom during what was called the Arab Spring came as a surprise to many, for the citizens of many Arab states had long been silent about their exclusion from political discourse. The researcher contends that Arabs are not innately passive but have been made so by regimes that marginalize and incapacitate them. For decades, Arabs were made spectators of their own destiny, and responding to their seeming helplessness, they developed a psyche filled with fear and debility.

Perhaps literary texts, in contrast to opinion pieces of political pundits and maybe even in contrast to the work of academic experts on the “realities” of the Middle East, can offer a more compelling perception of the inner feelings and experiences of individuals living under and responding to the daily indignities that one confronts in oppressive societies. Sadallah Wannous, (1941-1997), the leading Syrian dramatist, was very responsive to the influence of oppression on the individual. His drama confronted suppression within an overall scene of silence. “He manifested a brave conscience that has become very rare”. (Salama. n.d, p. 3) His work, as it explores the forces that have brought about this enfeebled state, opens such a perception of the mental and social debility experienced by the average Syrian. Though his protagonists suffer oppression and humiliation at every turn, they stumble toward engagement in the political arena.

All of Wannous’s 26 plays are informed by the will to freedom. He coined the term “Theater of Politicization” to describe work that aims at educating the masses and helping them to identify the connection between their own sense of helplessness and the political corruption that envelops them. Wannous (2004) defines his goal in the “Statements for a New Arabic Theater” (1970) printed in The Complete Works. He contends that the Theater of Politicization must have:

- a progressive political content. Needless to say, the people who need to be politicized are the commoners, since the ruling elite, whether those in the government or financial corporations, are already politicized. The class of people addressed by the theater of politicization is the masses who are conspired against by the ruling class in order to remain ignorant and politically marginalized. It is hoped that such classes will, one day, be the leaders of revolution and change. (p. 92)

Wannous (2004) wants his plays to reach his audience that:

- has already been robbed of its sensibility. Its aesthetic taste has been destroyed. Its means of expressions has been falsified. Its folk culture has been confiscated and recycled in pro-government literary works that, in their turn, reenact the same ignorance and backwardness. (p. 92).

In order to demonstrate the debased condition of too many of his fellow citizens, in many of his plays, the leading figure is an underdog, a representative of the blindfolded commoner. He
The Rise of the Underdog: The Anti-hero in Two by Sadallah Wannous Zahrawi

is a person who is so confounded by multiple social and political injustices that he is utterly stupefied. This paper focuses on two of his underdogs, Hanzala in *Rihlat Hanzala Mina-l Ghafla Ila-l Yakaza* (The Journey of Hanzala from Unawareness to Awakening, 1978) and Farouk in *Youm Min Zamanina* (A Day of Our Time, 1995). These two characters project the experience of the average citizen who has been dehumanized by multiple factors, all of which poignantly point to despotic regimes and consequent corruption. They go through a sequence of situations in which they repeatedly experience or witness injustice, but are immediately suppressed. However, they eventually arrive at an awareness of the factors that cause their degradation. As a result of what they endure and come to understand, the protagonists move from inaction to protest against their oppressor.

**Awareness Leading to Proactive Protest**

Hanzala, an insignificant man of slight figure, is unjustly incarcerated, robbed of his savings, job, and wife. His timidity has made him the perfect target of victimization. A cashier who counts coins in a bank, Hanzala can instantly be replaced by another unskilled worker. His life motto reveals his timid non-commitment, and his behavior, as suggested by the dramatist, mirrors the essence of several famous Arabic proverbs such as "Walk closest to the wall and seek God's protection;" "Hide your white penny for your black day"; "Between you and your neighbor, set up a thick wall;" and "The window that brings wind, jam it and relax" (Wannous, 2004, p.8). All of these are proverbs that reverberate culturally throughout the whole of the Arab world and display a collective psyche that is unnerved. They betray not only a pacifist tendency, but an inclination toward escapism and defeatism.

A pathetic doormat, Hanzala becomes the easy victim of the kind of injustice too familiar to those who live in societies without the rule of law, where justice is arbitrary. The opening words of the chorus figure are "Misery and dejection" which describe succinctly his state (Wannous, 2004, p. 7). His lot is to suffer ever increasing crises, but remain unaware of their origin. He is arrested and incarcerated, but not for any offence he has committed. In order to secure his freedom, Hanzala must give his meager savings to his jailer. He cannot understand why he does not merit, instead, an apology for the harm that has been done to him. He repeats: "Misery is threatening me and obscurity is engulfing my perception" (Wannous, 2004, p.12). The play asks us to envision him as the cypher that the regime has created, a man lacking in assertiveness.

To show the effects of his character’s emasculation, Wannous returns him to what should be the security and warmth of his home. In a surrealistic scene, there are two large feet sticking out from under his bedcovers, a sign of his wife’s infidelity. But he is so totally vanquished by what he has endured that he is oblivious to the presence of her lover. Instead of expressing remorse or embarrassment, she assails him for failing to meet her needs. Like a witch she uses a broomstick to drive him from his home.

In order to restore he financial security, he visits the bank where he worked for many years before he was jailed. At the bank, he is shocked that he is not even remembered. He was
The only cure for his feeble state is a visit to a doctor, which turns to be a harlequinade. The doctor diagnoses his disease as a sense of oppression, but the treatment is outlandish; a brain wash and lubrication is suggested to help him with his hallucination. A new branch of medicine is coined by the dramatist; “psycho-media” which is suggested to help him tolerate misery and boost a more placid demeanor. This points critically to familiar government propaganda which aims at keeping people subdued. However, the treatment fails and Hanzala seeks counselling from the Darwish, a hermetic pious man. There, he receives instructions to be stoic, to pray for contentment, and ask no questions. It is insinuated that religion acts as an opiate to help people tolerate pain, but does not address the root of the problem.

The last refuge for Hanzala to retrieve his lost dignity is to bring his complaints to the government. Upon explaining his ordeal to a set of governors, he starts to comprehend why he has been derided and conspired against. The statesmen, portrayed as being reverently important, are engulfed in smoke and are busy having muffled discussions. They agree not to listen to a whining complainer and to be callous toward him. He finally understands that precautionary arrests help terrorize the masses and keep them under control, “as the police baton is the best way to rule” (Wannous, 2004, p. 54). The life savings he had paid as a bribe to his jailors is a necessary sacrifice expected from all patriotic citizens. Complaining about his wife, he is answered that the government looks favorably upon wives who are strict toward their suspicious husbands. Above all, as a citizen he should show contentment, for the government frowns upon the disgruntled. In this case "he will lose us ... he who loses us will be found by the police and be locked in jail" (Wannous, 2004, p. 57). It is here at the government office where Hanzala becomes aware that the root cause of his multiple humiliations is the autocratic government that does not only rob the civil society of its wealth but more importantly of its will and dignity.

The concluding declamatory rhetoric by the statesmen is written as a satirical travesty of familiar presidential addresses in the Middle East:

We have declared, and we are declaring now, in this stage that is heavy with responsibilities and perils, we must be like a tight structure. We should be made firm by the stable values. We will not allow a disruptor or a lunatic to harm the society and its institutions. The government is above the people. It will go on being reverberating till all the great hopes are fulfilled. (Wannous, 2004, p. 56)

At the end of his journey, Hanzala perfectly comprehends that the sequences of oppression are inter-connected. He had been oblivious to the political oppression which made him a fit victim of it, but Hanzala has now awakened. It has been a strenuous journey but it is worthwhile, for, finally, he understands that he himself is responsible for his pains, that his life course can only be changed by his new found sensibility. His motto changes, “Everything
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around me is relevant to me because it affects my destiny.” (Wannous, 2004, p. 58). He understands that maintaining a marginal existence is not conducive to his well-being. Hanzala emerges as a politically aware citizen and starts a new journey of liberation.

Perhaps Hanzala’s stupor and consequent awareness are remotely similar to Wannous’s own. Having been an extremely sensitive idealistic thinker, Wannous, the dramatist, was overwhelmed by the successive failures of the political system to regain land lost to Israel, to fight local corruption or to alleviate oppression. In the wake of the defeat in 1967 war between Israel on the one hand and Egypt, Syria and Jordan on the other, Wannous suffered severe depression. Consequently, his creativity was severely stifled, and he was unable to write for the stage for 10 years in the eighties (Jaber, 2008, May 15, p.1).

In order to provoke the audience to think and find connections between Hanzala's case, and the dilemma of the average citizen, Wannous detaches the audience from completely empathizing with Hanzala. Although Hanzala is a weak blameless victim, he is not allowed enough empathetic characterization; rather, he is conceived as a tragicomic character in an absurd situation. His awkwardness, his wide sliding pants, torn belt, huge shoes, and the way he walks, stumbles, and falls bring to mind the comedian Charlie Chaplain (1889-1977), and the tramps Estragon, and Vladimir in Waiting for Godot (1953). Thus the empathy with his pitiful situation is checked by his comic caricature. Furthermore, in order to better achieve an effect of alienation, Wannous creates the chorus figure Harfoush, who acts like a circus ringmaster and introduces him in a declamatory tone of voice: "This is no longer the time of gigantic heroes. Every era has its prominent character, and this slight figure is the epitome of the period" (Wannous, 2004, p. 7). Thus, the dramatic action seems to be a play within a play, in which the audience are invited to see the events from the presenter's critical point of view. Harfoush watches and comments on the action but is unsympathetic toward Hanzala's misfortune. Most of the time, he is carelessly swinging on the dangling ring which takes center stage. His circus-like actions and lack of empathy help set the mood for a certain detachment from Hanzala. Thus the audience is enabled to see through Hanzala's pathetic ignorance and think analytically about the causes of such a dilemma. Wannous makes his intention clear by having Harfoush express clearly his meta-dramatic intention as he addresses the audience: "No doubt some tenderness and sympathy will help him a little, but what will help him more is to get him to know more" (Wannous, 2004, p. 14). Through the use of the chorus figure, Wannous uses a Brechtian alienation technique in order to break the theatrical illusion and to guide the response of the audience.

The choice of Hanzala's name is suggestive. The name means a bitter herb, but, more significantly, it is associated with a famous cartoon figure by the Palestinian cartoonist Naji al-Ali (1939-1987). The 40,000 satirical cartoons of a little boy by the same name presented a running commentary and derision of the policies of Israel and Arab regimes from 1967 until 1987. The cartoon figure of Hanzala presented a ten-year-old boy with ragged clothes and bare
feet, symbolizing the cartoonist's allegiance to the poor displaced Palestinians. The poor boy is depicted as always turning his back clasping his hands behind his back as he witnesses the plights of Arabs and gives insight to their imperfection. Haifaa Khalafallah, (1984, Sep 21), describes him as "the nearest thing there is to an Arab public opinion". The early cartoons of Hanzala show him observing political events, while the later cartoons depict him actively participating in the action. Although Wannous's Hanzala is conceptually different, he shares many similarities with the cartoon figure. Both are conceived with a great deal of bitterness toward the long lasting oppression practiced against humanity. Both boy and adult are innocent. The cartoon is a child while the play's Hanzala, although an adult, is a blameless non-committal underdog. Both of them are made to witness events conducive to injustice and both change from being observers to involved participants. Borrowing the famous name of the cartoon, Wannous is adequately effective in dramatizing the effects of oppression on innocent fellow countrymen and their consequent rise to get involved in the political decision and to alleviate injustice.

Awareness Leading to Despair

It is interesting to draw a trajectory of the awakening and actions of Wannous’s underdogs throughout his dramatic production. Doing so, a reader can detect a growing pessimism in the way Wannous’s doormats evolve. Although Hanzala (1978) is able to remove his blindfold and is willing to become proactive and regain his dignity, Farouk, in A Day of our Time (1994), experiences series of shocks and decides that he cannot adjust to the dissolution of ethics. As an act of protest, he commits suicide. Wannous’ later protagonist, Farouk, does protest, but in a more helpless way.

Like Hanzala, Farouk has to discover the truth about the modern world. An idealistic, sharp-tempered math teacher, Farouk goes through painful disillusionment as he witnesses corruption invading all corners of his life. It is through his portrayal of shocked naivety that the play criticizes the educational, religious, social, and political institutions because they have traded values for commercialism. His heartbreak begins with his discovery of the pragmatic nature of the school principal, who is more concerned about keeping his job than caring for the education and ethics of his students. The school faculty encounter two alarming situations on the same day. The first occurrence is a fight among female students; girls are reported to have exchanged accusations which revealed that many of them have been led to prostitution by a fellow classmate, Maisoon, who acts as a pimp to the infamous Madam Fadwa, the owner of a brothel. The second alarming situation is the anti-president graffiti discovered on the restroom walls. The principal's recourse is to ignore the prostitution accusations as transitory. Instead, he feels that the more important issue to deal with is the political graffiti. He cannot even pronounce the written statement for he believes that "One's death can be caused by what one says" (Wannous, 2004, p.196). According to the principal, the mother of all virtues is "love and allegiance to him," pointing with awe to the portrait of the president (Wannous, 2004, pp. 198-99).
The innocent and rather naïve Farouk feels compelled by his duty as an educator to follow up with the prostitution issue. Despite the financial hardship and marginalization of teachers, he still regards the "protection of ethics" as the top priority of an educator. (Wannous, 2004, p.198). The principal, on the other hand, is primarily protective of his position; he may easily lose his job in spite of his seniority if he does not identify and punish the graffiti writer. It is noteworthy that the principal’s phobia of the anti-government graffiti has its resonance in the real world, as the Syrian Revolution in 2011 and the ongoing war in Syria were originally initiated by the graffiti written by a 13 year-old kid, Hamza Alkhatib, on his school wall in the southern city of Daraa. (Alexander, 2011, June 5). According to Farouk’s principal, the purpose of education is to “Protect the students” from the “germs of politics” and to teach them "loyalty and obedience" because "the highest degree of ethics is love and loyalty to the president. Any other unethical behavior is a minor one” (Wannous, 2004, pp. 197-99).

The lack of freedom of thought is presented in this play as one of the vices of the time. After an exhaustive investigation, a book by the late nineteenth century free thinker Abdrrahman Al Kawakibi, The Nature of Despotism (1902), is found in the possession of a school girl who is eventually accused of writing the graffiti. The book had been banned from the school library, and the principal is appalled as he reads parts describing the absolute despot:

The absolute despot is aware that he violates rights. He stamps with his heels on the mouths of millions and gags them in order to prevent them from claiming their rights.

The despot is the enemy of right. He is the enemy of freedom. (Wannous, 2004, p. 205).

As a necessary measure, the principal deems the possession of this censored book to be a felony and instructs that a report be prepared and sent to authorities. The principal's selfishness and internalized fears are testimonies to the demoralizing effect of dictatorship that the innocent Farouk is witnessing. The lack of freedom creates slavish hero worshippers who, in their turn, suppress any will to freedom in others.

Furthermore, the debasement of education under a despotic regime is mourned by Wannous in this play, and is considered another instance of the debasement of all values. The author is enraged by this state of affairs; for him education is the foundation of true progress and its deformation is “a crime against the people” (‘Anezi, 2006, p. 240). Wannous’s resource for this is an interview with his friend Anton Maqdisi, a former professor and a literary scholar. In the interview with Maqdisi in 1991, the latter sounded very pessimistic about the future of education in Syria:

Our schools are being used to inculcate glorifying propaganda and shallow slogans. Our teachers have become dead souls. From Primary school teachers to university deans, they are all dead souls now. They are shackled by fear and hypocrisy. They lack the courage and pride of the teaching profession. (Wannous, 2004, p. 26).
In the play, Farouk is heartbroken over the banning of the free thinking book and the punishment of its reader. He is more burdened by the fact that the principal prioritizes the issue of anti-government graffiti over the prostitution scandal. His grief points poignantly to the play’s message that political despotism deforms logical reasoning and crushes ethics.

Having been horrified by the ethical degradation at school, Farouk seeks counsel at the religious institution. His conference with the mosque cleric, Sheikh Mitwally, shocks his common sense deeply. After the preacher gives a sermon full of pedantic details about cleanliness after toilet functions, his advice to Farouk is equally nonsensical and removed from reality. He is an ignorant fanatic for he is against schools and enlightenment. According to him, schools propagate sin. When he is told that Madam Fadwa is recruiting prostitutes among school students, he refuses to listen. He considers Farouk sinful because he is exposing the girls to scandal. He considers Madam Fadwa to be a philanthropic business woman; after all, she has donated a generous amount to construct and decorate the mosque minaret and dome. The religious institution is revealed to have completely lost its true essence and is only preoccupied with marginal details. Therefore it cannot be trusted to guarding ethics or protecting the society from social disease.

Searching for more support for his cause, Farouk discovers that the political corruption is the culprit in spreading insanity and destroying values. At the government bureau, he finds that the governor, father of Maisoon, is in the know of his daughter’s prostitution, is delighted with the gold lighter she had given him as a gift, and proud of his daughter’s “pragmatic thinking”. There, Farouk comes to the root of the problem. He learns that the “obscene transformations” of the past two decades have created a culture in which all humane values are “prostituted and polluted” (Anezi, 2006, p. 237). People must offer full allegiance to the despot and to comply with the rules of the market. The policy of economical openness (infitah) has replaced all the old values. The new values call for flexibility and adjustment in order to achieve prosperity. “We are living in the midst of a changing world,” says the governor. “I am not exaggerating if we are experiencing a deep revolutionary change…The real revolution is becoming open to the modern age and its achievement, to the world and its markets” (Wannous, 2004, p. 222). This materialism has proliferated all areas of Farouk’s life, and even infected his wife. He is finally shocked to learn that his own wife works for Madam Fadwa and has exhibited the same will to flexibility and financial gain.

This is the final blow to Farouk’s ideals. He is now adamant at looking vice in the face and pursue his quest for the root of the problem. At Madam Fadwas’s brothel, he meets a woman with a capital appetite for business and life. Fadwa had been the victim of gender bias and male greed, although it is not clear how she found, in prostitution, the vindication for her diminished humanity. The play does not call for a realistic interpretation for the case of prostitution. Rather, prostitution should be viewed here as a literary device symbolizing the extreme form of corruption in multiple aspects of society. Societies in the Middle East uphold female chastity as
the sign of her and her family's honor. The honor of chastity has been often emphasized as a fundamental value encapsulating all other values of integrity, dignity, and truthfulness. Thus, the violation of the female body either through rape or prostitution is the ultimate signifier of humiliation and debasement in Arabic literature. At this point, Wannous is adeptly using a stock common dichotomy of honor and defamation often connected to female chastity in Middle Eastern societies in order to draw an extreme image of corruption of all values.

Fadwa is not given enough time to develop her persona on the stage and is not convincing as a round character. She is significant in as much as symbolizes an extreme state of corruption deplored by the author. On the whole, she is a foil to Farouk. Through her pragmatism, Farouk’s idealism and inadequacy are emphasized. She describes Farouk as the “vulnerable expensive monument that will break if he is faced with the real world” (Wannous, 2004, p. 246). Fadwa is significant in as much as she highlights the ironical new value system. She is the well-respected successful business woman, while Farouk the math teacher is demoralized because of his meager salary and moral tenacity. So, although the phobia of Fadwa’s profession dominates the play from its opening scene, the play at the end stresses the plight of the innocent individual who is crushed by the immorality that is caused by despotism and the lack of freedom in the first place.

Finally Farouk’s disillusionment is complete. “The mask has fallen off from the face of this world. It is an ugly and deformed world” (Wannous, 2004, p. 246). His final action is to allow himself and his wife be gassed to death while making love to each other. An act of suicide is normally viewed by most as the utmost example of withdrawal and weakness. However, this case invites an alternative interpretation. Al-Anezi (2006) notes that “Farouk and Najat's suicide can at best be read as a romantic gesture uniting in death of two lovers who have recaptured their love” (p. 238). On a second note, Al-'Anezi, considers it to be an act of despair since Farouk is incapable of fighting against “the ta'rees [whoredom] that encompasses him in all its ugliness” (p. 238). However, Wannous himself argues- in his article “Cultural Margins (2) (1994, April 26)- for a positive reading of this suicide in terms that seem like a defense of his own reasons for attempting to kill himself after the defeat in the 1967 War. In his article titled “Cultural Margins”, Wannous explains his intentions:

The status quo is more bleak and immoral than we can imagine. However, does this mean that the horizon is blocked? Surely, hope is faint and I do not intend to propagate false hope. But I say that recognizing the reality and being able to protest it, even in death, are in themselves innate signifiers of hope. (Wannous, 2004, p. 691).

Farouk and Najat’s suicide may mean a spark of protest for the audience implicated by this tragedy. Modern history has provided a similar example in the self-incineration of the famous Tunisian, Bouezizi, who initiated the recent Arab Spring in 2011. (Abouzeid, 2011, January 21) Therefore, Farouk's suicide, hopeless as it is, can well be read as an act of protest, the utmost
expression of an oppressed underdog like him in the face of multiple crushing factors. This suicide is his last statement to uphold the values of integrity.

Conclusion
As the critic Sweileh (2015, May 15) puts it in his article in Al Akhbar newspaper:

After many defeats, Wannous turns to . . . dramatize oppression starting from the smallest cell of the Arabic brain, revealing the individual's pain, glimpsing the suppression deeply latent in collective psyche. We are confronted with an intellect that is historically defeated, a lost justice and tyrannical authority that has transformed the Arab citizen into an oppressed being living in a cage. (p.2)

Hence his anti-heroes are defeated, but faintly gain a small voice of protest. Hanzalah and Farouk are only two examples of many anti-heroes who represent the suffering of the oppressed contemporary Arab citizen. In the first case, Hanzala unwittingly experiences injustice. His transformation marks a growing awareness of his own oppression and will to become accountable for everything going around him. Here, the solution lies in the enlightenment that will change the dormant masses from passive to proactive citizens. Similarly, Farouk, the idealistic math teacher, is exposed to the demoralizing effect of despotism and commercialism. Being shocked, he refuses to surrender to the domineering trend and protests by his own death. However bleak this death is, it is hoped to he will inspire the masses to fend for their own integrity. Wannous does not expect heroic miracles from his underdogs. At best, the trodden anti-hero gains a little more awareness which is enough to transform him and make him protest. The new found knowledge and the faint signs of protest are the ultimate victories of the writer who intends to educate the host of audience and plant the seeds of social and political rebellion.

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References


World Englishes-Based Lessons: Their Effects on Anxiety and Language Achievement of Thai Tertiary Students

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Abstract
Foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) is prevalent among Thai learners, affecting language learning achievement. This problem has been rooted in ineffective pedagogical practice informed by native speaker (NS) ideology of English language teaching (ELT) policy in Thailand. This has made learners struggle to reach an unrealistic goal of NS norms as the only way to be proficient users of English, leading to low self-esteem and fear of speaking English. This study aims to investigate a paradigm shift in ELT as a means to reduce students’ FLCA. By incorporating World Englishes (WE) into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom practice, it is believed that students will develop a more realistic goal of being efficient English users rather than struggling, and failing, to become like native English speakers. As a result, they will develop self-esteem and more confidence in using their own English, considered a crucial anxiety-buffering factor. Quasi-experimental research with 92 first-year students at one government university in Bangkok was employed over 17 weeks in one of their required English courses. FLCA questionnaires and English achievement tests were used as a pretest and posttest to find out anxiety and achievement levels, while a focus group interview yielded supplementary data. Means, SD, T-test results and content analysis were used for data analysis, showing a significant reduction in anxiety resulting from the WE-based instruction and an increase in achievement from the FLCA reduction. Therefore, this study concludes that global ELT curriculum should incorporate more WE in classroom practice as an alternative means to reduce FLCA and indirectly increase language achievement.

Key words: English as an international language, L2 learning anxiety, students ‘L2 achievement, world englishes
Introduction

Anxiety among second or foreign language students is prevalent, affecting language learning achievement in many EFL contexts, including Thailand. Various treatments have been sought by many researchers to date, but the results have not been satisfactory since language classrooms are complex and involve various factors. This study presents another alternative to help reduce anxiety and bring about greater language achievement. This potential solution involves a shift in ELT curricula implementation that incorporates English as an International Language (EIL) or WE notions in classroom practice. This shift is especially appropriate in contexts where English is used as a lingua franca among non-native speakers (NNSs) (Jindapitak & Teo, 2013). Also, traditional pedagogical principles that push NS ideology can cause students to experience tension, low confidence and fear of speaking English, as they tend to devalue themselves as being local NNSs in peripheral positions outside English discourses (Boriboon, 2011; Methitham & Chamcharatsri, 2011).

Through the researcher’s teaching experience in Thailand, many students fear to speak English, and experience anxiety and low self-esteem, or low perception of their own success, by having NS norms (mainly British and North American) as a yardstick to judge their success or failure. This is also reaffirmed by the Director of Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) in Thailand (Personal Communication, December 2014) who notes anxiety as the main obstacle for Thai students in learning English. He concludes that among various sources for language anxiety, it appears that unrealistic learning goals informed by NS norms, low self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation or social discrimination if they cannot speak with a NS accent are most prevailing. These three factors are interrelated and confirmed by previous studies to be crucial sources of anxiety (Boriboon, 2011; Young, 1999). These factors move learners away from participation in comprehensible input and output, indispensable for language learning success (Swain, 1985). Thai students’ unrealistic goals, low self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation have been rooted in the ineffective pedagogical practice guided by NS ideological domination that puts a great deal of pressure on learners to acquire native-like linguistic and sociocultural norms (Boriboon, 2011). Various scholars (e.g. Cook, 2014; McKay, 2012; Matsuda, 2003; Canagarajah, 1999) consider such goals unrealistic and could result in unhealthy attitudes and low self-esteem as the struggle to reach such unrealistic goals can become a great potential source of tension or fear to speak English, affecting language performance (Boriboon, 2011).

In this changing landscape of English, learners should be prepared to communicate in intercultural contexts. In addition, since language anxiety has been found to be rooted in NS-based ELT curriculum in Thailand, the question arises as to whether NS models should be the only correct models to inform ELT policies in Thailand, or whether the curriculum should be more enriched by introducing the legitimacy of other varieties of English alongside NS models. Among various solutions to the anxiety problems, a reconsideration of ELT curricula implementation to address more WE/EIL notions which attempt to go beyond the nativeness might be another effective means to promote realistic learning goals and develop confidence among Thai learners to speak English, leading to a reduction in anxiety.
Need of the Study

Even though various attempts have been provided as solutions to reduce FLCA, none of them have been discussed under the WE/EIL framework. Most suggestions still gear towards traditional classrooms in which NS norms are used as a yardstick to judge students’ success or failure (Cook, 2014). Furthermore, even though WE/EIL theory has gained acceptance in the last three decades, there is far less discussion on pedagogical implications that are specific enough to be useful in classroom practice (Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011). This study will hopefully fill in these gaps in ELT in terms of FLCA minimization and pedagogical practice.

Significance of the Study

This study can contribute to both teaching and learning aspects in a way that provides alternatives for English teachers or administrators to create curriculum that truly reflects the current English learning environment. Also, it offers another effective solution to reduce learners’ FLCA, a crucial means for language learning achievement.

Aims and Research Questions

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the incorporation of WE in EFL classroom practice in reducing FLCA among Thai tertiary students, as well as explore if the reduction of FLCA could help increase language learning achievement. Two research questions include:

1. Does the incorporation of World Englishes in classroom practice help reduce FLCA among Thai tertiary students?
2. Do the students in a WE group outperform students in a control group in terms of English language achievement?

Literature Review

Anxiety and language learning

Anxiety is an unpleasant emotional state filled with nervousness and apprehension (Freud, 1924, as cited in Chiang, 2012). When anxiety is limited to specific language learning situations such as a foreign language classroom, it is a specific anxiety called foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA), defined by MacIntyre and Gardner as a tension or apprehension particularly related to second or foreign language learning, including listening, speaking, and learning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, as cited in Tintaboot, 1998). Horwitz et al. (1986) note that performance in foreign language can be problematic as it involves risk-taking and may challenge an individual’s self-perception as a competent communicator and lead to self-consciousness, reticence, or fear. The occurrence of frequent mistakes may also put the students in vulnerable positions, opening them up to negative evaluation. Students who exhibit low FLCA tend to have greater success in school and feel like studying more in class than their higher FLCA counterparts (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Since FLCA concerns performance evaluation within both academic and social contexts, Horwitz et al. (1986) provide three related factors or specific anxieties of FLCA. The first is Communication Apprehension (CA), or fear of communicating with people. The second is Fear of Negative Evaluation, which is anxiety about others’ evaluations. The third is Test Anxiety, which is anxiety stemming from fear of failure. Young (1999) further includes some other specific anxieties or factors causing FLCA, such as classroom procedures, teachers’ beliefs about
language teaching, personal factors involving low self-esteem, and unrealistic learning goals based on NS models. Wang (2010) also notes a close relationship between CA, fear of negative evaluation and low self-esteem. To clarify, self-esteem is closely linked to anxiety. Students who begin with a self-perceived low ability level in foreign language classes are perfect candidates for language anxiety. And vice versa, anxious students tend to have low self-esteem (MacIntyre & Noels, 1994, as cited in Young, 1999). Low self-esteem can be caused by learners’ unrealistic learning goals such as developing an accent that approximates that of native speakers (Young, 1999), leading to great anxiety once expectations and reality clash (Ganschow et al., 1994, as cited in Occhipinti, 2009). Students start worrying when they realize it is impossible to acquire such a goal in a short amount of time, or whether it is even possible at all. In the researcher’s experience, this realization negatively affects many Thai students’ self-esteem. According to such NS goals, to perform differently could lead to the possibility of being wrong and then lead to a fear of negative evaluation, such as being laughed at or perceived as low-level users (Moore, 1997, as cited in Occhipinti, 2009), which impairs self-esteem further. Among affective factors in language learning, anxiety stands out as the best predictor for language learning success (Horwitz, 2001).

To date, there have been various attempts made to overcome FLCA. For example, Tanveer (2007) suggests that teachers promote realistic goals by using materials that do not present nativelike pronunciation as the only model. Greensberg et al. (1992, as cited in Ozwuegbuzie, 1999) propose a terror management theory, which focuses on the idea that positive self-esteem will act as a protector against any type of language anxiety. Other treatments from cognitive, behavior, and pedagogical approaches present Cognitive Modification (CM), Skill Training (ST) (Mejias et al., 1991, as cited in Occhipinti, 2009), and a Community Language Learning (CLL) approach (Koba et al., 2000).

**ELT situation in Thailand**

ELT policies in Thailand have long been informed by NS ideological domination, which has caused Thai learners to have low self-esteem and a serious and permanent destruction of identity, indirectly affecting language learning achievement (Boriboon, 2011). NS ideology centered around North American and British models in Thailand has been reinforced through textbooks, teaching methods, testing techniques, policy makers, and teachers, all of which get passed on to the students and society as a whole. Most Thai teachers believe that the ultimate goal of English learning is to help students achieve NS models (Choomthong, 2014), including pronunciation, forms, and cultural norms. As a result, most Thai students are afraid to speak English for fear of discrimination if they cannot speak with a NS accent (Boriboon, 2011). Too-much prioritizing of NS models can reinforce the idea that other NNS varieties, including students’ own, are not acceptable, inferior, low-competent or even low-class, while the NS counterparts symbolize modern, superior, or high-class (Jindapitak & Teo, 2012), indicating that language learning cannot be discussed from apolitical view. Boriboon (2011) notes that the incomplete presentation of English varieties in English classrooms in Thailand has gradually made other Englishes, including Thai English, be refused and gained no position in the society and contributed to the fear students have in speaking English, both inside and outside the classroom.
WE/EIL prospectives and ELT implications

The use of English has changed from being a language primarily used between NSs to becoming an international medium in multicultural communication used mainly among NNSs (Jenkins, 2009), which has led to the pluralization of English, resulting in the birth of new varieties of English and the emergence of the terms World Englishes, English as an International Language, and English as a Lingua Franca. All highlight the increasing role NNSs play in using English alongside their first language to serve their specific needs (McKay, 2012). To acknowledge the spread of English, Kachru (1992) divides WE into three concentric circles: The Inner Circle, referring to native-speaking countries (e.g., USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada); The Outer Circle, referring to former colonial countries where English is used as a second language (e.g., India, Philippines, Singapore); The Expanding Circle, referring to countries such as Thailand, China, Japan where English is used as a foreign language (Jenkins, 2009).

The current English profile has important pedagogical implications on ELT, including awareness-raising of the existence of other English varieties, valuing learners’ own and other varieties as legitimate modes of communication, and the need for learners to be able to listen and comprehend diverse English varieties for business, travel, study and other purposes (Kubota, 2012). These implications have called for a paradigm shift in ELT curriculum to incorporate realistic and authentic needs of English (Cook, 2014; McKay, 2012) by putting aside NSs as the only, or best, models and addressing more realistic goals of being effective English users, which does not require NS competence (Matsuda, 2003).

WE principles reflected in WE-based lessons

WE framework in this study is informed by the Kachruvian approach (1992) and Matsuda & Friedrich (2011), in which the underlying philosophy argues for the importance of pluricentricity in the linguistics of English worldwide. Successful international communication among people who do not share a common first language does not require one particular model of English. WE/EIL concepts in this study also highlight the freedom that learners have in designing their own Englishes without being restricted by NS norms and is not a course or class that teaches a particular linguistic variety as it is believed that there is no single variety that can assure success in all situations of international communication (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011). Based on this idea, Matsuda & Friedrich (2011) note that a WE/EIL class should aim to prepare learners to become competent users of English in international contexts who are able to use English to serve their specific needs while respecting the needs of others. An attempt to create competent EIL users requires the curriculum to give equal importance to three aspects: linguistic competence; other competences (e.g. pragmatic, strategic); other knowledge (three types of culture). From these three aspects, four principles described by Matsuda & Friedrich (2011) were used to design WE-based lessons in this study. It should be noted, however, that an established variety is appropriate as the primary instructional model as suggested by Matsuda and Friedrich. In other words, teachers can choose one of the established varieties (codified and used for wide communicative functions; e.g. British English, Indian English) as the dominant instructional model, while also introducing other varieties as part of common classroom practice. In this way, teachers should emphasize that the variety selected as dominant is simply one of many English varieties that exist in the world and that other Englishes the students will encounter in the future may look or sound different from this.
The first WE principle is *Awareness of and Exposure to Varieties of English*. Matsuda & Friedrich (2011) note that lack of awareness might lead students to believe there is only one correct variety. Therefore, they may develop negative attitudes towards their own and other NNS varieties, and also lose confidence in successful communication, as they have never seen effective NNS models. Jindapitak & Teo (2012) and Boriboon (2011) also point out that negative attitudes resulting from an incomplete presentation of English varieties in classrooms could cause learners to disfavor other standard varieties and form a deep-seated inferior self-image by concluding that their own English is unacceptable. Moreover, the students would have no way to know how successful they could communicate with their accented English and they may feel embarrassed about their accent and hesitate to use it (Matsuda, 2003). Examples of classroom activities may include YouTube VDO representing varieties of English and how stereotypes are constructed in a society (Bayyurt & Altinmakas, 2012), or inviting international visitors to class (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011).

The second principle is the *History, Politics and Ownership of English*. According to Matsuda (2003), a traditional curriculum fails to address issues such as language and power, the colonial past of English, stories of the worldwide spread of English and its implications on language learning, the current EIL status, and variations in English standards. As a result, without the awareness of the potential power struggles associated with EIL, learners tend to devalue their own status in international communication (Pennycook, 1998) and likely to assume that it is Inner Circle native speakers who have the right to use English or have the ownership to the English language (Matsuda, 2003). Interestingly, such NS ideology is found to have a psychological impact on users of English, drawing them to get close to those whom they believe to be the owners of the language (Jenkins, 2009). Possible activities to remedy this situation could include reading the history of colonial past and the spread of the English language to help students critically think about the ownership of English, or examine the discourses surrounding the use of English which tend to promote unrealistic expectations (McKay, 2012).

The third principle is *Three Types of Cultures* which includes the awareness of global culture or global issues such as world peace, environment, human rights in relation to globalization and the spread of the English language. Activities can be course assignments or appropriate reading encouraging students to critically discuss the topics in class. Next, *culture of future interlocutors* entail those of all three concentric circles to let students learn and understand the wide diversity that exists among English-speaking countries. This can be introduced in class by pointing out resources to learn about a particular country from an English website created by its government (Matsuda & Friedrich, 2011). Last is the *students’ own culture*, which may include students explaining their own culture in a way that outsiders can understand. This can be introduced in class by assigning students to create an English website of their hometown. In short, *three types of culture* could help students become conscious about gaining the ability to articulate one’s convictions to an international audience. It is a more important objective for language learning than imitating the usage habits of native speakers (Matsuda & Duran, 2012), and also develops students’ ability to extend or transfer their cultural knowledge to anticipate cultural traits in new or unexpected communication situations.

The fourth WE principle is *Communication Strategies*. Various scholars (e.g. Kubota, 2012; Matsuda, 2003) note that communicative strategies are required for WE/EIL curriculum as
linguistic knowledge alone is not adequate for successful communication, which individuals bring their own linguistic and cultural backgrounds to approach international communication. Therefore, students should have the ability to make effective use of various strategies to enhance intelligibility, overcome communication difficulties, and develop confidence in their ability to use English (Kubota, 2012). Possible activities include explicitly teaching communicative strategies or exemplifying NNS-NNS interactions to engage students in communication prepared for miscommunication and how to address it (McKay, 2012).

Previous studies of WE in classroom practice
Relevant research on WE in classroom practice over the past 10 years is scarce. The important studies are as follows. Lee’s study (2012) supports the positive effects of a WE-based course. This study evaluates a pilot program at Chukyo High School in Japan. The program successfully develops positive attitudes and confidence in students speaking their own English, and lessens anxiety and encourages more class participation. D’Angelo (2012) at Chukyo University in Japan, Sharifian & Marlina (2012) at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, and Bayyurt & Altinmakas (2012) at Turkish University also find that students successfully develop awareness of other varieties when presented with WE-based courses. Besides, they develop positive attitudes and respect towards their own and other NNS varieties, recognizing them as legitimate varieties. Other attempts include Baik & Shim (2002) who introduce WE in their classrooms via the internet at Open Cyber University of Korean, and Jindapitak & Teo (2012) who use an attitudinal neutrality activity to make the students aware of their linguistic prejudice at a university in Thailand.

Methodology
Research design
This study used a mixed-method approach since it aligns with Dornyei’s (2007) suggestion to be appropriate for a classroom research which requires the use of more than one method to understand what is happening in such complex environment. This study employed quasi-experiment as the main approach, with qualitative inquiries (focus group interview and headnotes) to help triangulate the results or to be confident that the results were due to the treatment (WE-based lessons), not some other variables.

Research setting and participants
The university being studied was one government University in Bangkok where the researcher has been working. It was comprised of 15 Faculties (e.g., Humanities, Fisheries, Agro-Industry, Social Science). In this study, the population was around 2,596 who were all first-year and non-English major students, studying in a regular program. About 1,250 students were from arts and 1,350 from science field. The participants included 47 students in the control group and 45 in the experimental group. All participants were first-year students, coming from various faculties. To meet certain practical criteria, students were assigned to enroll in an appropriate English course level determined by the Office of the Registrar (2014) at this government university. Both groups were lower-intermediate and enrolled for the Foundation English II course.
Data collection
Data was gathered in the first semester of the 2015 academic year. The semester covered 17 weeks, running from August to December. Seven of those weeks were devoted to university activities, so the actual data collection took place over 10 weeks, separated into eight weeks of WE lesson plans plus two weeks for the pretest and posttest. Each lesson took 1.5 hours. To answer the first research question (Does the incorporation of WE-based lessons in classroom practice help reduce FLCA among Thai tertiary students?), three main instruments were used.

FLCAS questionnaire
A 39-item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was used to measure foreign language anxiety, adapted from the 33-item tool designed by Horwitz et al. (1986) and Aida (1994), and expanded upon by Young’s (1999) and Matsuda & Friedrich’s (2011) framework. Validation by three experts through the Item Objective Congruence (IOC) process was done and piloted for its high reliability of 0.929 by using the coefficient of Cronbach. All items were scored on a Likert-5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The minimum score was 39 points, while the maximum was 195 points. A higher score showed a high level of FLCA, while a lower score showed a low level of FLCA. The questionnaire contained five specific anxieties: Communication apprehension and Fear of negative evaluation; Fear of failing the class; Comfortableness in speaking with native English speakers; Negative attitudes towards the English class; Unrealistic learning goals and low self-esteem. All items were written in the Thai language to assure valid answers. (See the questionnaire in Appendix A)

WE-based lesson plans
Eight WE-based lesson plans were used with the experimental group as treatment to explore its effects on reducing FLCA. The researcher collected, adapted and developed speech samples and materials representing many English varieties as suggested by Matsuda (2003). These samples and materials include YouTube clips, dialogues, readings, and others. A conscious effort was made to use a wide range of English varieties, rather than being limited by speech samples from the British and American standards presented in the textbook used in this course. The eight lesson plans were designed to reflect all four WE principles based on Matsuda & Friedrich (2011), and integrated into the existing tasks sheets, topics, and course objectives set for the Foundation English II course. The activities were adapted from Matsuda & Friedrich (2011), Matsuda & Duran (2012), McKay (2012), and expanded upon by the researcher. (See the sample lesson plan in Appendix B)

Focus group interview
The focus group interview was used to supplement the results from the FLCA questionnaire to see how WE principles may help reduce FLCA. 10 voluntary students were selected from those who showed a significant reduction in FLCA scores between the pretest and posttest, and showed an increase in their English achievement scores. These students were further separated by gender (five males/five females), and fields of study (five arts/five science). The researcher developed 10 guideline questions, validated by three experts, piloted and revised before their actual use.
The second research question is: Do the students in the experimental group outperform the students in the control group in terms of English language achievement as a result of the FLCA reduction? The English achievement test was used to find their English achievement level. This test was adopted from previous Foundation English II tests and validated through IOC. The finalized test included 50 items worth 50 marks, and divided into four main parts: vocabulary-15 items; expressions-10 items; structure-15 items; reading comprehension-10 items (one reading passage). All items were in a multiple choice format with four options (a, b, c, d).

Procedures
Before the experiment, the FLCA questionnaire and English achievement test were given as a pretest, taking about 15 and 45 minutes, respectively. Prior to the tests, the participants were told the purpose, ethical issues and given the consent forms.

During the experiment, eight WE lessons began in the third week and continued until week 14th. The two groups were taught by the same teacher, and the same grammar points, expressions and vocabulary that were used in the midterm and final examinations.

After the experiment on the last day of the course, the FLCA questionnaire and English achievement test were given as a posttest, while the purpose of the study and ethical issues were explained again. Then, the scores were checked to select ten participants to join the focus group interview one week later.

Data analysis
To answer the first research question, scores from the FLCA questionnaires were calculated for means (x) and standard deviations (SD). Independent Sample T-test (2-tailed) was used to find any significant differences in the pretest and posttest anxiety scores between the two groups. Second, qualitative content analysis (QCA) adopted from Schreier (2012) was used to analyze data from the interview, based on a partial transcript. QCA is a summary of data, rather than generating new themes, so it helps the researcher describe the data only in certain aspects which we may pre-specify based on some coding frames in our mind (Schreier, 2012). The steps involve units of data that were sorted into predetermined categories based on four WE principles in relation to the FLCA framework. The large amounts of data were reduced, and repeated significant patterns were carefully identified.

To answer the second research question, scores from the English achievement test were calculated for means (x) and standard deviations (SD). Independent Sample T-test (2-tailed) was used to find any significant group differences in the pretest and posttest achievement scores as a result of FLCA reduction.

Results and Discussion
To discuss the first research question, the results from FLCA questionnaire in Table 1 and from the focus group interview will be presented.

Effectiveness of WE lessons on FLCA reduction reported in the FLCA questionnaire

Table 1. The overall anxiety results of the pretest and posttest from FLCA questionnaire

<table>
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<th>Control group</th>
<th>Experimental group</th>
<th>Test for equality</th>
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<td>N = 45(</td>
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</table>

...
According to Table 1, the t-test results indicated that there was no significant difference in the pretest FLCA of the two groups at 0.05 level (sig. = .322), implying the two groups were equivalent, both showing a moderate-anxiety level before the treatment. However, the posttest mean scores indicated a significant difference in the FLCA levels between the two groups (sig. = .000), in which the experimental group’s mean significantly reduced to a low level in the posttest, whereas the control group remained at a moderate level. The results in Table 1 show the effectiveness of WE-based lessons in reducing FLCA among the students.

**Effectiveness of WE lessons on FLCA reduction reported in focus group interview**

The focus group interview was employed to explore the participants’ reasons for considering the effectiveness of WE in reducing their anxiety. The main reasons are grouped under four WE principles, as follows.

**WE principle 1: exposure and awareness of varieties of English**

The majority of the participants reported that the exposure to varieties of English helped them develop more positive attitudes towards their own and other NNS varieties. Instead of considering these varieties as wrong or inferior, they began to see these more as different, but still legitimate. This view not only affected their self-esteem and confidence in speaking English, but it lessened their fear of negative evaluation as they no longer devalued themselves as being inferior local NNSs. The WE lessons where the students watched different varieties of English accents and forms from YouTube VDO clips especially assisted them in uncovering and adjusting their attitudes.

From the first activity that I learned that there are not only US and UK accents. There are actually varieties of accents. This made us see a difference. And we don’t have to follow anyone if there is a difference and it does not mean wrong. We could also make a difference. And we know that we can communicate with them successfully even it’s different from US or UK models. We realized that they have their accent, we also have ours. It’s just different. This made me feel more confident to speak.

I learned that there are actually many English accents. I feel more confident in speaking. Before this I felt shy to speak English with my Thai accent...like I fear that others would think that I am not proficient. But now I think we don’t have to stick with US or UK accents. Thai accent is ok.
Participants also had opportunity to witness successful NNS models, which helped them develop more realistic goals and self-esteem by putting aside NSs as the only correct model. One of the WE lessons was particularly effective in presenting a successful NNS model. In the lesson, the teacher invited a Chinese international student to share her study experience in class.

*I like activity 3 that teacher invited Jessica (Chinese guest speaker) to class. I met a real NNS that spoke with Chinese NNS accent. When she came, she didn’t use US or UK accent. I could understand her... understand her accent. So, I think I could also do it. No need to follow just only British or American models.*

The results from these examples corroborate Matsuda & Friedrich (2011) and Jindapitak & Teo’s study (2013) in finding that unhealthy attitudes are more likely to occur if students remain unaware that varieties of English exist. These unhealthy attitudes develop because they conclude that there is only one correct variety, one they are unable to master, and their English and other NNS varieties are not acceptable. Also, without such awareness, it can affect students’ confidence in speaking English as they never witness effective NNSs who are able to effectively use English with their accented English (Matsuda, 2003). With this exposure, however, most students developed better attitudes towards their own and other NNS varieties, and set more realistic goals by putting aside a single NS model. Moreover, fear of negative evaluation was reduced as a result of an increasing positive attitude, since attitude, self-esteem and fear of negative evaluation are closely connected. This aligns with Boriboon (2011), in that most Thai students fear of negative evaluation or social discrimination because they have developed a deep-seated inferior self-image or low self-esteem. In a nutshell, it is possible that WE principle 1 was effective in helping the students develop a more positive attitude towards their own and other NNS varieties, leading to more realistic goals and self-esteem in speaking English, considered as a crucial means to reduce FLCA (Greensberg et al., 1992, as cited in Ozwuegbuzie, 1999).

**WE principle 2: politics & ownership of the English language**

Through the recognition of the global role of English, its spread, EIL power, its uses and users, and that English is used increasingly more between NNS-NNS rather than NS-NNS, all participants reported an increased sense of ownership of the English language. They recognized that it is no longer limited to the Inner Circle countries. Instead, it is owned by whoever uses it. Consequently, this also helped them develop more realistic goals by putting aside NS models and gaining more confidence in speaking English, regardless of whether it is with a Thai accent.

*In the past I think we use English to communicate mainly with NS and US and UK are the owners of the language. After reading the articles about the current status of English, its spread or users, I think English belongs to everyone who uses it. Also in real life we meet NNS. We don’t see many NS...like when doing i-VDO project that we went to Wat Pra Kaew (a famous temple in Bangkok). We met just Chinese, Japanese, or Romanian. Now people around the world uses English. So, I think the owners should be the ones who use it. I realized that English is no longer used by US and UK. Now everyone around the world uses it. And they have their own different accents. We don’t have to speak like NS. When they speak with their accents, we can reply with our own Thai*
accent. I feel no shame, but rather have more confident and less pressure. In the past if I speak, I wanted to speak like NS because I think they are the owner.

The results from these statements are consistent with the findings of Matsuda (2003) and Boriboon (2011) in that being taken away the presentation of real current uses and users of English, the learners might assume that it is only Inner Circle native speakers who have ownership of English. In response to WE principle 2, the results indicated that most students developed a sense of ownership in the English language and didn’t feel a need to get close or acquire an NS norm, which resonates Jenkins (2009) in terms of the psychological impact that the perception of language ownership and students’ goals has on language learners. In summary, WE principle 2 was effective in helping the students develop a sense of ownership of the English language, leading to more realistic goals, greater self-esteem and less fear of speaking their own English variety, considered as a crucial means to reduce FLCA.

**WE principle 3: recognition of three types of cultures**

Through the teaching of all three types of culture including global, future interlocutors, and students’ own cultures, most participants developed more confidence in communicating with others in English. The main reason involved the development of students’ ability to transfer and extend cultural knowledge to facilitate their international communication.

*I feel more confident to communicate with others because I think I kind of understand people from other cultures more...like Singaporeans they have the words siah or lah. We learn that the person we are talking to is in bad mood or moment or how he/she feels. Or different gestures of Indian people like shaking head that means yes or how they treat senior like the example of the last piece of cake Rusma (the invited Indian guest speaker) told us in class. These all link to their cultures. We (=Thais) also use the words like na, naja to express our moods as well.*

Moreover, from the introduction of global culture in the classroom, many students developed more realistic learning goals. Their increase in this cultural knowledge helped to recognize communicative effectiveness in cross-cultural interactions, beyond linguistic knowledge. The more realistic goals also involved learning and using English to bring about positive global change, rather than only imitating NS ability.

*In the past, I gave pressure to myself very hard that I have to speak with NS accent. But now I feel that what really matters is to succeed in real world communication and learn about other cultures as well.*

... *In the past I focused only on learning English to pass the exam or speak like NS, but now I think English is also used for communicating the campaign which proposes solutions to something to the world. Because if we use Thai language, others might not understand. But with the use of English it can broadcast our message to worldwide. We can use simple words and with our own accents like Ban Ki-moon. He used a very strong Korean English accent, but we could still get it.*
These statements are consistent with Matsuda & Friedrich (2011) in that broader cultural understanding based on WE principle 3 could help increase students’ ability to extend and transfer their cultural knowledge to facilitate international communication. It could also help students become more aware that gaining the ability to articulate one’s convictions to an international audience and bring about positive global change is a more important objective for language learning than imitating NS ability (Matsuda & Duran, 2012). This is considered to be a more realistic learning goal by many WE/EIL scholars. As a result of greater confidence in being able to communicate, and more realistic goals beyond NS imitation, these could be crucial factors for reducing anxiety.

**WE principle 4: communicative strategies**

The majority of participants expressed more confidence in using English to communicate in real world environments outside the classroom than before they were explicitly taught with these skills. This is because they learned how to repair the communication breakdown by using various strategies, rather than avoiding communication like before.

...learning about various communication strategies in class helped me a lot when talking to foreigners. Sometimes I don’t know the words I want to say. It’s like it is on the tip of my tongue. But now we can categorizing or finding synonym to communicate with foreigners more successfully. This gives me more courage to speak.

Learning communication strategies allowed me to learn how to make myself understood by others and also to understand others. Before this, I didn’t know the strategies, I kept talking and talking and the foreigners could not understand me and I felt bad. But now I know how to use categorizing or asking for repetition. I feel more confidence to speak even though I am not good at grammar or don’t know many vocabularies.

These statements support the importance of teaching communication strategies in EIL classrooms, as addressed by Kubota (2012), in that it could help learners develop more confidence in their ability to communicate in English when confronting interlocutors from different linguistic backgrounds. They could select different strategies to overcome communication difficulties and this added confidence could also encourage them to use language more. As they developed confidence in speaking English, it is possible that FLCA was reduced.

**Table 2 English achievement results of the pretest and posttest of English achievement test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Control group</th>
<th>Experimental group</th>
<th>Test for equality of means</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>28.49</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>30.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>33.68</td>
<td>8.43</td>
<td>37.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Significant at the p < .05 level.*
Results from Table 2 were used to answer the second research question. The independent t-test (2-tailed) indicated no significant difference in the pretest between the two groups at 0.05 (sig = .152). However, the posttest mean scores indicated a significant difference at 0.05 (sig = .016), indicating that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group, which could be due to the significant reduction of their FLCA. The results support various studies in that language anxiety has a negative correlation to language learning achievement (Tanielian, 2014; Chiang, 2012; Mahmood & Iqbal, 2010).

Conclusion & Pedagogical Suggestions

This study challenges NS guided practice that has long informed traditional ELT policy in Thailand and maintains the need for a paradigm shift addressing WE/EIL notions in curriculum implementation, which can better serve current English profile. From the shift in this study, it is found to help learners develop more realistic goals of being effective English users, rather than requiring NS competence (Matsuda, 2003). This will help them develop better attitudes towards their own and other NNS varieties, build self-esteem and increase confidence in speaking English. It does so by allowing the students to express their national identity, leading to less anxiety, which has a negative relationship to language learning achievement. This study also maintains the need for English learners to be exposed to multiple varieties of English, introduced to politics and ownership of the English language, three types of cultural awareness, and communicative strategies in order to re-conceptualize the notion of effective users beyond the nativeness. This study also suggests an early stage of WE-in-class implementation and introduction into different schooling ages (Boriboon, 2011) since attitude or linguistic prejudice take time to reform. Since most students in this study showed recognition of the importance of WE/EIL notions in studying English in this era of globalization, few still desired to acquire NS norms. A shift in classroom practice, however, is unlikely to occur until policy makers and teachers let go of their traditional assumptions of ELT informed by NS ideology. This shift can be supported by professional development or teacher training. On the top of that, with the incorporation of WE/EIL, English classes will be more than a language class where teachers teach only linguistic competence; learners will also be trained to critically reflect on their current roles as EIL users and able to seek their own voice in English. However, this is not to say that NS models should be excluded from classroom practice; rather, in order to enrich global ELT curriculum, it requires the introduction of English varieties which represent a more realistic context of English where people bring diverse English varieties to approach their international communication.

Recommendations for Future Research

The participants in this study are all first-year, lower-intermediate students from both arts and science fields. Collecting data from participants of different ages, proficiency levels, and other fields of study may yield different findings. Moreover, since this study employed a questionnaire and interview method to investigate the effectiveness of WE lessons on reducing anxiety, it is recommended for future studies to use other approaches (e.g. headnotes, vignette, researcher’s log, students’ diary) to yield other relevant data.
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World Englishes-Based Lessons: Their Effects  Rajani Na Ayuthaya & Sitthitikul

and TEFL, 1(2), 65-80.

APPENDIX A

Thai Tertiary EFL Students’ Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale
Descriptions: Please provide true information about yourself and your foreign language anxiety experience by rating 1 to 5. Your responses are valuable and considered highly confidential. 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire items</th>
<th>Rating scales</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1( Communication apprehension &amp; fear of negative evaluation no. 1-16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 I tremble when I know that I am going to be called upon in English class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 I don’t feel confident to volunteer to answer in my English class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in my English class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire items</td>
<td>Rating scales</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>other students.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6  I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7  In English class I can get so nervous, I forget things I know.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9  I feel confident when I speak in my English class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven’t prepared in advance for.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Even if I am well-prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12 The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13 It frightens me when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying in English class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 I am usually at ease during tests in my English class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 I don’t worry about making mistakes in my English class.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16 I am afraid that my English teacher will correct every mistake I make.</td>
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2( Fear of failing the class no. 17-22)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire items</th>
<th>Rating scales</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 I don’t feel pressure to prepare very much for my language class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire items</td>
<td>Rating scales</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3( Comfortableness in speaking with native english speakers no.21-23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 I feel comfortable around native speakers of English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 I don’t understand why some people get so upset over English classes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 I would not be nervous about speaking English with native English speakers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4( Negative attitudes towards English class no.24-26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 It wouldn’t bother me at all to take more English language classes.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25 I often feel like not going to my English class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 When I’m on my way to English class, I feel very sure and relaxed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5( Unrealistic learning goals &amp; low self-esteem no.27-39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 It makes me feel worried to speak grammatically perfect when I speak English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 I can never speak English like native speakers no matter how hard I try.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29 I feel upset to speak English like a native speaker.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30 I feel embarrassed with my own accent when I speak English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 The awareness of English varieties makes me feel more relaxed when learning English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 The knowledge about history, current users of English, and ownership of English lessens my anxiety in English class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 The knowledge about intercultural communication and broader cultural knowledge helps me feel more confident in communicating in English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Knowledge about communication strategies helps me feel more confident in communicating in English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Practice in intercultural competence that goes beyond linguistic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Questionnaire items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>knowledge from this class helps me realize that being a competent EIL user does not require obtaining native speaker competence.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this class, exposure to samples of communication breakdown situations between L2 speakers, and communication strategies to overcome these breakdowns, has helped me increase my confidence in using English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the reasons why I feel anxious in learning English is because I have never known the existence of other standard varieties of English apart from British and American.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The idea that British and American English should be the only correct standards makes me feel worried about my English language learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that current users of English use English to communicate with native speakers of English more than with those from other countries, which makes me worry about being able to acquire native speaker competence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix B

**The sample of WE-based lesson plan** (week 12th)

**Tasksheet (unit) # 5: topics**

1) Grammar: participles used as adjective
2) Reading: reading for the main idea and specific information, using cues to identify word meanings and understanding references
3) Expression: asking for and giving opinions

**Focus:** Critical examination of the fallacies about English language learning and the discourses surrounding the use of English that promote the learning of English.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to

- Apply linguistic structure focusing on participles used of adjectives in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Develop awareness of the role of EIL and EIL users, and have fundamental knowledge to further discuss the controversies of EIL.
- Aware of that English proficiency is only one of many factors which may affect the status of individual.
- Be autonomous and independent-thinking students who can seek their own voice in English.
- Develop realistic learning goal: no need to acquire NS norms.
**Interaction patterns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T → C</th>
<th>Teacher → whole class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GG</td>
<td>Students work with their group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GG → C</td>
<td>Each group shares/presents ideas to class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The sample WE-based lesson plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WE principle</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Interaction patterns</th>
<th>Time (min)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Politics, Ownership of the English language | **Activity#1: Comprehension check on reading:** *Fallacies about the learning of English* | 1. Each group summarizes the six fallacies, take-home reading to class, group1-fallacy#1, group2-fallacy#2, and so on.  
2. Teacher gives students time to answer the questions related to the reading and to discuss in their group e.g., “According to the argument of 3th fallacy, is it possible to define who native speakers are? Why?”  
3. Teacher discusses each question and answer with class and teaches them skimming and scanning skills to help them read more effectively. | - Practice reading for main idea and specific information, using cues to identify the meanings, understanding references.  
- Develop awareness of the role of EIL and EIL users, and have fundamental knowledge to further discuss controversies of EIL. | -Reading passage: *Fallacies about English*  
-Worksheet #1 | GG → C | 10 |

**Notes:**
- T → C: Teacher → whole class
- GG: Students work with their group
- GG → C: Each group shares/presents ideas to class
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WE principle</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Interaction patterns</th>
<th>Time (min)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Politics, Ownership of the English language | Activity 2: Critical examination of discourses surrounding the use of English | 1. Teacher provides each group some extracts of the discourses drawn from the websites and brochures designed to advertise local English language institutions, and then asks if they have seen this type of discourses before, where they saw and how they felt. After that, students are asked to examine these discourses with their group to seek their own voice in relation to English language learning. Each group has to share their ideas to class based on the following prompts. | - Practice expressions for asking and giving opinions  
- Aware of the imagined benefits VS the real benefits of learning English  
- Aware of that English proficiency is only one of many factors affecting the status of individual.  
- Be independent thinking students who can seek their own voice in English.  
- Develop realistic goal: no need to acquire NS norms. | - Sample English discourse from the websites and brochures  
- Worksheet#2 | T → C | 5 |
| | Wrap-up | - List down the claims that are made regarding the advantages of acquiring English. | - Which claims do you think is a real benefit of learning English and which one is imagined benefits? Why do you think so? | GG | 5 |
| | | - Do you think being successful users of English must require a native speaker model (accent, culture)? Why? | 2. Teacher concludes the key points of today’s activities that are to help them aware of the fallacies about English language teaching and learning. Also, teacher points out the importance for students to develop a realistic view of the benefits that the acquisition of uses of English may bring to them and aware of that English proficiency is only one of many factors which may affect the personal, social and professional status a person has | GG → C | 10 |

McKay, 2012.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WE principle</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Interaction patterns</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Politics, Ownership of the English language | Class assignment: An ideal language school advertisement | 1. In group of 2-3, students are asked to imagine that they are the owner of a language school, and they have to create their own advertisement to promote their language school in the form of a poster. The students are provided with the prompt to help them critically think about how they want to design their advertisement as follows.  
- What benefits of learning English and what goal would you like the students at your English school to achieve?  
The students are also required to use participles as adjectives in creating the poster.  
2. Each group presents their poster to class. | - Develop awareness of the role of EIL and roles EIL users.  
- Be independent-thinking students who can seek their own voice in English.  
- Develop realistic goal.  
- Apply linguistic structure focusing on participles as adjectives. | - A4 paper  
- Websites  
- Poster | GG→C | 10 |

* GG→C: Group to Group hugs*
Developing English Islamic Narrative Story Reading Model in Islamic Junior High School

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Abstract
This study aims at producing a learning model in English reading Islamic narrative texts for Islamic junior high schools in Central Java. This study was designed as research and development involving three stages including the exploration stage, the development stage of teaching materials models and the model validation stage. The research samples were 17 public and private Islamic junior high schools in Central Java with their English teachers as the research subjects. After reviewing the entire procedure, the results of this study were as follows: (1) the Islamic narrative text materials were not given in most of Islamic junior high schools in Central Java (71%), (2) the Islamic narrative themes favored by students in schools implementing the Islamic narrative material were prophet stories (60%), humor (20%), and friendship (20%), and (3) the produced learning material model were based on the genre approach consisting of building knowledge of the field, modelling of the text, the joint construction of the text, and independent construction of the text, (4) the produced learning material model were divided into two parts including, (a) narrative text about prophets with the generic structure, moral value, and grammar used in sentences, (b) the six exercises with the format of Q&A, fill in the blanks, matching, finding the meaning, and creating new sentences. Based on the results of the experts’ judgement and try out in the validation stage, this learning material model was valid to be used as the reading material for narrative story in Islamic junior high school in Central Java.

Keywords: English Islamic stories, narrative text, reading model
Introduction
According to the recent rapid development, a growing number of human needs as well as the rapid development of science and technology require us to be able to communicate with public at large both in and outside the country. For the time being, English is the main language used as a means of communication. It is used as one of languages to communicate in international level for both spoken and written. Especially in this globalization era, the role of English seemed getting important because it was used in all aspects such as: science and technology, communication, politics, economy, trading, banking, culture, arts, and film (Crystal, 2003; Genc & Bada, 2010; Johnson, 2009; Kamkhien, 2010a, 2010b; Liu, 2012; Seargeant & Erling, 2011; Sharma, 2015; Supriyono & Sugirin, 2014). Thus, the mastery in English is basically required in this globalization era.

In Indonesia, English has become the first foreign language to learn at schools (Alisjahbana, 1990; Passaung, 2003). Besides, the English formal language learning was nationally started in junior high school. It was regulated through the enactment of the Law No. 22/2006, about the standardized content in which it stated that English was one of compulsory subjects in junior high schools.

At junior high school level, the purpose of English language learning is to help students achieve the level of functional communication (Hadisantosa, 2010; Supriyono & Sugirin, 2014). At the level of functional communication, students are encouraged to be able to communicate in both spoken and written to solve everyday problems. Supriyono and Sugirin (2014) conduct a study on one class of grade eight to develop a web-based learning model. By targeting at helping junior high school students achieve functional level of communication, they engage students in a web-based English learning. Then, they indicate that it could be a helpful media to help students achieve this particular level by going through five stages: (1) need analysis, (2) evaluation plans, (3) product development, (4) product implementation, and (5) summative evaluation. In particular, this study shows that in order to achieve the purpose of English language learning at junior high school level, in this case, helping the students achieve the level of functional communication, teachers have to discover the students’ needs. So that, they are able to make connections between their teaching pedagogy and the students’ needs. Latter, learning English might be more meaningful to help the students solve their everyday problems.

In English learning of all educational levels, the students would learn to develop four language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those four language skills could be divided into two groups; those are: productive and receptive language skills (Morrow, 2004 in Demirbas, 2013; Sharma, 2015). In particular, Sharma (2015) explains that speaking and writing are categorized into productive skills; whereas, listening and reading are categorized into receptive skills. Sharma argues that the receptive skills tend to be easier to acquire rather than the productive skills as they need a lot more practices. Nevertheless, after conducting a study by interviewing Saudi students and analyzing students’ works, he indicates that for EFL students, attaining receptive skills tends to be more difficult than the productive skills because English as the foreign language is not used in daily interactions.
Along with the development of printed media as communication devices, reading ability appears to have a significant role for human life. For both academic and common society, the ability to read is “the main foundational skills for all school-based learning,” (Ruedel & Mistrett, 2004: 1), and it may improve community participation in a very complex social environment by engaging in literacy activities which led to a lifetime habit of reading. Consequently, the stronger the reading culture of a nation, the stronger the nation is. Thus, educating critical and good readers should be a concern of a nation.

Basically, in teaching English reading, there are various type texts which can be employed to engage students in learning English, for instance, using narrative texts. To begin with, narrative text is about a series of events, occurrences, or episodes (Coffman & Reed, 2010; Keraf, 1981). In other words, it is defined as story (Iranmanesh, 2012). Coffman and Reed (2010: 5) underline that “[C]hildren should be taught that narratives have connectivity.” Referring to the definition of narrative text as a sequence of events, Coffman and Reed, further, explain that there should be the central to the causal chain. In this case, Omason (1982) as cited in Coffman and Reed (2010) adds that the central events particularly introduced main character and connected events from the beginning to the end of the story to provide support to comprehension. Consequently, there would be a goal achieved in each narrative text to tell the development of characters from the beginning to the end of the story (Coffman & Reed, 2010; Iranmanesh, 2012) as well as delivering certain moral values embedded in the story to readers.

Narrative text is generally imaginary derived from imagination or the author’s experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Iranmanesh, 2013). On one hand, there are certain types of narrative text which we can find in daily lives such as fairytales, legend, mystery, horror stories, romance, and short stories. Iranmanesh (2013) writes a literature review about narrative prose and its different types. She highlights distinctions between narrative and non narrative prose. She concludes that on one hand, narrative text was derived from personal imagination which could be written in prose or poetry; on the other hand, narrative text was constructed based on factual data. Regarding to the second type of narrative text which is based on factual data telling about actual occurrences, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) write a literature review which described a two-part research agenda for curriculum and teacher studies flowing from stories of experience and narrative inquiry. They explain that in the process of constructing an inquiry, narrative was the combination of phenomenon and method. Connelly and Clandinin (1990: 2), further, explain that:

Thus, we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect, and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience. Perhaps because it focuses on human experience, perhaps because it is a fundamental structure of human experience, and perhaps because it has a holistic quality, narrative has an important place in other disciplines. (p.2)

It means that not only could narrative text be in the form of prose (Iranmanesh, 2013), it could also be in the form of inquiry which consisted of factual occurrences (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990).
In general, there is a mission embedded within a narration; that is moral value which the writer wants to deliver to readers. Therefore, it is very necessary to choose a good story in which on one hand, it was entertaining; on the other hand, it could help building students’ characters in a positive way. In this case, through their study, Piaget and Kohlberg (1932) as cited in Musfiroh (2008: 66) indicate that story could play a significant role in character building. If teaching narrative reading directed properly, learning narrative text may positively contributes to the students’ character building because they could have a chance of creating imaginations and learning to appreciate others’ experiences as a basis to learn morality.

In Indonesia, several publishers are prolific in producing story books originating from abroad, for example, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, Goldilock's, Snow White, Aladdin, and others. Unfortunately, these stories do not contain the values of the national characters because they are not rooted from the culture of Indonesia.

The establishment of national characters is highly important to prevent a destruction on a nation identity. However, nowadays we often come across occurrences which show the weakening national characters of Indonesia society. It has been many times that adolescents caused riots with other students, did raping, drank liquor, and did pre-marital sex; not to mention those who become a regular consumer or a dealer of narcotic. On the other side, officials who should be a role model failed to show good examples of behavior. Most of them do corruption, show greedy attitude, and prioritize individual business over public matters in which it has been a common thing happening within the society. As a civilized and cultured nation, such a situation is obviously not very profitable for the nation's future, especially in giving birth to smart future generations, either intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and socially. In that context, there needs to be serious efforts from all components of the nation to build a "collective awareness" for the sake of restoring the missing national characters.

Because of the importance of character education, the Government of Indonesia, via the Ministry of national education has initiated the implementation of character education for all levels of education, starting from elementary to college levels. According to the Berkowitz and Grych (2000), it is essential to implement character education since the early stage of the children. If the character was already formed from an early age, it would not be easy to change the characters of a person. Furthermore, he hoped that character education could build a personality of the nation.

Talking about the process of the formation of one's character, we cannot be apart from the discussion of religion issues. Religion is very strong and has a major role in the process of building a person’s characters, if it was taught correctly. The role of religion in the process of building the nation characters, is making the moral religion became a cornerstone of the nation's daily life. Sergiovanni (1992) suggests moral leadership was much more effective and efficient in comparison with the traditional leadership. For if the moral has become a cornerstone in the conduct of every individual, that person will do their best even though no one is watching.
In Indonesia, the majority of the population converted to Islam. As a religion, Islam has definitely taught positive values that also shape the nation characters. For example, in Islam, the examples of the application of discipline values are embedded in the enforcement of prayers five times a day, the value of tolerance is in the Alms and Almsgiving, and the other positive values which embedded there. Thus, at a time when the nation is already in a crisis of morality, it is considered essential to re-introduce Islam and its character values in all aspects of language learning, including English.

One way to introduce the character values in Islam is the imitation of figures who well implemented of the Islamic values through an Islamic narration story. This is in line with Faridi (2010) in his research to create a model of English language learning which promotes sociocultural information in the teaching material in the form of games, songs, and folktales. He tries this model in three elementary schools in Central Java and resulted in the effectiveness of the model to be implemented in the class. It helps to develop not only the student’s English language comprehension but also their character since the material consists of several norms related to their local contents in the daily life. Looking at this result, the present study aims to present an idea to integrate the national characters and Islamic values by creating a model of Islamic narration text. In detail, the objectives of this study are: (a) to describe an English language learning implemented by teachers of Islamic junior high schools in Central Java, (b) to describe the need-map of English language learning in those Islamic junior high schools in Central Java, (c) to describe junior high school teachers’ abilities in developing English language learning, especially reading, in those Islamic junior high schools in Central Java, (d) to describe a model design of reading lesson of Islamic narrative texts which were going to be implemented in English language learning in those Islamic junior high schools in Central Java, and (e) to discover the validity of the model design of reading lesson of Islamic narration stories developed in English language learning in those Islamic junior high schools in Central Java.

Literature Review

There are three points discussed in this literature review which are first, the purposes and functions of English language learning in junior high school level. Second, character education in Indonesia. Third, Islamic narrative stories.

The Purposes and Functions of English Language Learning in Junior High School Level

English is a tool to communicate in both spoken and written. To communicate is to understand and disclose information, thoughts, feelings, and develop science, technology, and culture. The ability to communicate in the intact sense is an ability to generate discourse, that is, the ability to understand and/ or produce spoken and/ or written texts realized in the four language skills; those are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The fourth skills are used to respond to or create discourse in the social lives. Therefore, Ministry of Education in Supriyono and Sugirin (2006) assert that English subjects need to be directed to develop those four skills, so that, graduates were supposed to able to communicate and participate in English discourse to certain literacy levels.
Wells (1987) as cited in Setyo (2015) asserts that the literacy level includes performative, functional, informational, and epistemic. He, then, elaborates that at the level of the performative, people should be capable of listening, speaking, reading, and writing by using certain symbols. He also explains that at the level of functional, people should be able to use the language to fulfill the daily needs such as reading newspapers, manuals or instructions. Whereas at the level of informational, Wells underlines that people should be able to access knowledge with their language ability; while, at the level of epistemic, people should be capable of expressing knowledge in the target language.

Learning English in junior high schools aims to help students achieve functional level; that is to communicate in both spoken and written in order to solve everyday problems; meanwhile, learning English for senior high school students aims to help students achieve informational level because they are prepared to continue their study to college level. The epistemic literacy level is considered too high to be achieved by senior high school students for English is learned as foreign language.

**Character Education in Indonesia**

Character is the realization of one’s development intellectually, socially, emotionally, and ethically. John. et.al (2005) state that character can refer to:

- Personality traits or virtues such as responsibility and respect for others,
- Emotions such as guilt or sympathy,
- Social skills such as conflict management or effective communication,
- Behaviors such as sharing or helping,
- Or cognitions such as belief in equality or problem-solving strategies. (p.4)

This definition straightens the concept of character which saw character as merely behaviors and personalities of people.

Having good character does not solely mean people have to follow the rules and conform to the government and its status quo, but people have to be competent as an individual in realizing good values and making positive contributions to their communities. In addition, they have to promote a democratic way of life based on justice, equity, and respect for all people. Thus, by having good characters, the concept of equity and diversity in all aspects can be achieved in that society.

Character education views that education is not only for helping students in reaching academic results, but also for guiding them to have good characters. Another definition of character education is “a reflection or particular values as well as particular assumptions about the nature of children and how they learn” (Kohn, 1997 as cited in Stedje, 2010, p.3). Consequently, character education should deal with cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of education, and foster character development.

The purpose of the character education in Indonesia is to build and develop the Indonesian characters in order to actualize the Indonesian society which strongly holds the values covered in Pancasila: religion, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice. In order to reach this goal, the government determined eighteen characters to be taught to students such as...
Developing English Islamic Narrative Story Reading Model  Faridi & Bahri

religions, honesty, tolerance, self-discipline, hard-working, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, pride of mother land, appreciation, communication, compassion, reading habit, environmental caring, social caring, and responsibility. By teaching these values to students, the government expects that Indonesian people can apply these values in real life in order to develop the better life.

*Islamic Narrative Stories*

Islamic narrative story is a narrative story that brings out islamic stories. These stories are adapted or excerpted from stories existing in both the Koran Holy Book as well as Al Hadith. Based on both sources, Islamic narrative stories become rich of good moral value and provide good character education to the students. In this study, the islamic narrative stories which would be used as reading materials were the stories of the Apostles of God (Stories of the Prophets). The theme and the length of the narrative texts were adapted to the level of the readers/learners, in this case, junior high school students.

**Method**

In accordance with the problem and the goal of this research, this research was designed in the form of research and development (R&D) with the aim of generating a model of the reading material. In this study, the resulted model was reading materials of Islamic English narrative for junior high school. The development of the teaching material was intended to enhance English learning related to reading materials in Islamic junior high school, Central Java.

This development research process was carried out through ten steps suggested by Gall, Gall, and Borg (1983:775-776), including (1) gathering information and conducting initial research (research and information collecting), (2) planning, (3) developing a preliminary form of product, (4) preparing a trial test in the field (preliminary field testing), (5) revising the test based on the results of field trials (main product revision) (6) performing tests in the field (main field testing) (7) revising after getting input from field tests (operational product revisions), (8) doing trial test for the model or learning tests (operational field testing), (9) doing the last revision (final product revision), (10) delivering the research report (dominination and implementation).

Then, the design of the research was simplified over three stages, as follows: (1) the exploration stage, (2) the prototype development stage, and (3) the validation model stage. In each stage of this research design involved (a) the research approach used, (b) data sources, (c) data collection techniques, (d) data analysis techniques, and (e) the research time.

This research was carried out in 17 Islamic junior high schools or *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs) in Central Java, with the subjects of the research were English teachers and students of the Islamic junior high school in Central Java. The data collection in this study were grouped into three stages including the exploration stage, the prototype development stage, and the model validation stage. In general, these three data collection techniques were used simultaneously and complemented to each other.
The data collection instruments developed in this research dealt with the data collection conducted at each stage of the research, as follows: (a) questionnaires and check lists for asking questions and doing observations at the stage of exploration; (b) questionnaires and check list for asking in the development stage; (c) the experts’ judgment and try out for the developed reading model in the model validation stage.

Research Design

In designing the research, there were three stages taken, as follows:

a. Exploration Stage

At the exploration stage, the study was planned through several stages including literature study, data collection, and description and analysis of the model factual. In detail, this preliminary study drove some activities such as the need analysis of teachers, students, and teaching materials for teaching reading in English.

b. Reading Material Development Stage

Based on the description and analysis of the factual model in the exploration stage, there were steps taken in the learning development stage including collecting English reading materials commonly used in English learning in Islamic junior high schools in Central Java based on the questionnaires, reviewing the materials in order to figure out the strengths and limitations of each reading materials; utilizing the strengths of each materials to create a draft of learning materials; putting together a draft of learning material considering (i) the theory of good learning material composition, (ii) the results of the review of existing learning materials, and (iii) the suggestions from the respondents through interviews and questionnaires, and reviewing and revising the draft of the compiled learning materials.

c. Model Validation Stage

This stage was divided into two parts, namely the stage of the model I test and model II test. The model I test was given to English learning practitioner (teacher) who was asked to give comments on the model I which had been compiled; whereas in the model II test the compiled module was given to two experts for assessing the narrative structure and its religious content. In model I test, the material generated at this stage was named as Model I containing the model for eight graders in which every unit was divided into a number of activities. Broadly speaking, every unit was divided into four stages of learning strategies, namely; Building Knowledge of the Field, Modelling of Text, Joint Construction of Text, and the last of the Independent Construction of Text.

Results Findings

Based on data analysis from the whole instrument, it was obtained that from 17 schools sampled, only five schools (29%) that already implemented teaching materials of Islamic narrative reading, while there were 12 schools (71%) that had not yet implemented the similar material.
The reason the school did not give or had not been fullest in providing the Islamic narrative reading material was because there were lack of books containing Islamic narrative materials. This reason acquired from 13 respondents (76%). Another reason was because the school preferred the material referring to the national examination. In other words, the Islamic narrative story was not specifically mentioned as a material that will be tested in the national examination. In other part, it was also found that the students’ favorite themes of the Islamic narrative in schools that already applied Islamic narrative material were the story of the prophets (60%), humor (20%), and friendship (20%).

It was also obtained that there were six source of learning materials in the form of book that was used i.e. BSE, Erlangga, Yudhistira, LKS, Let's Talk, and English in Focus. From these learning resource books, BSE was the most used book by the respondents. Sequentially, BSE was the most widely used from sample schools (ten schools), followed by Erlangga (seven schools), Yudhistira (one school), LKS (five schools), Let's Talk (one school), and English in Focus (three schools).
From the third figure, it can also be inferred mathematically that there were several schools using more than one handbook. Internet was also became the other source to be used not in form of a book even it was used by all of the school respondents yet it was not the main source. Because it is not as the main source and not in the shape of a book, then the use of the internet cannot be compared to the book.

With regard to the handbook/textbook quality currently used by teachers, based on the results of the questionnaire, all of 17 school respondents (100%) stated that the material contained in the book still need to be tailored to the needs of the students.

Whereas, for the respondent who already had given the material of Islamic narrative reading, obtained additional information i.e. only one school implemented more than 50% for the Islamic narrative reading, while four other schools gave less than 50% compared with the common narrative material. Other information of interest is the students in schools are most fond of the theme of the prophets story.

From the questionnaire instrument, it can be concluded that the Islamic narrative reading material taught in Islamic junior high schools in Central Java was still very minimal. This would of course be an irony in the middle of the character development efforts in the sphere of school (particularly Islamic school), but this Islamic narrative-based teaching materials have not been considered to be included into the textbook. Therefore, with this data, the researchers then designed a model of Islamic narrative reading (learning material) which is expected to provide solutions to the constraints of the Islamic narrative reading learning.

**The Model of Teaching Islamic Narrative Reading**

Broadly speaking, the model of learning reading Islamic narrative story is similar with the genre based model learning by Hammond, *et al* (1992) in Faridi (2013), which consists of
Building Knowledge of the field, Modeling of Joint Construction of Text, Text, and the Independent Construction of Text.

**Building Knowledge of the Field** → **Modelling of Text**

**Independent Construction of Text** ← **Joint Construction of Text**

*Figure 4. Genre based model by Hammond, et al (1992) in Faridi (2013)*

a. Building Knowledge of the Field is the stage to provide the basic knowledge to the students about the context, grammar and vocabulary necessary for Islamic narrative story text.
b. Modelling of the text is the stages where students get knowledge of the purpose and social function of Islamic narrative text, including other things associated with the linguistic elements such as the generic structure and other language features (grammar, etc).
c. Joint Construction of the text. This is the collaborative stage where the students work to solve a problem/question using information they already got in the previous two stages.
d. Independent Construction of the text. In this last phase, the students work on all activities in the learning material, which one is constructing a Islamic narrative paragraph.

**The Model of Islamic Narrative Teaching Material**

After going through the stages of model testing, following is the model of learning material of Islamic narrative reading. There are two large sections this model which are section A and B. Part A contains: readings texts of the Prophets, the generic structure, moral value, and the grammar used in sentences. While part B is the exercises which consists of 6 types of exercises with the following format:

a. Answering the questions based on the story
b. Filling in the blanks
c. Matching
d. Finding the meaning
e. Creating new sentences.

Detailed example is presented in appendix.

**Conclusion**

From the explanation above, there are four points can be concluded, first, the teaching learning to read narrative texts in most Islamic junior high school in Central Java (71%) has not been yet incorporated Islamic narrative material. Second, the students’ favorite themes of the
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Islamic narrative in schools applying Islamic narrative material are the story of the prophets (60%), humor (20%), and friendship (20%). Third, the modelling of the Islamic narrative reading material is an urgent necessity given the benefits that it can be obtained to build a superior character, cultured, and Islamic. And the last, the designed learning model is based on the genre approach, which consists of Building Knowledge of the Field, Modelling of the text, the Joint Construction of the text, and the Independent construction of the text. Based on the results of the experts’ judgement and try out in the validation stage, this learning material model is valid to be used as the reading material for narrative story in Islamic junior high school in Central Java.

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References


Appendix  Model of Islamic Narrative Story

A. The Generic Structure

Long time ago, after Prophet Idris era, people became cruel and immoral. For many generations, they had been worshipping statues and consider it as a god. They believed that these gods would bring them to the better live, protect from evil and provide all their needs. Then Allah sent a prophet named Noah to guide them. He was the 9th generation of the Prophet Adam. Noah was selected as a prophet and messenger at the age of 480 years. He continued to invite his people to believe in Allah for five centuries and died at the age of nine hundred fifty years.

Noah tried his best for many years to guide his people to worship Allah but they would not listen. They didn’t believe him. They laughed at him, hate him, and called him as a crazy and a liar man, only a few people responded to his call. Even his son, Qan’an and his wife did not believe in him. However, he only got followers between 70 to 80 people, and most of them were the weak people. He was very sad, then he prayed to Allah, “Oh Lord, avoid this land from the unbelievers”. Allah accepted Noah’s prayer. There would be a terrible flood cover the whole earth.
He ordered Noah to build a ship which would save him and the believers from this terrible disaster. Noah chose a place outside the city, far from the sea. It was on the hill. The ship was finished and the terrible day arrived when water rose and became a big flood. Noah hurried to open the ship and call all the believers. He also took with him a pair, male and female of every type of animal, birds, and insects. The flood washed away the disbelievers, including his son, Qan’an and his wife who didn’t believe him.

Noah was very sad and sorry for the attitude of his son who was very obstinate until the last moment before death. He expressed this sorrow to Allah. But Allah gave him a warning that although the son was his family, he was among those who refused his teachings.

After the disbelievers were died and the Allah’s Decree was fulfilled, the ship rested on Mount Judi. The story of Noah in the Qur'an is spread in 43 verses, 28 of

B. Value/ Meaning To Be Transmitted
- Don’t worship anyone except Allah because Allah will give a punishment to the people who disobey His instruction in the Judgment Day.
- Don’t worship a statue or the other things because you can’t get anything from them. Just believe in Allah swt as The Creator.
- We have to believe in our prophets as a messenger because they guide us to the better live by following Allah’s instruction.
- As a good child, we have to believe in our parents if they teach us the truth. Don’t be an obstinate person.

**Structure Of The Sentences**

1. **Simple Present**
   
   Example: (+) “Oh Lord, avoid this land from the unbelievers”.

   \[
   \text{Subject} + \text{Verb 1 (present tense)} + \text{Object}
   \]

2. **Simple Past**
   
   Example: (+) Allah sent a prophet named Noah to guide them.

   \[
   \text{Subject} + \text{Verb 2 (past tense)} + \text{Object}
   \]

   (-) Allah didn’t send a prophet named Noah to guide them.

   \[
   \text{Subject} + \text{To Be Past/Auxiliary Past + Not} + \text{Verb 1} + \text{Object}
   \]

   (?) Did Allah send a prophet to guide them?

   \[
   \text{To be Past/Auxiliary Past + Subject} + \text{Verb 1} + \text{Object} + ?
   \]

3. **Passive form on past tense**
   
   (+) Noah was selected as a prophet and messenger at the age.

   \[
   \text{Subject} + \text{To Be} + \text{Verb 3 (past participle)} + \text{Object}
   \]

   (-) Noah was not selected as a prophet and messenger at the age.

   \[
   \text{Subject} + \text{To Be} + \text{Not} + \text{Verb 3 (past participle)} + \text{Object}
   \]
C. Exercises

1. Answer the question based on the story!

   Example:
   • How long did Prophet Noah invite the people to believe in Allah?
     Answer: He invited his people to believe in Allah for five centuries.

   1. Did the people become cruel and immoral after Prophet Idris era?
   2. What thing that had the people been worshipping as a god?
   3. Who was sent by Allah to guide them?
   4. Who Noah was?
   5. Was Noah an excellent speaker and patient man?
   6. Did Noah try to guide his people or just keep silent?
   7. Did Noah get many followers or get just a few followers?
   8. Did Qan’an believe in his father?
   9. Did Allah accept Noah’s prayer or ignore it?
   10. What did Allah order to Prophet Noah to save him and his believers?
   11. Where did Noah build the ship?
   12. Did the disaster really happen or just an opinion?
   13. Did the unbelievers and Noah’s son save from the disaster?
   14. Was Qan’an an obstinate person or an obedient person?
   15. Was Noah very happy or sad because of his son’s attitude?

2. Complete the text with the correct words from the box!

   Example:
   After the disbelievers were (1) died and the Allah’s Decree was fulfilled, the
   ship rested on (2) Mount Judi. The story of Noah in the Qur’an is spread in 43 verses,
   28 of them were in (3) Surat Nuh.

   A. Surat Nuh B. Died C. Mount Judi

   Long time ago, after Prophet Idris era, people became (1). . . . . For many
   generations, they had been worshipping statues and consider it as a (2). . . . . They
believed that these gods would bring them to the (3), . . . . . protect from evil and provide all their needs. Then Allah sent a prophet named Noah to (4) . . . . . them. He was the 9th generation of the Prophet Adam. Noah was selected as a prophet and messenger at the age of 480 years. He continued to invite his people to believe in Allah for five centuries and died at the age of (5). . . . . .

3. Match the following sentences with the appropriate sentences on the box!

Example:

1. People became cruel and immoral.  (B)
2. The people who did not believe in Prophet Noah.  (A)

A. The unbelievers  B. After Prophet Idris era

1. Things which was considered as a god.
2. The day at the end of the world when Allah will judge everyone who has ever lived.
3. Noah’s son who didn’t believe in him.
4. Transportation that save prophet Noah and the believers from the disaster.
5. The terrible disaster that killed all the unbelievers of prophet Noah.

A. Qan’an
B. Flood
C. Judgement Day
D. Ship
E. Statues

4. Find the meanings of the new vocabularies below on your dictionary!

A. guide  D. a gift
B. cruel and immoral  E. better live
C. 950 years  F. god
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Example:

- Happy = glad
- Disaster = calamity

1. Cruel
2. Terrible
3. Obstinate
4. Atitude
5. Sorrow

5. Create the new sentences based on the underline word with the same structure!

Example:

1. Long time ago, after Prophet Idris era, people became cruel and immoral. Answer: After long time waiting for him, I became angry.
2. Prophet Noah tried his best for many years to guide his people to worship Allah. Answer: Tina tried to come on time to the meeting last night.

1. Allah sent a prophet named Noah to guide them.
2. He only got followers between 70 to 80 people.
3. Noah chose a place outside the city, far from the sea.
4. The unbelievers and his son did not believe him.
5. Prophet Noah felt very sad because of his son attitude.

6. Rearrange the sentences below into a good paragraph!

Example:

1. He expressed this sorrow to Allah.
2. Noah was very sad and sorry for the attitude of his son who was very obstinate until the last moment before death.
3. But Allah gave him a warning that although the son was his family, he was among those who refused his teachings.

Answer: 2-1-3

Noah was very sad and sorry for the attitude of his son who was very obstinate until the last moment before death. He expressed this sorrow to Allah. But Allah
gave him a warning that although the son was his family, he was among those who refused his teachings.

1. Noah tried his best for many years to guide his people to worship Allah but they would not listen.
2. The flood washed away the disbelievers, including his son, Qan’an and his wife who didn’t believe him.
3. After the disbelievers were died and the Allah’s Decree was fulfilled, the ship rested on Mount Judi.
4. Noah was very sad and sorry for the attitude of his son who was very obstinate until the last moment before death.
5. Long time ago, after Prophet Idris era, people became cruel and immoral.
6. He was very sad, then he prayed to Allah, “Oh Lord, avoid this land from the unbelievers”.
7. Then Allah sent a prophet named Noah to guide them.
8. Allah accepted Noah's prayer.
9. He ordered Noah to build a ship which would save him and the believers from this terrible disaster.
10. The ship was finished and the terrible day arrived when water rose and became a big flood.
Written Discourse Analysis and its Application in English Language Teaching

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Abstract
Discourse analysis is the study of language in either spoken or written form. Written discourse is considered an imperative aspect that needs to be analysed. Cohesion, coherence, clause relations and text patterns are all parts of written discourse. This paper, therefore, aims to shed some light on the analysis of several written texts by discussing the possibility of applying written discourse analysis in English language teaching contexts. The paper starts by reviewing related literature about the meaning of cohesion, coherence, cohesive devices and text patterns, followed by reasons for choosing written discourse analysis in particular. Following this, an analysis of several written texts, together with the possibility of applying written discourse analysis in English language teaching, is presented. Before concluding this paper, an evaluation of the proposed application is provided. It is found that applying written discourse analysis in teaching written texts via the use of a problem solution pattern (SPRE) can increase what to expect in reading texts and the ability to write coherently. Although the author did not have the opportunity to apply this task, generally speaking, most text patterns involving SPRE are highly recommended for students when it comes to shaping their writing and this therefore makes students’ writing coherent and easily readable.

Keywords: cohesion relations, discourse analysis, English language teaching, text patterns, written texts.
Introduction

Discourse analysis in terms of both spoken and written language is believed to be helpful for both linguists and language teachers. It is simply “the study of language in use” (Gee & Handford, 2013:1). Written texts are considered an important aspect that needs to be analysed. Doing so means that writers gain the ability to make their writing more cohesive and easier to read. Cohesion, coherence, clause relations and text patterns are all parts of written texts.

This paper, therefore, aims to shed some light on the analysis of written texts. The paper consists of three parts. In the first part, the literature regarding the meaning of texts and discourse analysis is briefly reviewed. An illustration of cohesion and coherence is presented. After this, grammatical and lexical devices and text patterns that help written texts to be understood are presented and discussed. The rationale for choosing to analyse written texts is addressed. The second part provides an analysis of several written texts, with a focus on the cohesion devices and text patterns discussed in the first part. The third part offers some suggestions and an evaluation of one of the written texts analysed in the second part, and suggests how to apply the analysed discourse in the classroom in such a way as to help teach written texts.

Literature review

If you are studying the relationship between language and the context it is utilised in, then you are analysing the discourse. Discourse can be either written, such as in books, essays, newspapers, magazines, road signs or invoices, or spoken, such as in conversations, verbal interactions and TV programmes. Discourse analysts study language in either spoken or written use. According to Gee and Handford (2013:5), the importance of discourse analysis “lies in the fact that, through speaking and writing in the world, we make the world meaningful in certain ways and not in others”. Although Coulthard (2014) makes a distinction between spoken discourse and written texts, this distinction is by no means universally accepted. Recently, the scope of linguists has switched from analysing single sentences to the distribution of linguistic elements in extended texts and the relationship between texts and social situations. This paper’s focus will be devoted to written texts in order to afford an understanding of how natural written discourse looks and sounds. This understanding will boost the production of teaching materials (McCarthy, 1991). By taking the scope of this paper into account, discussing written texts normally includes the consideration of cohesion, coherence and text patterns. Thus, each aspect will be discussed in the following sections.

What do we mean by texts?

The term “text” refers to “a passage, either spoken or written, that does form a unified whole” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:1). In other words, a text is the ability to distinguish a particular sequence of sentences, whether connected or not. It is also a semantic unit of meaning in the language. For instance, Halliday and Hasan (1976) coined the term “ties”, which refers to a single instance of cohesion. Such ties mean that written texts can be analysed by investigating the relationship between cohesion and the organisation of written texts into sentences and paragraphs.

Failure to make writing fully understood, even on the part of advanced learners, due to either the overuse of conjunctions or the inability to achieve cohesive texts, is a common problem among non-native speakers of English (Basturkmen, 2002).
Cohesion and coherence

A text’s cohesion and coherence are pivotal. The more coherent a sequence of sentences, the better they are understood (Todirascu et al., 2013). According to Bublitz (2011:37), cohesion and coherence are “(linguistically encoded or just assumed) connectedness of spoken as well as written discourse or text”. However, they are “descriptive categories which differ in kind”. In detail, cohesion relates to “inter-sentential semantic relations” whereas coherence is a “kind of textual prosody” (Bublitz 2011:37). Cohesive texts could be partly coherent (Grabe, 1984). Cohesion means the relationship between meaning within a particular written text and the way the reader interprets several elements in the discourse (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). According to Martin (2015), the term “cohesion” is inspired by the work of Halliday (1964) and Hasan (1968).

Cohesion befalls through “the stratal organisation of language” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:5). It is the means through which ideas and content are linked and ordered (Basturkmen, 2002). In simple terms, cohesion is explained by meaning, form and expression. By the same token, Grabe (1984:110) states that it is “the means available in the surface forms of the text to signal relations that hold between sentences or clausal units in the text”. Cohesion occurs “where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another”. Because cohesion is articulated either through grammar or vocabulary, Halliday and Hasan (1976) divide it into grammatical and lexical devices.

Cohesion relations

There are five cohesive devices: reference; substitution; ellipsis; conjunction; and lexis. In this section, four types of grammatical cohesion will be discussed in turn. After that, lexical cohesion will be addressed.

Grammatical cohesion

1- Reference

In any language, there are some items that refer to something else for their interpretation rather than being interpreted on their own. This process is called “reference” in that the information is signalled for retrieving the referential meaning. Reference can be personals (including pronouns - possessive adjectives - possessive pronouns), demonstratives (verbal pointing) and comparatives (deictic or non-deictic) that function as cohesive ties (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). For instance, “Three blind mice, three blind mice. See how they run! See how they run!” is an example of personal reference, where the pronoun they refer to three blind mice. An example of demonstrative reference is “Doctor Foster went to Gloucester in a shower of rain. He stopped in a puddle right up to his middle and never went there again”. There in this example refers to Gloucester. A comparative reference is ‘There were two wrens upon a tree. Another came, and there were three”, where another refers to wrens (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:31).

Reference could be established either with a textual endophoric within the text, such as “Doris likes him very much” or with a situational exophoric outside the text, such as “Would you like to join me for a cup of tea this afternoon?” (Bublitz, 2011). Endophora may be anaphoric or cataphoric. The most important issue with reference and whether a word is endophoric or exophoric is that “the thing referred to has to be identifiable somehow” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:33).
2- Substitution

This cohesive relation is in contrast with the former (reference), in which reference is a relation in terms of the meaning (semantic) while substitution is a relation in terms of the wording (grammatical). In other words, this is a relationship between linguistic items. It is “the replacement of one item by another” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:88). Substitution is used instead of repeating a particular item; for example, “My axe is too blunt. I must get a sharp one”, in which one is the substitute for axe (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:88).

There are three types of substitution: nominal, verbal and clausal. The substitute of one, ones or the same is a nominal substitution. For instance, “I have heard some strange stories in my time. But this one was perhaps the strangest one of all”, where one is a substitute for stories (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:92). The second type is the verbal substitution (do). For instance, “the words did not come the same as they used to do”, where do is the substitute for come (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:112). The third type is the clausal (so - not). For example, “Is there going to be an earthquake? – it says so”, where so presupposes the clause there is going to be an earthquake.

3- Ellipsis

Ellipsis is similar to substitution as it “can be interpreted as that form of substitution in which the item is replaced by nothing” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976:88). Nevertheless, ellipsis and substitution differ in terms of their structural mechanisms. It is substitution by zero, as it is not articulated or written and something is left unsaid. It is a presupposition at the level of words and structures (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Just like substitution, ellipses can be established within the nominal, verbal and clausal groups.

4- Conjunction

The fourth cohesive device is an anaphoric relationship as it expresses particular meanings that presuppose the existence of another component in discourse. It is employed to connect clauses using conjunctive relations whether addictive (and), adversative (yet), causal (so) or temporal (then) (Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

Lexical cohesion

In order to cover all types of cohesion relationships, this section will address lexical cohesion. Lexical cohesion can be achieved through reiteration—that is, saying something again or multiple times for the purpose of emphasis or clarity. Pedagogically speaking, it is the most common element to be learned by language learners and taught by teachers. Consequently, it is a must for language teachers. Yet McCarthy (1991) argues that it is negligent to consider lexical cohesion out of their discourse. Although lexical cohesion play an important role in verbal interaction, they are mostly abandoned in English description. Lexical cohesion includes repetition, synonym, near-synonym, antonym, superordinate, general words and metonymy. For instance, “Henry’s bought himself a new Jaguar. He practically lives in the car” (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:278); the word “car” refers to “Jaguar”, which is the superordinate of Jaguar. However, Stotsky (1983) argues that Halliday and Hasan (1976) do not provide a consistent reason for combining types of reiterated items together in one category. This argument is not adequate because Halliday and Hasan declare that reiterated items are linked via a common referent.
In addition, lexical cohesion can be achieved through collocation. Lewis and Conzett (2000) define collocation as the words that are placed or found together in a predictable pattern. The functions of general nouns are similar to reiteration. A lexical item is an open set, while a grammatical item is a member of a closed system. For instance, in the following example, the cohesive function of the general noun goes together with the reference “the” in “We all kept quiet. That seemed the best move” (Halliday and Hasan, 1976:275).

Clause relations and text patterns

It is worth noting that when we talk about grammatical and lexical cohesion, clause relations and macro text patterns should be considered. One clause or sentence’s relation to another can be interpreted through either matching relations or logical sequence relations (Winter, 1994). Additionally, the most common macro patterns in a text are those that Hoey (2001) identifies as follows:

1- Problem solution
2- General particular
3- Hypothetical real (claim-counterclaim pattern)

The problem solution pattern is the most common pattern (Hoey, 2001). Due to the limited space in this paper, only problem solution patterns will be discussed in detail. This pattern includes four functions: situation, problem, response and evaluation (SPRE). The first function should afford background information. The second function raises a particular problem. The third function is to provide a response (counterclaim) to the problem that has arisen. Finally, an evaluation deals with whether the response to the problem is positive or negative. If a negative evaluation is achieved, the pattern should be repeated until a positive evaluation (result) is attained. An example of this pattern, which McCarthy (1991:30) mentions, is as follows:

“(1) Most people like to take a camera with them when they travel abroad. (2) But all airports nowadays have x-ray security screening and x-rays can damage film. (3) One solution to this problem is to purchase a specially designed lead-lined pouch. (4) These are cheap and can protect film from all but the strongest x rays”.

The example above covers the four functions of a problem solution pattern. The first sentence presents a particular situation; the second raises a problem; the third provides a response to the problem raised; and the fourth sentence positively evaluates the proposed solution. They are the ‘situation, problem, response and evaluation pattern (SPRE)’.

To conclude this section, all the cohesion devices, clause relations and text patterns mentioned above afford means for connecting the apparent text structure. As Grabe (1984:110) notes, they “reflect both the communicative intents and choices by the authors”.

Reasons for choosing written discourse analysis

Written texts need to be properly connected and linked. Cohesion is the most important property of writing quality. The author agrees with Witte and Faigley (1981:201) who state that, “if cohesion is better understood, it can be better taught”. Nonetheless, cohesion is not employed in the English language teaching (EFL) classrooms with which the author is familiar. Hence,
teachers ought to teach learners how to utilise cohesive devices (references, substitution, ellipsis and conjunctions) and lexical ties (repetition, synonyms, antonyms and superordinates) both explicitly and implicitly (Basturkmen, 2002). Most classroom exercises are not designed to teach cohesion but they do demand that students form cohesive ties (Witte & Faigley, 1981). It has been argued that teaching often concentrates on conjunctions rather than on any other cohesive device, such as lexical cohesion (Liu, 2000). Some studies that have been conducted regarding the use of conjunctions in written texts have revealed that non-native learners tend to use them more than they should. Basturkmen (2002) examined the writing of two non-native advanced learners with a focus on the use of conjunctions. She found that both students misused conjunctions. Therefore, the author would argue that this dilemma could be resolved by teaching this aspect in the classroom. Neglecting this issue will result in more fragmented texts.

Similar to cohesion devices, Basturkmen (2002) recommends that English language teachers should make their students aware of typical clause relations and macro text patterns in English. Needless to say, that problem solution is the most common pattern. It is important to ensure that “questions spell out the relationship between sentences” (Hoey, 2001:123). Moreover, the dialogue ought to be properly connected and meaningful.

The analysis of several written texts

Written discourse analysis is a growing field of study. It allows researchers to follow different lines of investigation. Grabe (1984:101) states that the analysis of discourse involves “the study of literary texts” and “the study of form-function relationships within language segments”. In other words, it is the study of both oral and written language.

In this section, several written discourses will be presented and analysed. The analysis will consider references in the first extract, conjunctions in the second, lexical cohesion in the third and both references and problem solution macro patterns in the fourth extract.

1- “Hale knew, before he had been in Brighton three hours, that they meant to murder him … That, as it happens, is the opening of Brighton Rock, but turn up the opening lines of the rest of his books and they won’t disappoint you. Graham Greene, who died yesterday, rich in years and rich in honour, was first of all a storyteller…” (Thornbury, 1997:122).

2- In the above text, reference has been employed seven times. In the first line, “he” refers to Hale and “they” in the same line is a forward reference. “Him” in the second line refers to Hale and “that” in the same line refers to the preceding sentence. In the third line, “his” refers to Graham Greene, “they” refers to Greene’s books and “who” refers to Graham Greene again. The use of these references helps the text to be more cohesive.

3- “These two forms of dissent coalesced in the demand for a stronger approach to the Tory nostrum of tariff reform. In addition, trouble threatened from the mercurial figure of Winston Churchill, who had resigned from the Shadow Cabinet in January 1931 in protest at Baldwin’s acceptance of eventual self-government for India” (http://www.uefap.com/reading/exercise/refer/refer.htm).
The above extract contains two sentences. In line two, the second sentence starts with “in addition” in order to link the second sentence to the first. This conjunction makes the whole extract more cohesive.

4- “The clamour of complaint about teaching in higher education and, more especially, about teaching methods in universities and technical colleges, serves to direct attention away from the important reorientation which has recently begun. The complaints, of course, are not unjustified. In dealing piece-meal with problems arising from rapidly developing subject matter, many teachers have allowed courses to become over-crowded, or too specialized, or they have presented students with a number of apparently unrelated courses failing to stress common principles. Many, again, have not developed new teaching methods to deal adequately with larger numbers of students, and the new audio-visual techniques tend to remain in the province of relatively few enthusiasts despite their great potential for class and individual teaching” (http://www.uefap.com/reading/exercise/refer/refer.htm).

In this extract, the term “complaint” has been used twice. In the fourth line, “complaint” is repeated again as it is the focus of the extract. The other phrase “teaching methods” has been used as a collocation. This collocation has also been repeated. Also, the phrase “audio-visual techniques” has been employed as a synonym for “teaching methods”.

5- “(1) Tony and Sheila’s first home was a terraced house, one of a line houses all connected. (2) But several years later when they had a small child, they found it rather cramped for three people. (3) They wanted something more spacious and so decided to move. (4) They went to an estate agent and looked at details of the houses he had to offer. (5) They looked at a semi-detached house (one of a pair attached to each other), liked it, and asked a surveyor to inspect it for them. (6) He said that it was in good condition and they therefore decided to buy it. (7) Luckily, they sold their house quickly and soon a removals firm was taking all their furniture and other possessions to their new home. (8) But already, after a couple of years, they are hoping to move again. (9) Tony’s business is doing well and they want to get an architect to design a modern, detached house for them, and a builder to build it” (Thomas, 1995:13).

6- In the above extract, as expected, references are the most cohesive devices employed in the passage. For instance, Tony and Sheila are referred to nine times by the pronoun “they” as they are the focus of the passage. It is used in sentences two (twice), three, four, five, six, seven, eight and nine. Likewise, “their” is used three times in sentence seven. The first time this refers to their current house, the second time this refers to the furniture and the third time this refers to the new home. “It” is used six times in sentence two, which refers to the current house, in sentence five (twice) as a reference to the new house, in sentence six (twice) referring to the new house and in sentence nine, which refers to their future house. “Them” is used twice in sentences five and nine. “He” is used twice in sentences four and six as a reference to the estate agent.

In addition to the reference cohesion device analysed in the above passage, the text pattern will be analysed. The above passage is a good example of a problem solution pattern (SPRE). The first sentence begins by providing a background to the situation. Then, a problem is
raised in the second sentence. An outline of the problem, along with several recommendations, is presented before the response. After that, a response is offered in the seventh sentence as a reaction to the problem that was raised in the earlier sentences. A negative evaluation is achieved in the eighth sentence, because Tony and Sheila want to move again. This negative evaluation prompts a recycling of the pattern until they achieve a positive evaluation in the ninth sentence, in that they are going to consult with an architect in order to build another house. The problem solution pattern in the text above, according to Hoey’s (2001) diagram, is as follows:

**Figure 1:** The problem solution pattern (SPRE).

**Application of written texts in ELT**

It is believed that the main purpose of language teaching for students is the understanding of the communicative value of linguistic items in a discourse (Nattinger & DeCarrico, 2001; Candlin & Hyland, 2014). It has been argued that cohesion is an indispensable part of written texts. Therefore, the reader’s knowledge, the writer’s aim and the information delivered should all be considered and taken into account. Witte and Faigley (1981) argue that clause and sentence structure are taught out of their discourse and out of context. By the same token, Cook (1989) states that cohesion is almost mistreated in language teaching. He argues that students’ difficulties arise from their difficulties with cohesion. This negligence has resulted in cohesive problems for students. Cook (1989) stresses that this mistreatment is due to a lack of awareness and, although it has been considered recently, this issue has not been given much prominence in language pedagogy. In addition to cohesion devices, clause relations and text patterns should also be analysed. Writers should take readers into account when writing.
Although not everything that discourse analysis describes can be employed in language teaching, teachers should have the ability to “create authentic materials and activities for the classroom” (McCarthy, 1991:147). To do so, teachers should teach learners how to make use of the cohesive devices and text patterns they encounter in written discourse. By doing so, learners can identify references, synonyms and antonyms in reading texts and can then make use of the devices. Moreover, task-based language teaching activities are one of the teaching methods that can be employed to teach text patterns. In a context that the author is familiar with, students always struggle with lexical cohesion and text patterns. A course book entitled “Intermediate Vocabulary” has been employed to teach novice undergraduate students. The book is split into topics that are familiar to students. Each topic has several passages that include new vocabularies. Students are asked to read these passages, which contain gaps, and discover new lexical items from a group of words given above each passage. However, these exercises do not give any clue as to how to make use of the context (the passage) that they are reading.

According to the author’s experience, students, due to a lack of knowledge, totally neglect the context, which can be very informative. Teachers can teach students how to analyse written discourse using cohesion devices and problem solution macro patterns to help them thoroughly understand the passage. The fourth passage, which was presented and analysed above, is an example of how one of the cohesive devices can be taught. Moreover, the same text can also teach a problem solution macro pattern. One of the implications of this is that “conformity to the pattern when writing is likely to make organising and reading the text easier” (Hoey, 2001:167). Hoey (2001:123) believes that a problem solution pattern (SPRE) can be presented in “a short fabricated text”. Therefore, a problem solution macro pattern is proposed below to show how it can be taught in the classroom. To do so, a task-based language-teaching (TBLT) lesson can be divided into six phases. The rationale behind choosing a TBLT lesson is because it focuses on the meaning, the real world process of language use and on communicative outcomes. These features of TBLT seem suitable for teaching students the relationship between the language and the context in which it is used (Ellis, 2003). The task can be a combination of reading and writing practice through discourse analysis.

1st phase: The teacher encourages students by starting a discussion regarding houses and how to buy one or when you might move from one house to another. This discussion is in the form of brainstorming and acts as an introduction to the topic.

2nd phase: The teacher asks the students to skim or scan the whole passage with a focus on the cohesion devices that they may encounter. A handout should be given to the students containing the meaning of new words and further information about the topic.

3rd phase: The teacher asks the students to read the passage again carefully and try to find any problems in the text that might arise regarding buying a house or moving to a new house and if there is an answer to such problems.

4th phase: The teacher asks the students to analyse the text by explaining the solution problem macro pattern (SPRE) and shows them Hoey’s diagram on the whiteboard.

5th phase: After the students have learned the SPRE pattern, the teacher asks them to identify the parts of the pattern in the text as a practical part of the lesson and to make sure they understand how the pattern works.

6th phase: Subsequently, students should move to the writing part where they are asked to write a short passage about any topic they like. In their writing, students should start with a particular
situation with a problem that has to be solved. Then, a response or solution should be provided. Finally, an evaluation of the proposed solution, whether positive or negative, should be presented. If a negative evaluation is attained, a repetition of the pattern should be implemented until a positive evaluation is achieved.

The same task could be extended to the next lesson as a second part by focusing on analysing cohesion devices and the above phases can be repeated. By doing so, students can revise the SPRE pattern together with learning certain cohesive devices (e.g., references).

**Evaluation**

This is an example of applying written discourse analysis to teaching written texts. In doing so, teachers and learners can increase what to expect in reading texts and help students learn how to write in a coherent way. One of this method’s merits is that it is a ready-made template. However, it cannot be applied to every written text; it is “only part of the answer to the question of how texts are organised” (Hoey, 2001:145). To conclude this section, the author has not yet had the chance to apply this task. But, generally speaking, most text patterns involving SPRE are very helpful for students when it comes to shaping their writing and they help make students’ writing coherent and easily readable.

**Conclusion**

Due to its natural occurrence, written discourse analysis is a supportive function when it comes to teaching languages. The goal of most learners of English is to gain the ability to use the language either in spoken or written form; therefore, applying written discourse analysis lessons in the classroom is very helpful. By doing so, learners will have the ability to make their writing coherent and readable. Moreover, the analysis of text patterns will help students in terms of both writing and reading in the ELT context. To conclude, although written discourse analysis has some shortcomings, as mentioned above, its merits and valuable outcomes are very appealing.

**About the author**

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**References**


Duolingo as a Bilingual Learning App: a Case Study

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Abstract
Due to the evolution of technology, this study focuses on the use of technology in order to promote language learning. Duolingo is one of the modern applications that facilitate acquiring a second language. Hence, the study aims to confirm the hypothesis that Duolingo helps promote acquiring two languages simultaneously for beginners. It is a mixed-method study including observation, assessment, and interview. It is also a case study that involves one participant who used Duolingo to learn Spanish and English simultaneously for two months. The participant is a male school student whose age is 12 years old, and he lives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. After collecting the data, they were analysed and described to have the final results. At the end, the results displayed that Duolingo can promote acquiring two languages for beginners, but it has limitations. Thus, it is recommended to develop Duolingo for advanced levels as well as for English language learners.

Keywords: bilingual app, Duolingo, English, language learning, Spanish
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Introduction
Technology has been used as a technique to improve education and teaching methods. Accordingly, mobile applications have been used extensively in learning the second language since smartphones and tablets are available most of the time. One example is Duolingo; it is an online app and website that was created to facilitate learning various languages, such as Spanish, German, and Chinese. The main method of the app is Direct-Translation Method. In addition, it provides the learner with a track of his/her improvement over time as well as a reminder to follow up with the learning process. The learner also can specify the duration of daily studying, such as studying for fifteen minutes or for twenty five minutes per day. To illustrate, Duolingo was dedicated only for native speakers of English at the time of the study, but the participant of this study is a native speaker of Arabic. Hence, this study was conducted to examine how Duolingo can promote acquiring two languages, which are English and Spanish, simultaneously for beginners.

Vesselinov & Grego (2012), have done a study to investigate the effectiveness of Duolingo in learning Spanish. The results showed a significant improvement of the participants during two months. Thus, it has proven that Duolingo promotes learning a second language. However, Garcia (2012) reported that Direct-Translation Method that is adopted by Duolingo is helpful, but it is more challenging for upper levels. As an illustration, Direct-Translation Method proves its capacity to learn a second language, but it will be more difficult while levelling. On the other hand, this research paper aims to discover in depth how a beginner can learn English and Spanish by using Duolingo, which is created for learning only one language at a time. Hence, the purpose of the study is to improve learning techniques by using technology, primarily apps.

Literature Review
Learners, nowadays, can easily access to a numerous sorts of language learning apps, especially with the existence of smartphones. However, Duolingo was created in 2010 as an online web, and then it became available on Android and IOS. Its rapid development led to registration of over 100 million users (Duolingo, 2016). The application’s potential and limitation were evaluated in several studies.

The Effectiveness of Duolingo
According to Vesselinov & Grego (2012), the motivation for learning a new language plays a primary role in the progress of the learners’ levels. To illustrate, people who are motivated are more likely to follow the program’s regulations. 196 participants were included in the study. The researchers set certain criteria to choose the suitable subjects, such as the age of 18, native speakers of English, and live in U.S. (Vesselinov & Grego, 2012). The participants had to learn Spanish for two months by depending on Duolingo though some of them were not committed to the program. The findings displayed that the majority of learners developed over time without any external sources or assistance. The results indicate the importance of being determined and having an incentive in order to learn energetically and independently by using online websites and apps, such as Duolingo.

The Translation Method
Garcia (2012) claims that the main approach to learning a language in Duolingo is translation. The translation method was rejected, and now it returned to be used in software
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programs. In Duolingo, this method succeeded primarily for beginners, but as levelling, it becomes more challenging. What makes this app distinctive is the human’s control of the translation process in opposed to translation machine. Thus, it was proven that Duolingo is one of the leading programs that help the users learn the language effectively. This study gives an evidence of the limitations of language learning applications though they have improved recently. These programs are a valuable step to improve the teaching methods and to give the learners an incentive to learn since they are accessible.

**Learning a Language through Media**

According to Gilson, Wells, & Tatro (2012), a large number of people have been recently depending on smartphones, tablets, and computers to learn a new language. Duolingo is one of the most popular applications for learning languages among people in addition to Babbel and 24/7 Tutor. These types of apps have advantages that the traditional teaching lacks. For instance, Duolingo motivates the learners to learn independently without the teacher’s instructions. It encourages the users to review what they have learned as well as relearning what they have forgotten. However, teaching language applications still have some limitations, for example, Duolingo does not provide English language. Moreover, it shows that using applications for learning the second language is beneficial for different ages though these apps do not substitute the teacher’s role. To conclude, it was demonstrated that Duolingo is a useful app for beginners as they can step ahead in learning autonomously.

**Duolingo’s Contribution to E-learning Education**

Duolingo has been improving consistently concentrating on the details in which led to the users’ satisfaction. In addition, it attracts the learners to remain engaged by adopting games methods. (Jašková, 2014). Czech learners were considered in the study as 118 participants had to fill in a questionnaire expressing their attitudes toward e-learning, and specifically toward Duolingo. The majority of the answers showed that Czech learners were not aware of Duolingo due to the absence of Czech language. Jašková (2014) states that “for the Czech learners it would be very beneficial to have the possibility to learn English via Czech.” (p. 46). Therefore, it is recommended to improve the program with respect of adding more languages.

**Using Duolingo in the Classroom**

The study examined the efficiency of Duolingo in corporate with the traditional teaching method, and it was used in Spanish university courses, including two levels; beginners and intermediate (Munday, 2016). The first group (beginners) were asked to complete five lessons per week, whereas the advanced group were required to finish all Duolingo lessons during the semester. According to Munday (2016), the purpose of the study was not to cram for Spanish learning, but to enhance their learning process by not limiting them to a number of hours. At the end, it was shown that Spanish learners enjoyed the app, and achieved more than the required levels. However, advanced learners did not show an adequate development in comparison to first-level learners who improved rapidly through the course. Munday (2016) recommended that Duolingo should be used in the classrooms as the learners prefer to have it instead of homework. Furthermore, there are students who kept using Duolingo even after the end of the course (Munday, 2016). The results demonstrate that Duolingo could be more enjoyable and beneficial for basic level learners than the sophisticated levels.
Learning German via Duolingo or Traditional Course

Ratzlaff (2015) explored the difference between learning German through Duolingo and classroom that follows Communicative Teaching Approach. Entry-level Subjects were divided into two groups; 5 participants used Duolingo to learn German, and 10 participants attended the classroom. Then, they were tested to assess their proficiency of the language. Results proved that being involved in the classroom reinforces learning process effectively, in contrast to relying only on software apps. According to Ratzlaff (2015), no matter how many online apps are available, they are still not as effective as the real classroom since language learning requires human interaction.

Software Applications for Language Learning in Elementary School

Pourreau & Wright (2013) conducted a study to investigate the capability of mobile apps in acquiring a second language. Several apps were used in the study as a supplementary to the traditional learning based on English level and learners’ ages. Duolingo was selected for learners from grade 2 to grade 8. According to Pourreau & Wright (2013), by looking to the abilities of Duolingo, it would be suitable for learning a second language up to the middle school level. Generally, it was proven that using software apps would engage and motivate the learners to progress in language learning (Pourreau & Wright, 2013).

Research Question and Hypothesis

How can the application Duolingo promote acquiring two languages simultaneously for beginners?
H1: Duolingo helps promote acquiring two languages simultaneously for beginners.
H01: Duolingo does not help promote acquiring two languages simultaneously for beginners.

Methodology

Research Design

The present research paper is following a mixed-methods approach, containing qualitative and quantitative data collection. There is only one participant involved in the study, and he was observed intensely while using the app Duolingo to learn English and Spanish simultaneously. Hence, it is a case study that contains observation for two months, and then the subject was tested to assess his level, and interviewed to address his attitude toward the app. The scores of English and Spanish tests are the quantitative data, whereas qualitative information are collected through observing the learner during the sessions, and then conducting a semi-structure interview to conclude the study.

The Participant

The subject of the current study is a male student whose age is 12 years old. He is a native speaker of Arabic, and lives in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Additionally, he has a basic knowledge of English, and has not learned Spanish before being introduced to Duolingo. He was selected due to his basic level of English, and he showed a desire to learn Spanish via Duolingo.

Instrumentation

The assessment of the learner was based on two English and Spanish tests. They were created by the researcher depending on the content of Duolingo. The participant was tested in
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present simple, present progressive, plural and singular forms, pronouns, articles (a, an, un, una…etc.), adjectives, and questions forms.

The first test was conducted after two weeks of learning, but it was not reliable due to its simplicity. Therefore, a second evaluation was required to estimate the learner’s performance accurately. Each section of the second test (English and Spanish) includes identical question types which are 12 multiple choice questions and 8 picture recognition items.

However, the interview contains five questions in which the subject was asked about his overall experience. First two questions were about Duolingo and how he benefited from using it. Then, he was questioned about learning Spanish as a second language besides English. Final question was about whether or not to rely only on Duolingo to acquire a second language.

Data Collection Procedure

After acquiring the participant’s approval, the following data collection has begun. The data were collected by using the mixed-methods; qualitative and quantitative including observation and assessment of the participant as well as interviewing him. It is a case study that contains one participant whom is observed in depth during the learning sessions. The participant was learning English and Spanish simultaneously by using Duolingo. Accordingly, the duration of the study was two months as the subject practised four times a week. Each session was around 30 minutes, so the total was two hours per week. At the end of the study, the participant has practised 16 hours.

Furthermore, the participant was tested three times during the learning process (see the tests in appendix). The first test was an achievement test which is after two weeks of studying, but the test was basic-level. Therefore, the subject was tested another test after one month of studying, and then he was tested the same test eventually to obtain reliable results. It is essential to realize that the goal of the study is to discover how Duolingo can promote acquiring two languages simultaneously for beginners by using Direct-Translation Method. The second assessment and the interview took place at the end of the study to examine the development of the learner.

The Results

The results were analysed and described based on the scores of the three tests, the observation notes, and the interview to gain valid results.

Observation Notes

As it is known, Spanish has two grammatical genders, masculine and feminine in nouns. For instance, the article ‘the’ has two words in Spanish; la (feminine) and el (masculine). This distinction between English and Spanish caused a difficulty for the participant. While observing the learner, he anticipated that the articles (a, an) have two equivalents in Spanish which are (un, una). Conversely, un is for masculine as in un niño (a boy), and una for feminine as in una niña (a girl). However, after several times of practicing via the app, the subject could distinguish this difference between the two languages.
Another difficulty that the learner faced is the auxiliary verb *es* when it is positioned at the beginning of the sentence. The equivalent of this word in English is *it is*. For example, *es un libro* means in English *it is a book*. Thus, the participant used to translate the previous sentence as *is a book*. After a short time of training, the participant could realize how to translate it correctly.

Using the article ‘the’ in Spanish is different from English whether in gender or number. For instance, the phrase *the women* in Spanish is *las mujeres*, and *the men* is translated to *los hombres* which is not corresponding to the singular form (*el hombre, la mujer*). The participant learned this distinction quickly as it did not cause any difficulty because Arabic also requires various morphemes for plurality and gender.

Moreover, there was another complication in Spanish which is subject-verb agreement. In English, the only case where the subject requires verb agreement is third person singular ‘s’ whereas in Spanish, the verb has to change in most cases according to the noun or the pronoun. In particular, the verb *come* (eat) has different forms; *el come*, *yo como*, *ustedes comes*, and *nosotras comemos*. Therefore, these various forms demand an effort to be memorized. However, the participant has not faced much difficulty understanding and memorizing them since he started to learn Spanish. The reason behind being able to learn the forms fast is that Arabic also requires subject-verb agreement in many cases, so the learner could reflect on his native language.

**The Assessment Scores**

In addition to the observation notes, the tests proved the development of the learner cover the two months. The first test assessed what he had achieved during the first two weeks. It was out of 14, and the participant obtained 12 in both English and Spanish. Since the first achievement test was basic, there was a necessity for another test that contains what was learned and what was going to be learned, and then the same test was used at the end of the study to examine his improvement. Hence, the results of the test that was conducted twice are shown in the graph below.

![Figure 1 English and Spanish Tests Scores](image-url)
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Figure 1 depicts the scores of the test that the learner had to do twice during the study. The test is out of 20 marks, and it included two sections; English and Spanish. It is shown that the participant has developed in Spanish in contrary to English.

The score of the first test is 11 out of 20 in Spanish, and 13 out of 20 in English. After conducting the same test at the end of the study, the score of the learner displayed a high rate of improvement in Spanish as he obtained 17 out of 20. However, the participant’s score in English remained 13; equal to the first score.

To sum up, the results of Spanish demonstrate the learner’s development over the two months whereas the results of English do not show any improvement.

The Analysis of the Interview

The questions of the interview are displayed below:

1. Can you speak about your experience with Duolingo?
2. What have you learned in the past two months?
3. Are you planning to continue learning Spanish and English?
4. Have you ever thought of learning Spanish before using Duolingo?
5. If you want to be competent in Spanish or English, will you rely only on Duolingo?

The interview consists of five questions regarding the learner’s development, attitude, and plan. First, the participant was asked to speak about his experience in using Duolingo. He declared that Duolingo is an app that everyone can enjoy while learning a language in contrast to the traditional way. He also recommended second language learners to take Duolingo into consideration since it is not complicated.

The second question was about what the participant learned during the past two months. He answered that he could learn several grammatical rules and various vocabulary in English and Spanish. However, the sentence structure was one of the complications he faced. For example, the word order in Spanish and English is distinct in some cases. He gave an example of the phrase *a red colour* and its equivalent in Spanish is *un color rojo*. Literally, this phrase is translated *a colour red*. Thus, he had to make several mistakes and trials in order to learn it. He also added that the pronunciation and spelling in Spanish are less complicated than in English because in Spanish, every single letter is pronounced and written.

After that, the learner was questioned whether or not he is planning to continue learning the both languages. He conveyed that he is planning to learn the two languages, but he would focus on Spanish as he prefers it rather than English. Then, the fourth question was about the learner’s plans before discovering Duolingo. He claimed that he had not thought of learning Spanish before uploading the app on his iPad. Duolingo entertained and motivated him to learn about the language.

Finally, he was asked if he would rely only on Duolingo to be competent in the two languages; Spanish and English. He acknowledged that he would not depend only on Duolingo to be ‘expert’ in a language, so he would refer to additional sources, such as Google, YouTube, and even the school.

Discussion

According to the results, it was demonstrated that Duolingo can promote acquiring two languages simultaneously, but there are limitations. Garcia (2012) reported that Duolingo is a
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satisfying app to start learning a new language, but it cannot be relied on for higher levels due to the Direct-Translation Method. Indeed, the limitation of Duolingo was displayed during the learning sessions. For example, the learner was confused about the sentence structure since he had to translate every single word. In addition, the learner could not recognize some vocabulary during the assessment even though he had learned them via Duolingo. The app usually provides pictures for the new vocabulary. However, there are certain vocabulary that are taught through a direct translation without a visual image, so the participant did not know the meaning of many words.

In despite of the fact that Duolingo has limitations, it improves the knowledge of the language regarding pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. To illustrate, Vesselinov & Grego (2012) proved that people who participated in the study developed in Spanish without referring to other sources. Hence, the participant of this study improved in both languages English and Spanish, but he obtained higher scores in Spanish comparing to English. Thus, Duolingo could assist the learner to learn more effectively, but it still needs an evolution regarding the English language.

Duolingo proved that it motivates the learners to continue learning the second language, and even to consider learning a new language. In particular, when the participant was asked about Duolingo, he answered that it made him motivated to learn a new language that he had not thought of, which is Spanish. According to Gilson, et al. (2012), language learning applications have an advantage over the traditional education which is encouraging the students to learn independently. Therefore, the students will learn how to refer to other sources with the assistance of the teacher. These kinds of apps are available and accessible at any time and any place which gives the learners an opportunity to practice their language constantly.

According to Munday (2016), “Duolingo can still be a valid addition to any course online or face-to-face, since students are able to review the language at their own level” (p. 97). The existence of engaging apps would enhance the performance of the students during the course. The participant mentioned in the interview that he would continue learning Spanish using Duolingo, yet traditional school cannot be replaced by online or software apps. Therefore, using these apps as a complementary to the curriculum leads to the increase of students’ performance and motivation.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This study showed that Duolingo is an app where every beginner can start with for learning a second language as it motivates him/her to keep progressing. However, Duolingo still needs improvement to cover more vocabulary, grammar rules, and languages, primarily English since it is the lingua franca of the world. It also should be promoted to be used for higher levels. In addition, Duolingo should not completely rely on the Direct-Translation Method as it can use extra visual tools.

In conclusion, Duolingo is recommended to be adopted at schools to entertain the students while learning since it is similar to a video game. Indeed, this research paper proved that the language learning app; Duolingo is beneficial for learning the second language. Furthermore, it prompts the desire of learning a new language.
Notes

1 Since Duolingo is being modified and improved, it currently supports learning English via Arabic. However, the focus of the present paper was learning Spanish and English simultaneously via Duolingo without referring to the mother tongue (Arabic).

About the Author:

Heba Ahmed graduated from Prince Sultan University in 2016 with first honor. Her major is Applied Linguistics. During her academic studies (2011-2016), Heba produced different leading research papers in linguistics, sociolinguistics, and technology in education. She has experience in teaching, research, and project management. Heba is interested in continuing her graduate studies in linguistics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics.

References


Appendix

The First Test Sample

English Test (14/------)

The participant will be tested in:
- Pronouns.
- Plural and singular forms.
- Articles (a, an).
- Present simple & progressive.

1) Choose the correct answer: (8/------)

1. (He, It, She, They) is a girl.
2. This is (a, an, the) apple.
3. The cat is (drinking, drinks, drink, drank) water.
4. (They, He, She, It) is a boy.
5. (Bear, Bears) drink water.
6. Many birds (are, is, am) on the tree.
7. We are (boy, boys, man).
8. I (is, are, am) drinking milk.

2) Write down the name of the picture: (6/------)
Spanish Test  (14/------)

1) Elegir:  (8/------)

1. Yo (come, comes, como) el pollo.
2. Las ninas comen un (tomate, salsa, comida).
3. (Tu, Yo, El) lees la carta.
4. Ela come (un, una) manzana.
5. Los ninos (escriben, escribe, escribe).
6. (Los, Las) hombres leen.
7. Las (tortugas, gatos, gata) beben leche.
8. (La, El, Un) mujer.

2) Escribir:  (6/------)

The Second Test Sample

English Test (20/____)  (12/____)

A. Choose the correct answer:
1. (They, He, She) is a boy.
2. The cat is (drinking, drinks, drink) water.
3. His cats (are, is, am) eating.
4. The horse is (me, mine, my).
5. (Who, What, Which) do you read?
6. (How, What, Why) are you?
7. Ahmed wears a white shirt as well as (its, her, his) pants.
8. The egg is (red, white, black).
9. She (eats, eat, eating) her breakfast every morning.
10. They (is, am, are) writing.
11. (What, Which, Who) animal do you like?
12. The sun is (white, orange, yellow).

B. Write the correct word: (8/____)

A. Elegir: (12/____)
1. (La, El, Una) hombre.
2. (Nosotras, Nosotros, Ustedes) somos mujeres.
3. (Quien, Cuales, Que) es ella?
4. (Que, Como, Cuales) animals?
5. Los ninos (escriben, escribe, escribes) libros.
6. Yo como una fresa (roja, blanca, negro).
7. Los zapatos (rojo, blancas, negros).
8. (Mis, Mi, Tu) libros.
9. Yo leo (tu, mis, tus) carta.
10. Ella come (un, una, el) manzana.
11. El (bebe, bebo, bebes) leche.
12. Las (gata, gatas, gato) beben agua.

B. Escribir: (8/____)

Spanish Test (20/____) (12/____)
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Investigating the Factors Leading to Speaking Difficulties: Both Perspectives of EFL Saudi Learners and Their Teachers

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors leading to speaking difficulties from both the EFL Saudi learners and their teachers’ perspectives through answering these questions: 1-What are the factors that affect Saudi students’ speaking performance from their own perspectives? 2-What are the factors that affect Saudi students’ speaking performance from their teachers’ perspectives? 3- What are the difficulties that Saudi students’ encounter when they learn how to speak English from their own perspectives? 4-What are the difficulties that Saudi students’ encounter when they learn how to speak English from their teachers' perspectives? The subjects of the study were three hundred and fifty female EFL students and 20 teachers of English. Three instruments were used to answer the research questions: two questionnaires and a classroom observation sheet. The findings of the research proved that the following factors affect Saudi EFL students' speaking performance: conceptual knowledge, listening ability, motivation to speak, teachers’ feedback during speaking activities, confidence, anxiety, mother tongue, law participation time allow to speak and time allowed for preparation. The findings also revealed that students face the following speaking difficulties when they try to speak: fear of mistakes, fear of criticism, the disability to think of anything to say, speak very little, their mother tongue and students' feel shy to speak. Data from class observations show that students’ speaking performance is mainly affected by four factors: insufficient input, time for preparation, poor instructions and the unsatisfactory amount of practicing speaking.

Keywords: Communicative competence, factors affect speaking, speaking difficulties, speaking performance, teaching speaking
Investigating the Factors Leading to Speaking Difficulties

Bani Younes & Albalawi

Introduction

English is the ‘Lingua Franca’ of the world. With the technological revolution and e-learning system, the English Language has emerged as one of the world's most important tools of formal communication in the present cyber and digital age (Khan, 2011). English is the dominant language of commerce; it is a worldwide, intercultural, linguistic phenomenon (Graddol, 2006). It is taught in a bewildering variety of situations. In many countries, it first appears in the primary curriculum, but in those and other countries where it continues to find entrances, most learners are still insufficiently competent in English use (Harmer, 2007). (Davies & Pearse, 1998) make it clear that the major goal of English language teaching should be to enhance learners' ability to use English effectively and accurately in communication.

For language learning to take place, there are four conditions that should exist: the exposure, opportunities to use the language, motivation, and instruction. Learners need chances to say what they think or feel and to experiment in a supportive atmosphere using a language they have heard or seen without feeling threatened (Willis, 1996). With increased exposure to the English language, students progress from acquiring social language to the more complex academic language (Collier, 1995). Social language is considered conversational, contextualized language and can be developed within two to three years. Academic language is defined as the combination of cognitive skills and content knowledge necessary for successful academic performance at secondary and university levels (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

There is no doubt that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is accelerating day by day in the field of education, but the level of achievement in learning English as a foreign language is far below the needed threshold level of proficiency. According to (Alshumaimeri, 2003) "Saudi teachers have pointed out that students leave the secondary stage without the ability to carry out a short conversation." (p.1).

Teaching English at most technical colleges of Saudi Arabia serves two purposes: first, it strengthens the foundation of English and later lays the basis for specific English which will be used in the years of the students' specialties such as business, health, computers etc. (Khan, 2011). In relating to the teachers' role in enhancing or prohibiting students' ability to speak (Rahman, 2010) points out that improperly trained teachers, inadequate teaching methodology, teacher-centered rather than learner-centered activities, students' aptitude, initial preparedness and motivation are some of the challenges of English as a foreign language (EFL) programs in the Arab world that manifest themselves in the students' speaking deficiency.

Literature Review

Speaking is “the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts” (Chaney and Burk, 1998). According to (Brown, 1994) and (Burns & Joyce, 1997) speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information. Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language, such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary (linguistic competence), but also that they understand when, why, and in what ways to produce language (sociolinguistic competence) (Carter & McCarthy, 1995). (Rebecca, 2006) states that:
Speaking is the first mode in which children acquire language, it is part of the daily involvement of most people with language activities, and it is the prime motor of language change. It also provides our main data for understanding bilingualism and language contact. (P.6).

Speaking seems to be the most important skill of all four (listening, speaking, reading and writing) because people who know a language are usually referred to as speakers of that language (Ur, 1996). The use of English as a second language (ESL) or (EFL) in oral communication is, without a doubt, one of the most common, but highly complex activities necessary to be considered when teaching the English language especially because we live at a time where the ability to speak English fluently has become a must, especially for those who want to advance in certain fields of human endeavor (Al-Sibai, 2004). (Zhang, 2009) argues that speaking remains the most difficult skill to master for the majority of English learners, and most learners remain incompetent in communicating orally in English.

**Communicative Competence**

Communicative competence is the ability to use the language correctly and appropriately to accomplish communication goals. The desired outcome of the language learning process is the ability to communicate competently, not the ability to use the language exactly as a native speaker does (Tolstykh, 2012).

Language teaching in the United State is based on the idea that the goal of language communicative competence is made up of four competence areas: linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic (Stovall, 1998). Here are the four competences in some detail:

1. Linguistic competence is knowing how to use the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of a language. Linguistic competence asks: What words do I use? How do I put them into phrases and sentences?
2. Sociolinguistic competence is knowing how to use and respond to language appropriately, given the setting, the topic, and the relationships between the people communicating.
3. Discourse competence is knowing how to interpret the larger context and how to construct longer stretches of language so that the parts make up a coherent whole.
4. Strategic competence is knowing how to recognize and repair communication breakdowns, how to work around gaps in one’s knowledge of the language, and how to learn more about the language in the context.

Learners should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest. They should try to avoid confusion in the message (due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary); to avoid offending communication partners (due to socially inappropriate style), and to use strategies for recognizing and managing communication breakdowns Sheppard (1999).

In the Common European Framework (2001), communicative competence is said to have only three components including linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence and pragmatic competence. For this study scope, communicative competence is described with four components including linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic and strategic competence.
Factors Affecting Students’ English Speaking Skills

Affective factors
Affective factors are the most important factors in foreign or second language oral production. These factors include emotion, feeling, mood, manner, attitude, etc. All these factors, especially, motivation, self-confidence and anxiety, decide the input and output of the second language as confirmed by (Edinne, 2013). (Krashen, 1982) argues that affective filter is a kind of psychological obstacle that prevents language learners from absorbing available comprehensible input completely. For him, affective factors function as a filter that reduces the amount of language input the learner is able to understand.

Performance Circumstances
Students perform a speaking task under a variety of conditions. (Nation & Newton, 2009) believe that the performance conditions that can affect speaking performance include time pressure, planning, the standard of performance and the amount of support.

Listening Input
Speaking skills cannot be developed unless we develop listening skills (Doff, 1998). Understudies must comprehend what is said to them to have a fruitful discussion. (Shumin, 1997) shares the ideas of Doff by stating that when one person speaks, the other responds through attending by means of the listening process. Truth be told, each speaker assumes the part of both an audience and a speaker. In this way, one is absolutely not able to react if s/he can't comprehend what is said. It implies talking is firmly identified with tuning in.

Conceptual Knowledge
Conceptual knowledge is defined by Niebling et. al. (2008) as the subjects' data and ideas that students are should learn. The information that conceptual knowledge provides empowers learners to utilize language with reference to the world in which they live. Bachman & (Palmer, 1996) believe that topical knowledge has impacts on talking execution. They state that specific test tasks may be easier for those who possess the relevant topical knowledge and more difficult for those who do not.

Students' expected feedback
Feedback is any reaction from an instructor in regard to a student’s performance or behavior (Reynolds, 2006). It can be verbal, composed or gestural. The purpose of feedback in the learning procedure is to enhance a students’ performance certainly not put a damper on it. A definitive objective of feedback is to provide students with an “I can do this” state of mind as affirmed by (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996). In any case, when feedback is consolidated with a correctional review, the feedback and instruction become intertwined until “the process itself takes on the forms of new instruction, rather than informing the student solely about correctness.” (Thompson & Richardson, 2001: P.41). At the point when the input is predominately negative, contemplates have demonstrated that it can debilitate understudy exertion and accomplishment( Hattie, 2007).
Investigating the Factors Leading to Speaking Difficulties

Bani Younes & Albalawi

Speaking Difficulties

**Anxiety**

According to (Ur, 1996), there are many factors that cause difficulty in speaking including inhibition, students are worried about making mistakes, fearful of criticism, or simply shy. While investigating Turkish EFL learners' correspondence hindrances in English language classrooms, (Dil, 2009) finds out that anxiety and unwillingness during the English speaking process are viewed as two of the greatest impediments for EFL learners. Anxiety and unwillingness are brought on by the apprehension of being contrarily assessed when committing errors, especially before their companions. (Tsiplakides, 2009) conducts a study to explore the reasons why students experience the ill effects of anxiety when it comes to speaking language apart from their mother tongue. According to Tsiplakides', students experience anxiety due to the negative feedback they feel they will receive from their classmates. As confirmed by Mohamed and (Wahid, 2009), speaking anxiety experienced in EFL classrooms often regularly has a pervasive inconvenient effect and impacts students' adjustment to their learning surroundings and eventually the accomplishment of their instructive objectives.

Among the effective factors which influence EFL learners, anxiety appears as one of the most outstanding factors due to its pervasive effects on foreign language learning as stated by (Idri, 2012). Boyce et. al. (2007) demonstrate that students confronted with their instructors' inquiries that they should answer and the likelihood of talking before the entire class, they may experience issues thinking, and experience a few indications like sickness, sweating, powerless knees and a dry mouth.

**Motivation**

(Cheery, 2015: 5) defines motivation as “the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. Motivation is what causes us to act, whether it is getting a glass of water to reduce thirst or reading a book to gain knowledge.” (Littlewood, 1981) makes it clear that the development of communicative skills can only take place if learners have the motivation and opportunity to express their own particular personality the general population around them.

**Confidence**

Confidence "certainty" is a mental and social wonder in which an individual assesses his/her capability and own self as per some qualities, which may bring about various enthusiastic states, and which turns out to be formatively steady, however, is still open to variety contingent upon individual circumstances (Nofsinger, 2001). (Brown, 1994) defines confidence as the expression of “an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy.” In the context of language learning, low confidence can have genuine results. Students may avoid taking the necessary risks to acquire communicative competence in the target language; they may feel profoundly frail and even drop out of the class. Thinking about these impacts, in the language classroom, it is essential to be worried about learners' self-esteem. However, this implies more than doing occasional activities to make students reflect on their worthiness and competence (Schumann, 1994).

As stated by (Brown, 1994), Adelaide Heyde studied the effects of confidence on performance of oral production tasks by American College students. The results show positive
correlation. Self-esteem, therefore, appears to be one of the indicators of successful second language learning. However, confidence is not an isolated variable. It is interwoven with several other personality variables.

**Mother-tongue**
(Harmer, 1991) suggests some reasons why students use mother-tongue in class. First, at the point when students are gotten some information about a subject they are not linguistically armed for discussing in the outside language. Another reason is that the utilization of native language is a characteristic thing to do. In addition, some students may resort to the first language to disclose something to others if there is no support from instructors to stick to utilizing the target language. Finally, at the point when teachers every now and again use the students’ first tongue, students will consequently feel good to utilize it.

**Low participation**
While increasing participation is a conspicuous objective in courses that incorporate regular discussions and small-group work, it is also vital in an address course. In short, if just a few students take an interest by volunteering answers, making inquiries, or adding to dialogs, class sessions get to be to some degree a lost chance to survey and promote learning (McKeachie, 2005). You can enhance student participation in your course by enhance the environment and planning each class session. Moreover, the way in which you interact, both verbally and non-verbally, communicates to students your attitude about participation (Harmer, 1991). Ideally, the objective of expanding participation is not to have every student participate take an interest similarly or at the same rate. Rather, it is to create an environment in which all members have the chance to learn and in which the class investigates issues and thoughts top to bottom, from a variety of viewpoints. Some students will raise their voices more than others; this variation is a result of contrasts in learning inclinations and in addition contrasts in identities (Davis, 1993).

**Fear of Mistake**
(Aftat, 2008) argues that the fear of mistakes is linked to the issue of correction and negative evaluation. In addition, this is also much influenced by the students’ fear of being laughed at by other students or being criticized by the teacher. As a result, students commonly stop participating in the speaking activity (Hieu, 2011).

**Shyness**
(Bowen, 2005) argue that some shy learners are caused by their nature that they are very quiet. In this case, the students are not very confident and tend to be shy because most of them find it very intimidating when speaking English in front of their friends and teacher. In addition, (Saurik, 2011) indentifies that most of English students feel shy when they speak the language because they think they will make mistakes when they talk. They are also afraid of being laughed at by their peers. This fact is also found in the data of this study that students’ shyness is their perception on their own ability. In this sense, they are afraid of being laughed at by their friends due to their low ability in speaking English.
Definition of terms:
Speaking difficulties: for the scope of this study, speaking difficulties refers to the difficulties that can be affected by the students emotional state and hinder them from speaking in English class. Among those difficulties are the students' fear of making mistakes, fear of criticism, feel shy to speak, the use of the mother tongue (to feel safe), the disability to think of anything to say (lack of motivation).

Methodology
Questions of the study
This study was designed to address the following questions:
1. What are the factors that affect Saudi students’ speaking performance from their own perspectives?
2. What are the factors that affect that affect Saudi students' speaking performance from the teachers' perspectives?
3. What are the difficulties that Saudi students’ encounter when they learn how to speak English from their own perspectives?
4. What are the difficulties that Saudi students’ encounter when they learn how to speak English from their teachers' perspectives?

The Subjects of the Study
The subjects of the study are three hundred and fifty female preparatory year students and twenty English teachers at Tabuk University.

Instrumentations
To achieve the purpose of the study, three instruments were used: 10 closed-questionnaire and a classroom observation sheet. The first questionnaire was developed to register for the factors leading to EFL students' speaking difficulties from their teachers' perspectives. The second questionnaire was developed to register for the factors leading to EFL students' speaking difficulties from their own perspectives. Participants are allowed to select three answers for each question. To investigate how teachers carry out speaking lessons, how students perform and what problems students encounter in speaking lessons, the researchers conducts four classroom observations. A classroom observation sheet was used (See appendix C).

Research procedure
After developing the questionnaires, they were reviewed by three EFL experts from the University of Tabuk, KSA who suggested omitting some items and modifying some others. The three hundred and fifty students and the twenty teachers were supposed to answer the same questionnaires in order for the researchers to be able to compare and contrast for their answers. On the first of February 2016, three hundred and fifty sheets of the questionnaire were delivered to the target students in eight classes. The researchers visited each of the eight classes and explained clearly the purpose of administering the questionnaires which is to find the factors affecting their speaking performance and the difficulties they face when they try to speak English. The researchers Then asked the teachers themselves kindly to complete the questionnaires and to give the students enough time to complete theirs.
Data Collection

The students’ questionnaires were administered and recollected by teachers. The data from the questionnaires were arranged in tables and percentage of each frequency was calculated. The researchers administered and recollected the teachers’ questionnaires. The data from the questionnaire were arranged in tables and percentage of each frequency was calculated.

Classroom Observation

The researchers first designed the classroom observation sheet. Classroom observation took place the day after the questionnaires survey had been administered. The researchers observed three randomly selected classes out of eight. Once permission was taken from the classroom teachers, the researchers observed each class for 100 minutes each.

Data analysis procedure

This study produced two types of data: quantitative and qualitative. The descriptive statistics of percentages were used to analyze the quantitative data derived from the questionnaires, whereas the qualitative data were collected from the classroom observation.

Results and findings

The first question

The first question of the study is "what are the factors that affect Saudi students’ speaking performance from their own perspectives?" In order to answer this question the percentage of the students’ answers to the questionnaire items which investigate these factors were calculated. Table 1 illustrates the students’ answers.

Table 1 Factors affecting Saudi students’ speaking performance from their own perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors affecting students speaking</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Percentage of students' answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual knowledge.</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law participation.</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers’ feedback during speaking activities.</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety.</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother tongue.</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivation to speak.</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence.</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening ability.</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time allowed for preparation.</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 1 shows that eighty-six percent of the students agree that the "conceptual knowledge" affects their speaking performance. Eighty-five percent of them refer to "law participation" during speaking as an effective factor. Seventy-five percent of the students confirm the importance of "teachers’ feedback during speaking activities" while seventy-two percent of them view their "anxiety" as an important factor that influences their speaking performance. Seventy percent of the students state that they prefer to use "Arabic" in the English classes while sixty-nine percent of them consider "motivation" as an effective factor on their speaking performance. Only fifty-five percent of the students agree that "confidence" affect their speaking performance while forty-eight percent of them think that their "listening ability" influence their speaking performance. Time allow to speak is considered by forty-seven of the students whereas thirty-four of them believe that their speaking performance is affected by "the time allowed to speak".

**The second question**

The second question of the study is "what are the factors that affect Saudi students’ speaking performance from their teachers’ perspectives?". In order to answer this question the percentage of the teachers’ answers to their questionnaire items were calculated. Table 2 illustrates the students' answers.

### Table 2 Factors affecting Saudi students’ speaking performance from their teachers’ perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors affecting students speaking</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
<th>Percentage of teachers' answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>motivation to speak.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother tongue.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual knowledge.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening ability.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law participation.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time allowed for preparation.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ feedback during speaking activities.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to teachers, "motivation to speak" is thought to be the most influential factor with a percentage of ninety percent. Eighty-five percent of the teachers believe that "students' anxiety" affects student speaking performance while Eighty percent of them think that "student's mother tongue" could affect their students' speaking performance while seventy-five of them consider the "conceptual knowledge" as an effective factor. Seventy percent of the teachers agree upon the effect of "the students listening ability" on their speaking performance. "Law participation" was considered by sixty percent of the teachers where as fifty of them consider "confidence". Forty-five of the teachers account for "the time allow for prepare the speaking task" and the "teachers' feedback" as effectual factors upon students' speaking performance.

In summary, the majority of teachers believe that student speaking performance is affected mostly by motivation. The next two important factors are low participation and anxiety. When comparing the first three factors from table 1 with the first three factors from table 2 we find that results from student questionnaire are different from those of the teachers'. Most students believe that their speaking performance is affected by the conceptual knowledge followed by both the law participation and the teachers' feedback during speaking activities. Teachers, on the other hand, confirm the motivation to speak, anxiety and the students' mother tongue as the most factors that affect students' speaking performance.

The third question

The third question of the study is "what are the difficulties that Saudi students encounter when they learn how to speak English from their own perspectives?" In order to answer this question the percentage of the students' answers to their questionnaire items were calculated. Table 2 illustrates the students' answers.

Table 3. Difficulties that Saudi students encounter when they learn how to speak English from their own perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking difficulties that Saudi students encounter they learn how to speak</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Percentage of students' answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students' fear of mistakes.</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' fear of criticism.</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students feel shy to speak.</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They speak very little or not at all.</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother tongue.</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When being asked about the difficulties they face in their speaking classes, ninety percent of the students admitted that they were "fearful of making mistakes and criticism when to speak". Eighty five percent of the students admit that they "feel shy to speak". Seventy two percent of them "speak very little or not at all". While Seventy of them resort unconsciously to their "mother tongue" where as sixty nine percent of them admitted that they "could not think of anything to say ".

The fourth question

The fourth question of the study is "what are the difficulties that the Saudi students' encounter when they learn how to speak English from their teachers' perspectives? " In order to answer this question the percentage of the teachers' answers to their questionnaire items were calculated. Table 4 illustrates the students' answers.

Table 4 Difficulties that Saudi students encounter when they learn how to speak English from their teachers' perspectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking difficulties that Saudi students encounter</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
<th>Percentage of teachers’ answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They can not think of anything to say.</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They speak very little or not at all.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother tongue.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' fear of</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' feel shy to speak.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' fear of mistakes.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the teachers decided that "students' disability to think of anything to say and their limited practice of speaking" are the main speaking difficulties that students encountered when they try to speak in English. Ninety-five percent of the teachers believe that their "students tend to use Arabic" rather than English to communicate. Ninety-percent of the teachers confirm their "students' fear of criticism " while eighty five of them account for "the students' shyness and their fear of mistakes " as inhibiting factors of students speaking.

Summary

The results in tables three and four show a discrepancy between the teachers' and the student' answers about the difficulties which students face when they try to speak English. According to the students, their fear of making mistakes, their fear of criticism and their
shyness to speak are the most difficulties they face when they try to speak while when comes to the teachers ,they think that the students' disability to think of anything to say ,their limited practicing of speaking and their mother tongue are the most difficulties that they face when they try to speak English.

Observation Results

Basically the idea of conducting classroom observation stems from noticing the discrepancy between the students' and the teachers' answers for the same items .the researchers found it valuable to register for how speaking class is taught and the roles of both the student and the teachers inside the class.

The following are the researchers comment about the observed classes:

- Students were not given sufficient warming up neither were they smoothly led during speaking tasks.
- Insufficient time for speaking task preparation.
- Students received unclear instructions during group-work; consequently, not all of them were fully engaged in group work. Some of them participated actively, but others preferred to remain as eavesdroppers.
- While some students participated actively in the speaking tasks, others did not. They either played with their belongings or chatted with other colleagues in Arabic.
- The input (of the target language) was very limited. Students tend to use Arabic in pair or group work.
- Students suffered serious anxiety while speaking in class. Sometimes, they did not know what to say and kept silent (due to the insufficient linguistic input).
- Some students tended to read loudly what they had written on a piece of paper. They did not have the command of grammar and vocabulary needed to speak naturally (due to the insufficient time to prepare).
- Much teachers' talking time (TTT), e.g. some teachers kept repeating the same instructions over and over again.
- Limited students' time talking .
- Class time management was so poor; students had to perform a lot of tasks in a hundred-minute class.

Conclusion

Concerning the first research question, the results indicated that the following factors affecting Saudi students’ speaking performance from their own perspectives:

1. Conceptual knowledge
2. Law participation
3. Teachers 'feedback during speaking activities
4. Anxiety
5. Mother tongue
6. Motivation to speak
7. Confidence
8. listening ability
9. Time allowed for preparation
10. Time allow to speak
Concerning the second research question, the results indicated that the following factors affecting Saudi students’ speaking performance from their own teachers’ perspectives:
1. Motivation to speak
2. Anxiety
3. Mother tongue
4. Conceptual knowledge
5. Listening ability
6. Law participation
7. Confidence
8. Time allowed for preparation
9. Teachers’ feedback during speaking activities
10. Time allowed to speak

Concerning the third research question the results indicated that the following difficulties affecting Saudi students’ speaking performance from their own perspectives:
1. Students' fear of mistakes
2. Students' fear of criticism
3. Students feel shy to speak
4. They speak very little or not at all
5. Mother tongue
6. They can not think of anything to say

Concerning the fourth research question the results indicated that the following difficulties affecting Saudi students’ speaking performance from their teachers’ perspectives:
1. They can not think of anything to say
2. They speak very little or not at all
3. Mother tongue
4. Students' fear of criticism
5. Students' feel shy to speak
6. Students' fear of mistakes

Data from class observations show that students’ speaking performance is mainly affected by four factors:
1- Insufficient input.
2- Time for preparation.
3- Poor instructions.
4- In all three lessons observed, the amount of students’ oral performance was not satisfactory.

Recommendations
Based on the results of the study, the following are some recommendations to overcome the difficulties EFL Saudi students face when they try to speak English:

1- Students should be given enough time to prepare and perform the speaking tasks
2- Creating friendly, helpful and cooperative classroom environment to help students overcome inhibition and shyness.
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3- Students should receive clear instructions and sufficient guidance to perform the speaking tasks.
4- Choosing interesting topics which are related to students' life and interests.
5- Including speaking tests as what is tested is always taught.
6- Creating more opportunities to motivate students to speak English in class.
7- Encouraging Students to overcome their fear of making mistakes as making mistakes is a means of learning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Teachers’ questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate the factors affecting preparatory year female students’ speaking performance at Tabuk University. Your assistance in completing the following questionnaire is greatly appreciated. Please put a tick (✓) in the box beside the option(s) you choose. The information gathered through this questionnaire would be kept confidential.

Personal information
Investigating the Factors Leading to Speaking Difficulties

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1. Gender
   □ Male
   □ Female

2. Age
   □ 20-25 years
   □ 26-30 years
   □ 31-35 years
   □ 36-40
   □ Other (please specify)………..

3. Educational level
   □ Bachelor’s degree
   □ Master’s degree
   □ Other (please specify)…………………………

4. How long have you been teaching English?
   □ 1-5 years
   □ 6-10 years
   □ 11-15 years
   □ More than 16 years

Part II: Factors affecting students’ speaking performance and speaking problems

5. The following yes/no questions describe performance conditions in speaking class, please read and answer them.
   Are students given enough time to perform speaking tasks?
   Do students prepare for a task before the task is performed?
   Do students have any pressure to perform well?
   Is the listener patient, understanding, sympathetic and supportive.

6. Choose the adjective that best describes students’ state in speaking classes?
   □ Motivated
   □ Anxious
   □ Confident

7. Choose the adjective that best describes students’ listening skills?
   □ Very bad
   □ Bad
   □ Average
   □ Good
   □ Very good

8. Choose the adjective(s) that best describe(s) your reaction when your students make mistakes during oral work
   □ Stop them and correct their mistakes.
   □ Keep quiet, smile and encourage them to go on their task.
   □ Get annoyed when students keep making mistakes.
   □ If students cannot think of what to say, you may prompt them forwards.
   □ Watch, listen to the students and write down points to give feedback afterwards.

9. Choose factor(s) that affect(s) your students’ speaking performance?
   □ Conceptual knowledge
Investigating the Factors Leading to Speaking Difficulties

Bani Younes & Albalawi

☐ Time for preparation
☐ Listener's support
☐ Motivation to speak
☐ Confidence
☐ Anxiety
☐ Pressure to perform
☐ Listening ability
☐ Time allocated to perform speaking tasks
☐ Feedback during speaking activities
Other reasons (please specify)……………

10. Choose the speaking problem(s) you think your students face while practicing a speaking task
☐ They cannot think of anything to say.
☐ They are fearful of criticism or losing face.
☐ They are worried about making mistakes.
☐ They speak very little or no English at all.
☐ They have no motive to express themselves.
☐ They use Arabic.
☐ They are shy.

Thank you very much for taking your valuable time to complete this survey.

APPENDIX B

Students’ questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate the factors affecting preparatory year female students’ speaking performance at Tabuk university. Your assistance in completing the following questions is greatly appreciated. Please put a tick (✓) in the box beside the option(s) you choose. The information gathered through this questionnaire would be kept confidential.

Part I: Demographic information

1. Age
☐ 18-20
☐ above 20

2. How long have you been learning English?
☐ 5-7 years
☐ More than 7 years

Part II: Factors affecting students’ speaking performance and speaking problems

3. How much do you like speaking English in class?
☐ very much
☐ rather
☐ it depends on the topic
☐ little
☐ not at all

4. How often do you practice speaking outside the classroom?
☐ Always
5. What do you think about the necessity of speaking skills to your future job?
   □ Very necessary
   □ Necessary
   □ Normal
   □ unnecessary
   □ Very unnecessary

6. Choose the statements that describe the performance conditions in speaking class.
   Students are given plenty of time to perform a speaking task.
   Students prepare for a task before the task is performed.
   Students have the pressure to perform well.
   Listeners are patient, understanding, sympathetic and supportive.

7. when I participate in a speaking class, I'm
   □ Motivated
   □ Anxious
   □ Confident

8. I'm a ................. listener.
   □ Very bad
   □ Bad
   □ Average
   □ Good
   □ Very good

   □ Always
   □ Often
   □ Sometimes
   □ Rarely
   □ Never

10. Choose the factor(s) that best affect(s) your speaking performance.
    □ Time for preparation
    □ Motivation to speak
    □ Listener’s support
    □ Pressure to perform well
    □ Confidence
    □ Conceptual knowledge
    □ Anxiety
    □ Listening ability
    □ Time allocated to perform a speaking task
    Other factors (please specify) ..........................................................

11. Choose the problem(s) that face(s) you in learning speaking.
    □ You are fearful of criticism or losing face.
    □ You are worried about making mistakes.
APPENDIX C

Classroom Observation Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher’s activities</th>
<th>Students’ activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Warm up</td>
<td>integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pre-speaking</td>
<td>get enough input/ group work /ss discuss using English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. While-speaking</td>
<td>all students speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Post-speeching</td>
<td>speaking task leads to next task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Homework</td>
<td>encourage students talk outside the class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Correlation among Reading Attitude, Interpersonal Intelligence and Reading Comprehension

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Abstract
Reading is one of the crucial skills to be mastered by students in Indonesia. The genre text approach is mostly implemented in each degree on formal education. This caused the redirection of teaching learning process aim, that is from mastering four English skills become more inclined in mastering reading skill. The curriculum sets the requirement of passing the final examination to step up into higher grade with a good reading score. Reading becomes interesting subject to be investigated by many researcher in Indonesia in order that teacher not only teach reading by the surface purpose of text, but make them become meaningful reading teaching learning process. Digging the inner factors to reading comprehension, this research aims are to investigate the correlation among the reading attitude, interpersonal intellegence and reading comprehension of English Education Study Program of Widya Dharma University (UNWIDHA), Klaten, Central Java, Indonesia and how those factors can theoritically has impact on creating meaningful teaching and learning of reading? This research implemented the procedure of expose de facto reasearch. Questionaires of reading attitude and interpersonal intellegence and a test of reading comprehension were administered to the sample (n=152). Pearson Product-moment correlation was used to analyse the data. The result of this study showed that there was a significant correlation between the students’ reading attitude and their reading comprehension. Students with positive reading attitudes strengthen their willingness to read for more reading experience which consequently influenced their reading comprehension. The students interpersonal intelligence also associated with their reading comprehension. This intellegence brings reading to another level. The students who had more precentage of interpersonal intellegence tend to insert emptahy or feeling in a text, then reading not only for reading text but comprehending the text.

Keywords: Expose de facto reasearch, interpersonal intellegence, reading attitude, reading, reading comprehension
Introduction
Most educators would agree that reading comprehension is very important among four major English skills. Mason (2004) claims that reading comprehension is the essential key not only to in school academic learning, but also to life-long learning. In order to fully function in society and be able to tackle problems and have access to important texts (whether literary, philosophical, or technical), people need to read. Allington and Cunningham (2002, p. 2) present a projection indicating that the 7 shifting economy will require a future workforce in which the workers, and not just the people in charge, will need some college or some form of post-secondary education. They also argue that nation’s literacy needs for the 21st-century require “strong academic skills, thinking, reasoning, teamwork skills, and proficiency in using technology.” However, although reading is useful for the students, for some students, reading is not always an easy activity to do. They still find difficulties in doing this important activity which affects their reading comprehension.

There are several factors affecting or influencing reading comprehension as stated in Harvey, Stephanie, & Goudvis (2000, p.102), (1) students’ reading attitudes (motivation and interest); (2) time truly engaged in reading; (3) vocabulary and world knowledge; (4) fluency; (5) type of text or genre; (6) opportunities for rich talk and written response; (7) effective comprehension strategy instruction; and the last is (8) understanding and implementing the strategies used by effective reading. Beside the factors, it could be caused by the macro developmental aspect (Brand, 2002) in which the students’ reading comprehension changes overtime as the readers get matures and develop cognitively, have reading experience with more challenging text and benefits from classroom instruction. Some scholars have pointed out that students’ reading performance is associated with their attitudes toward reading. According to Sallabas (2008), attitude can be described as an individual’s response tendency against any phenomenon or thing around him or her, In line with this, Gardner (1985, p. 9) describes as an individual attitude as an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual’s beliefs or opinions about the referent. In addition, Prattkains (1989) argues that attitude concept is associated with emotional behavioral and cognitive process. In other words, attitude is an individual’s response toward an object or situation and it is very important in learning process, in which the improvement of students’ educational performance depends on attitude. Sani and Zain (2011) find that the students with positive attitude toward reading have the stronger reading ability. Students with positive attitude toward reading have the enjoyment in reading. Enjoyment in reading is significantly related to reading attainment (Clark & Douglas, 2011).

Reading is also believed to be most complicated one for some students to cope because it is an active process which need recognition and comprehension skill (Patel & Jain, 2008, p. 113). In reading, comprehension skills are important especially for students who learn English as a foreign language. Reading comprehension is a process that involves the orchestration of the readers’s prior knowledge about the world and about language. It involves such as: predicting, questioning, summarizing, determining meaning of vocabulary in context, monitoring one’s own comprehension, and reflecting (Weaver, 1994, p. 44). To comprehend, a reader must have a wide range of capacities or abilities beside of attitudes. According to Ward (2008):
“Every student is smart according to the kinds of intelligence own by the students start from when he/she is born, or as the result of learning the culture. This theory is important to be applied in education. There is no stupid child, nor the difficult subject-study, it is caused by the highest intelligence of that person has been known. So, it is multiple and it is also various.” (p.548)

Interpersonal intelligence can be seen to play a key role in second language learning. Empathy is an aspect of interpersonal intelligence involving the ability to understand people and respond to them appropriately, and those with a high degree of empathy seem likely to more successful second language learners. Language is one of the ways in which people respond to each other. Effective communication calls for empathy, which allows an ongoing assessment and modification of what is being said, how it is being said and the body language that accompanies it. Horwitz (1995, p. 576) considers that successful second language learning depends on the emotional responses of the learner. At the cognitive level Multiple Intelligences theory develops a framework which assists in explaining individual variations in students’ second language learning proficiency.

In relation the problems faced by the students of English Education Study Program of Widya Dharma University (UNWIDHA), Klaten, Central Java, Indonesia., this research aims to answer the following questions: (1) Is there any significant correlation between the students reading attitude and reading comprehension?, (2) Are there any significant correlation among the aspects of reading attitude and the students’ reading comprehension?, (3) Is there any significant correlation between the students’s interpersonal intelligence and their reading comprehension? (4) Are there any significant contributions of the aspect of reading attitude to reading comprehension?, (5) Are there any significant contributions of the students’ interpersonal intelligence to their reading comprehension?

Research Method
The population was the students of English Education Program of UNWIDHA, Klaten. Purposive sampling technique was applied. The students who had taken all the reading courses and had the interpersonal intelligence (less or more percentage of its intelligence included) were the sample. Total number of the sample was 152 students.

A ready made questionnaire of reading attitude by Rhody and Alexender (1980) and a constructed questionnaire of the interpersonal intelligence and a ready-made test of reading comprehension by Chesla (2011) were used to collect the data. Validity used in this study was content validity in which the researcher considered the items of questionnaire based on the purpose of the study. It was to find out the students attitude, their interpersonal intelligence, and reading comprehension. To measure the validity statistically, factor analysis was applied and to see the reliability statistically, Cronbach Alpha was applied. The result of the try out of the questionnaires and the test showed that the instruments were reliable with Cronbach Alpha values were higher than .70. The result of normality test showed that the data were normal, the p-value was higher than .05 . To find out the correlation between variables, Pearson Product Moment was used. Linier regression analysis was applied to find out the contribution.
Findings

Descriptive Statistics
This study revealed there were 125 students (82.2%) who had positive attitude toward reading and 11 students (17.8%) who had negative attitude. The interpersonal intelligence, most of the students had the interpersonal intelligence, less or more. Based on the data of reading comprehension, most of the students had good reading comprehension and there only one student who had poor reading comprehension. The average score of reading comprehension was 73.61.

Correlation Analysis
The result of correlation analysis showed that the correlation between students' reading attitude and students' reading comprehension was .562 (p=.000). It means that there was a significant correlation between students' reading attitude and students' reading comprehension since the p-value (.000) was lower than .01. The strength of the correlation of both variables was in moderate level of correlation (Sugiono, 2012). The writer also did the correlation analysis for each aspect of reading attitude to reading comprehension. The result showed that all aspects of reading attitude (prevailing feelings about reading, action readiness for reading and evaluative beliefs about reading) correlated to reading comprehension. The correlation of prevailing feelings about reading and reading comprehension was .552 (p=.000), the correlation of action readiness for reading and reading comprehension was .536 (p=.000), and the correlation of evaluative beliefs about reading and reading comprehension was .442 (p=.000). The p-values of the aspects of reading attitude were lower than .01. The strength of the correlation of all aspects were moderate (Sugiono, 2012), since the r value for all aspect of reading attitude and reading comprehension was between .40 and .599.

From the findings, it was also founded that there was a significant correlation between the students' interpersonal intelligence and their reading comprehension. The r-obtained was .200. The strength of the correlation of the students' interpersonal intelligence and their reading comprehension was low correlation (Sugiono, 2012). Correlation analysis was also conducted to see the correlations among the aspects of reading comprehension and reading comprehension total. The finding showed that the correlation of detail and reading comprehension was .569 (p=.000), main idea was .435 (p=.000), sequence was .411 (p=.000), cause and effect was .436 (p= 000), vocabulary was .494 (p= .000) and inference was .518 (p=000).

Regression Analysis
The regression analysis by using stepwise method was applied to find out the contribution of the aspects of reading attitude to their reading comprehension and the contribution of the students' interpersonal intelligence to their reading comprehension.

Contribution of the Reading Attitude on their Reading Comprehension.
From the result of the regression analysis, it was found that the R Square ($R^2$) was .315. It means that the students' reading attitude gave contribution to their reading comprehension 31.5%. Table 1 presents the result of the regression analysis.
The Correlation among Reading Attitude, Interpersonal Intelligence

Regression analysis was also conducted to see the contribution of the aspects of reading attitude on the students' reading comprehension. The result of the regression analysis showed that only two from three aspects of reading attitude influenced the students' reading comprehension (see table 2). The result of the analysis revealed that $R^2$ for Prevailing Feelings about Reading was .305 which means it contributed to the students' reading comprehension 30.5%. Next, Action Readiness for Reading contributed 3.1% to the students reading comprehension. Both Prevailing Feelings about Reading and Action Readiness for Reading contributed 33.7% contribution to the students’ reading comprehension.

Table 2. Result of Regression Analysis of the Aspects of Reading Attitude and Their Reading Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$R^2$ Change</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevailing feeling</td>
<td>.552</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action readiness</td>
<td>.580</td>
<td>.337</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Influence of the students interpersonal intelligence on their Reading Comprehension.
The result of the regression analysis that the students' interpersonal intelligence contributed 4% to their reading comprehension.

Table 3 The Result of Regression Analysis of the Students Interpersonal Intelligence and Their Reading Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$R^2$ Change</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Intelligence</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aspects of Reading Comprehension and Reading Comprehension

Regression analysis was also applied to see which aspects of reading comprehension gave the best support to the students reading comprehension. The result of the analysis revealed that detail gave the best support to the students’ reading comprehension with 32.3% contribution. Inference contributed 23.2%, cause and effect contributed 16.9%, vocabulary contributed 11.9%, sequence contributed 7.9% and main idea contributed 7.7%. Table 4 presents the result of regression analysis of the aspects of reading comprehension and reading comprehension.

Table 4  The Result of Regression Analysis of the Reading Comprehension on Students’ Reading Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>R² Change</th>
<th>Sig. F Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detail</td>
<td>.569</td>
<td>.323</td>
<td>.323</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inference</td>
<td>.754</td>
<td>.556</td>
<td>.232</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause and Effect</td>
<td>.851</td>
<td>.725</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>.919</td>
<td>.844</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Idea</td>
<td>.960</td>
<td>.921</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

There are some interpretations of this study. First, this study revealed that most of the students had positive attitude toward reading. It was 82.2% of the students (125 students out of 152 students) who had positive attitude toward reading with the score ranged from 35 to 62 and there were 17.8% of the students (11 students) with negative attitude toward reading with the score range from 25 to 33. It could happen because of some factors. From the finding, it can be assumed that the students felt and realized the importance of reading. It also can be seen from the result of the questionnaire responded by the students with positive attitude. The finding showed that they like to improve and broaden knowledge and interest through reading. As the result, they would read for some reasons. It could happen because they like it, they need to, or they have to. When they read because they like it, they would read in their own will and choose many kinds of topic as what they were interested in or as what they need for. The finding showed that there were 60% of the students got really excited about books they had read. The number was possible to be the prediction of the students excitement for them who read books based on what they interested in. While, the rest was the students who read because they have to. Besides students’ awareness about the importance of reading, owning and having
access to books and library also could be the factor influencing their attitude toward reading. In line with this, finding revealed that the students often bought books, and they also had another way to access books. It was by checking out the books from the library and by sharing books with friends. Concerning factors influencing reading attitude, according to Nickoli, Hendricks, Hendricks and Smith (2004), there is a relationship between owning and having access to books and library and reading attitude.

Second interpretation of the finding was about the students' interpersonal intelligence. The finding showed that most of the students had interpersonal intelligence despite less or more percentage they had, but the students who had more portion of interpersonal intelligence is 56.6% from sample. The students who had interpersonal intelligence then to do some activities that involved them in group or connected them in society such as: doing group or pair course assignment, reading journal articles, sharing information, chatting with friends, sending message and email. Those activities bring reading activity not only in surface level, but in deep level. Third, in this study there were only 14.5% of the students who are very good in reading comprehension and there were 29% who are average in reading comprehension. There might be some reasons why the students with average reading comprehension were higher than the students with very good reading comprehension. It might occur due to some factors. One of them is the difficulties they had in reading comprehension.

Based on the observation, the lack of vocabulary, many difficult words, complexity of the sentences or the sentence pattern and the genre of the text could be the things they had to encounter in the process of reading comprehension even they had passed all reading courses. Besides that, negative attitude toward reading. The finding showed that there were 70.37% students with negative attitude had average reading comprehension. The students with negative attitude toward reading might consider reading as uninteresting activity. It is in line with what according to Seitz (2010), students who do not like texts to read often fail to engage in reading. This condition would impact the students' reading experience which meant they missed the opportunity of having reading practice that might improve their reading comprehension. Next, the data distribution showed that most of the students were good in reading comprehension (55.3%). It could be caused by the macrodevelopmental aspect (Rand, 2002) in which the students' reading comprehension changes overtime as the readers get matures and develop cognitively, have reading experience with more challenging text and benefits from classroom instruction. In this study, the students had passed all reading courses in the previous semesters where they practiced to improve the reading skill and gained experiences in reading. Many reading activities and classroom instruction during the reading courses and other courses that made the students to read, lead them to improve their reading ability.

Besides the macro developmental aspects, the students' positive attitude toward reading could be the predictor. Looking at the score of reading comprehension, it was found that the average score of reading comprehension was 73.61 which came from detail score (15.87), main idea score (8.57), sequence score (8.94), cause and effect score (13.25) vocabulary score (11.01) and inference score (15.96). The finding also revealed that there were correlations among the aspects of reading comprehension and reading comprehension total. Then, regression analysis was conducted to see the contribution of each aspect. The highest contribution was from detail (32.3%). It could be because the students were accustomed in finding specific information in
reading text to fulfill the need of answering question from the lecturers during the teaching and learning process and answering the written test for the assignments, midterm and final examination, and it was not only for reading courses, but also for other courses. Next, inference contributed 23.2% to reading comprehension. It could be summed up that the students understood the context then they were able to answer the questions although inference questions were considered difficult. It could be because the students did practicing for TOEFL prediction test in which some inference questions were available. Besides that, considering the inference questions were hard to answer, the students sometimes focused on learning how to answer inference question. Next, cause and effect contributed 16.9%. It was found that the kind of cause and effect questions were often available in their reading material in reading courses as well as in other subjects. Furthermore, vocabulary contributed 11.9% to reading comprehension. Some new vocabularies still became the barrier for some students in reading comprehension. They failed to understand the meaning of the new words based on the context. Unfortunately, not all the students tried to find the meaning of the new words. Some of them preferred to ignore the difficult words by considering that they could solve the problem latter. Then, sequence contributed 7.9% to reading comprehension. Although the students like reading short story in which the sequence of the story is available, they did not analyze this aspect. Reading short story was reading for fun. They did not need to analyze short story. Moreover, main idea contributed 7.7% to reading comprehension. It might because the students focused more in specific information in the text and there were some new vocabularies and the complexity of the sentence in the text which gave them difficulties to conclude the idea. Furthermore, the findings revealed that there was a significant correlation between the students' reading attitude and the aspects of reading attitude to their reading comprehension. It might happen because most of the students had positive attitude toward reading and most of the students with positive attitude toward reading had good reading comprehension. It could be because the students considered reading as an important activity and reading courses as crucial subjects. It was supported by the finding that 51.9% of the students like to read whenever they have free time. The students were accustomed to check out books from library and share books with friends. Besides that, most of the student had their own book, since the result showed that there were 66.45% of the students had a lot of books in their room. Moreover, from the book they had read, they usually got really excited about what they found. It could be concluded that the students with positive attitude had higher reading comprehension than the students with negative attitude toward reading. It was because the students with positive attitude toward reading were more interested in reading and read more than the students with negative attitude toward reading. This finding was supported by the literature. According to Bastug (2014), positive attitudes to reading activity make contribution to amount in reading, variety in reading, and affect the students’ success. Students’ positive attitudes toward reading lead to positive reading experience which help the students to achieve higher academic performance (Karim & Hasan, 2007).

Looking at the students’ interpersonal intelligence, this study revealed that there was correlation between students’ interpersonal intelligence and reading comprehension. The writer assumed it happened because Interpersonal intelligence can be seen to play a key role in second language learning. Empathy is an aspect of interpersonal intelligence involving the ability to understand people and respond to them appropriately, and those with a high degree of empathy...
The students’ reading attitude gave 31.5% contribution to reading comprehension. Reading attitude plays a very important role to support reading comprehension. When the students had positive reading attitude, their reading achievement tend to be higher. It can be assumed that the students’ attitude toward reading promote the students ability in comprehending the reading text as Chamberlain (2008) claims that students’ reading attitudes improve their comprehension skills and learning experiences. As a result, by having positive attitude toward reading, the students get better reading comprehension. The result of regression analysis showed that the aspects of reading attitude (Prevailing Feelings about Reading and Action Readiness for Reading) influenced 33.7% to reading comprehension. Since they felt and realized the importance of reading, students would have a tendency to have a good reaction toward reading, they would enjoy reading, and the students who enjoyed reading will get information better than who were not. According to Clark and Douglas (2011), enjoyment of reading is significantly related to reading attainment. Moreover, the writer assumed that when the students feel that reading is useful and important, they would have tendency to read. When they read more, they would have more reading experience which helps them improve their skill of reading and promote their reading comprehension. Although the correlation of the students’ interpersonal intelligence and their reading comprehension was significant, the contribution of the students’ interpersonal intelligence to their reading comprehension was only 4%. Finally, looking at the result of regression analysis, reading attitude contributed 31.6% to reading comprehension and the students’ interpersonal intelligence contributed 4% to reading comprehension. The total contribution from both reading attitude and students’ interpersonal intelligence was 35.6%. Since the contribution of both variables was less than 100%, there was a possibility that the rest was influenced by another factor which was not investigated in this study.

**Conclusion**

The result of this study shows that there is a significant correlation between the students’ reading attitude and their reading comprehension. Therefore, teachers should encourage reading
attitude in terms of improving their reading comprehension. Students with positive reading attitudes strengthen their willingness to read for more reading experience which consequently influenced their reading comprehension. The students interpersonal intelligences also associated with their reading comprehension. Therefore, teachers need to consider students’ interpersonal intelligence in teaching program. This intelligence brings reading to another level. The students who have more percentage of interpersonal intelligence tend to insert empathy or feeling in a text, then reading not only for reading text but comprehending the text. Moreover, teachers and stakeholders should facilitate the students in order to establish reading attitude. For instance, by providing books in many kinds of genre and interest, journal article, magazines, newspaper and so forth. Next, in teaching and learning process, teachers guide students to read many kinds of reading resources. In brief, thus both interpersonal intelligence and reading attitude have impact in creating teaching learning of reading becomes meaningful by not only reading the surface of the text, but comprehending the reading text.

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Narrative Protocols, Dialogic Imagination and Identity Contestation: A Critique of a Prescribed English Literature Curriculum

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Abstract:
A critique of the prescribed Anglo-American canon for Jordanian Universities, this article utilises narrative protocols and storytelling juxtaposed against my own literary education and a former student of mine. It examines how lived experiences, identity contestations and reconciliations are reflected and reinforced in a dialogic exchange with the study of English literature at undergraduate, graduate levels as well as while teaching. In the ‘New Times’ of cyberspaces and the Internet accretion, the data used in this study is gathered through email and Facebook message exchange between a former student of mine and myself. After first introducing the English literary curriculum used in Jordanian universities, this article offers a critique of the canon pointing out that the study of English literature. As traditionally conceived in these universities, this tradition reinforces Eurocentrism, monolithic, elitism and particularly, and for the purpose of this article, in the ways it is disseminated, it signifies relations of power in the academy. It further shows how the subject-positions of students of English in this context are contested between repulsion, conformity, and when textual cultural representations are at stake, they pass through a process of an ‘imbibing’ construction of identity that reconciles warring sentiments of love and agony. The paper concludes by reminding literature educators that some students bring profound experiences of anguish and identity contestation with them to the literature classroom, and that it is therefore our responsibility to challenge the hegemonic and essentialised ideologies and practices informed by the adoption, perpetuation and dissemination of the literary canon in these educational contexts.

Key words: Arab World Literary Education, Anglo-American Literary Canon, Critical Pedagogy, Identity Construction, Literary Criticism
Locus of enunciation
At times, personal reflections and narratives might mount up as an emancipatory domineering force, when someone just becomes aware of the demoralising experience of having read about his/her identity as the ‘other’ to a corpus of canonised, and to far extent, colonialist apparatuses of English literary texts. Although the trajectory of my personal, academic and professional life has prepared me to challenge the dominant assumptions about the representativeness of the prescribed literary canon, until this point, there is little in my educational and professional experiences have changed. Probably, like many others passing through similar experiences, I feel the demand to confront the fury and agony while revealing my literary education: to interrogate poetry from antiquity; to remember to read with a 21st – century critical intellect; to remember how, those who spent their life time constructing their emancipatory projects, have provided us with tools to deconstruct the essentialist and monolithic tendencies of the ‘authoritative literary text’; to reconcile with the ‘towness’ of our identity, and, hence, to offer carrying hands to those students who are intensely driven to read, to write, to learn, to reason, to make assumption about the world and about themselves, to critique, and to be ‘successful’ in doing their English literature.

Additionally, this personal narrative aims to confront the pedagogical violence [strictly emphasised] in the curricular canon. In so doing, my outlook is to subdue the misrepresentations and the making of the imaginary ‘other’ to be internalised and ‘normalised’ by our students. We need to balance our curiosity about how we, professors of English, should work within and against such curricula in order to delight the beauty of centuries of the English literary text without perpetuating monolithic myths. In short, through this article, aims to set out an emancipatory project; how to open canons; how to negotiate with identity construction (Abu-Shomar, 2012) while doing English that is over strict and conservative, “from Beowulf to Virginia Wolf” (Hall, 2005); how to educate with ‘hope’ (Freire, 1989); and how to be crossing borders (Giroux, 1992).

The Context of curricular literary canons
For an understanding of the current status of the curricular canon in the English departments in most Arab World countries, 17 English programmes were reviewed, and strikingly found that 92% of the selected periods and genre are either British or American literatures. In addition to this, in most of the reviewed plans, the names of the courses are quite similar. For example, 10 out of 17 universities share exactly courses including Introduction (or survey) to English (British) Literature, Introduction(or survey) to American Literature, English (British) Literature Until 1660, American Literature Until 1800, English (British) Literature from 1660 to 1798, Nineteenth-century English (British) Literature, Nineteenth-century American Literature, Shakespeare (share in all the reviewed plans), The English (British) Novel, The American Novel, Victorian Poetry, Romantic Poetry. The remaining varying courses also reflect the Anglo-American tradition. Examples of these courses are Rise of British Prose, British Prose 1830-1830, Modern American Prose, Contemporary British and American Prose, Medieval English Poetry, Poetry from the Romantic Per. to the 18th century, Shakespeare and the Renaissance and Modern British and American Drama. Only 8 out of 17 plans include only one course World Literatures, with varying names.

As can be seen in the above survey, the Anglo-American literary tradition dominates the English literature plans in most of the English departments in the Arab World. The irony is that
unlike most English Department in the ‘centre’, most Arab World English departments are staffed with Anglo-American curricular canon. Zughoul (1986) examines the structure of English departments in ‘Third World’ universities including their curricula, objectives, policies, – concludes that the adopted tradition lacks a complete covering of literatures written in English. Instead,

the offerings typically include such titles as medieval literature, English poetry from Chaucer to Milton, Shakespeare, poetry from Dryden to the present, metaphysical poetry, Renaissance drama, Victorian literature, Romantics, Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, seventeenth-century English literature (p. 10).

Zughoul argues that such a tradition, which aims to ‘broaden the intellectual horizons of the students and to sharpen their sensibilities’, has served as a theoretical framework for teaching literature in the university systems in ‘Third World’ countries. Such a tradition is deeply rooted in what Mathieson (as cited in Zughoul, 1986, p. 12) calls ‘the Victorian educators tradition’ which believes in the ‘character building powers of the classical English curriculum’, where the study of these literatures or classics becomes not just a subject for academic study, but one of the chief temples of the human spirit, in which all should worship. Such a tradition is imported in its totality without considering the cultural, social, and moral backgrounds of the host context.

Challenging such an ‘institutional culture’, according to Zughoul’ (1986) is far from easy. Within the understanding of the institutional cultural capital that seeks to maintain its power, any attempt to change “could be difficult and slow paced because a whole generation of old-timers running those institutions may feel more secure with the established patterns” (p. 16). Yet, challenging such traditions is not impossible; it is a task that prioritises a ‘discursive practice’ that espouses all forms of knowledge as valid. However, in so doing, the challenge should be first directed to those in power (i.e. the institutional class). Bordie (as cited in Zughoul, p. 16) points out that it is time for that old-fashioned and powerful class to realise that the application of old, somewhat stereotyped procedures to existing situations is not likely to lead to meaningful or beneficial solutions if only because older procedures have been superseded by procedures which relate directly to present day needs, [since] solving today’s problems with yesterday’s answers is what has gotten us into the bind we are in now.

Under the influence of a ‘globalised world ideology’ (Zughoul, 1999), institutional models, such as those in Jordan, experience a flow from the centre to the periphery, where the latter is dependent on the experience and the aids of those of the former, they are a replica of the centre. Schiller (quoted in Zughoul, 1999, p. 4) affirms that:

cultural imperialism is the sum of processes by which a society is brought into the modern world system and how its dominating stratum is attracted, pressured, forced and sometimes bribed into shaping social institutions to correspond to, or even promote, the values and structures of the dominating centre of the system.

Specifically, as English literature has become entrenched as an academic subject at post-colonial universities, such as those in Jordan where 95% of the courses in the English department are listed are Anglo-American (Elhaija, 2004), the study of literature has turned out to be a ‘counterfeit’ of the high cultural approach of those in the West. Paradoxically, while literary study at the centre today has overthrown such an approach, post-colonial institutions continue not only to pronounce the canon as an irrefutable entity of adoption, but also propagate its
everlasting value. They continue to rehearse a ‘colonial ideology’ that seeks to perpetuate its cultural products as having a taken-for-granted significance. Ashcroft et al. (1989) maintain that proponents of English as a discipline linked its methodology to that of the Classics, with its emphasis on scholarship, philology, and historical study – the fixing of texts in historical time and the perpetual search for the determinants of a single, unified, and agreed meaning (p. 3).

In these terms, the context of Arab curricular canon be understood, an over conservative and strict representing a ‘long tradition’ of hegemonic practice that not only disadvantage students of English, but also perpetuates an essentialised construction of relation of perceived power. To probe into an interrogation of such a tradition on the identity of English learners, I use story-telling and narrative methodological approach to construe a critique of the Arab English canons

Method
In a postmodernist world, social media and cyber culture world, research have witnessed radical shifts from traditions to novelties, which have attested their trustworthiness, responsibility and credibility as well as the morality of knowledge-making. The claim for knowledge provided in this article draws on personal narratives through email exchange between me and my former undergraduate student seven years ago, and who is now preparing defend her master degree thesis. Upon my graduation, I took a teaching position in a Jordanian university very similar to the one I received my bachelor and master degrees. Now after 22 years of leaving university with bachelor degree of English, I was staggered to see that the curricular canon I studied remains the same. I taught for only one semester and left the country to each in another university in the region. The email and Facebook correspondences with my former student started when she sent me asking for assistance to help her deciding which track (linguistics, translation or literature) to choose for her graduate study. Although my literary instinct could push me to tell her to choose literature, I left it upon her to decide for herself, and she selected the literature track. Since then, both have exchanged emails discussing her education wherein we divulged our educational concerns and views of the prescribed literary canon. After one year of correspondence, a huge body of knowledge (data) has been stored in my email in a form of personal narratives, stories, reflections, discussions, textual analyses, critical views of adopted institutional policies among many other topics. For an interpretation of these narratives, and counternarratives, an amalgam of outlooks have emerged: on the one hand, those personal narratives are used to construct knowledge through which the current English literary tradition is perceived as a sources of ‘authoritative texts’ (Said, 1983) through which the students are degraded victimised, muted, normalised and imbibed in channels not of their own selections. The counternarratives, on the other hand, are the ones of resistance, dissent and survival, the ones emerged when these narratives are challenged and defied. This is how I obtained data, and how I used it in this article.

Narrative technique in social research and in critical inquiry in particular, has been gaining momentum (Polkinghorne, 1988; Booth & Booth, 1996; Emden, 1998; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Baynham, 2003; Phillion and He, 2010). Its impetus has been associated with critical strands of thought such as the growing frustration over the problem of the 'disappearing individual' in social research (Whittemore et al., 1986). As Gone et al. (1999) argue, "personal narrative is a privileged site for the investigation of cultural identity and its construction" (p.
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371). It also emerged as a reaction against the ‘over-determined' view of reality brought by methods that impose order on a messy world (Faraday and Plummer, 1997). In a post-positivist tradition, it appeared as a "creeping disenchantment with research that subordinates the realm of personal experience to the quest for generalisation" (Abrams, quoted in Booth and Booth, 1996, p. 19).

Additionally, life histories, autobiographical or biographical, testimonial, confessional, diarist, written or performed orally, have been referred to as the ‘common denominator’ in social science because our customary framework for analysing other is: “In what way is this person like, or unlike myself?” (Frank, 1979, p. 73). When we read or listen to an account of another’s life, we compare ourselves with that representation, looking for similarities and resonances or dissimilarities, trying to make sense of that person’s life and actions, and of our own. In this way, life history is a particular type of case study (see Yin, 1994; Stake, 1995), in which individuals’ understandings and resolutions of a phenomenon (in this case, the study of identity construction as related to English literature) are privileged over the phenomenon itself. In other words, the truth that life-history narrators tell “can be quite different from the ‘historical truth’ of what happened in their lives, but nevertheless, it has a force in their attitudes and actions” (Soence, cited in Measor & Sikes, p. 224).

To achieve these ends, life history may employ narrated accounts of a life; interview data; and available documents; third party interviews; reference and comparisons to other research; and analysis in order to produce texts that are inclusive of marginalised voices, that allow for comprehensiveness reinterpretation, which are historically contextualised, and that are invitational to readers (Kouritzin, 2000). In this article, I have used written narratives as informed by documents, third-party interviews, comparisons and analysis. I have constructed a narrative that is just one account of my life, told at a particular time, in a particular location, for particular audience, with particular interest in mind, and, in this way, constituting a “briefer, more focused biography” (Smith, 1994, p. 287). Readers must also bear in mind that the experiences I divulge in this article are those that I feel are germane to this topic, and those that am prepared to make public; moreover, my use of these stories in another setting would be different. And, because we are all living in the midst of yet-to-be-completed stories in which we negotiate the boundaries between our multiple selves and our multiple ideal selves, against the backdrop of an imagined audience’s multiple selves, we cannot expect any life story to be complete, rounded, final, or in any other sense finished. In other words, this story invites dissent.

More importantly, I see personal narrative and story-telling as an emancipatory approach in which we unfolded ourselves while narrating our personal and academic experience. McEwan (1997) argues that personal narratives used in research could have two functions: coercive and emancipatory. While the first is persuasive and seeks to constrain the belief, the second, is expressive and offers processes for creating new meanings. However, for the latter to be emancipatory, one should understand the context in which narratives arise. The current narratives emerged in a context of story-telling; a context was carefully crafted to fulfil an emancipatory aim. My friend and student and I through our exchange of our life stories have one key purpose of pursuing issues around our literary education and to provide intellectual and moral support to each other. This 'authentic conversation' (Florio-Runae& Clark, 1993) was a genre of social and intellectual work that was accomplished by means of story and personal narrative, and conducted in an atmosphere of safety, trust, and care between people who share a common ground and to whom it was clear that everyone in the group has something to offer and
something to learn (Rust, 2002). In this sense, our narratives would not be distorted by fear of negative consequences regarding what is said. These conversations and stories were satisfying both as ends in themselves and as means to better understanding and for providing solutions of the current situation (Rust, 2002).

**Vignettes**

In her justification of her choice of studying English literature, and articulating her understanding of the notion of literature, Bothaina wrote:

... Literature usually reflects the society, its ideas culture aspirations. Sometimes it appraises economic or political systems of societies, but no one can deny the fact that literature is interesting and reading literary texts is fascinating experience. I mean when I read literature I enjoy its aesthetic value, its language, imagery, metaphors. I also read it to explore other cultures. I think literature is an outlet of the nation’s thought; it is a window to know how others think, especially how writers depict their nations and the circumstances around him and so on.

The author replied:

For me, literature is a special kind of reality; it optimises the human condition throughout history. It takes me to a synchronic and diachronic journey across time and space. During my BA and MA, it was quite possible that I lived in the texts and in several occasions, I travel in their journey and followed the trajectory they draw. Now, things have changed a lot since those earlier days.

Bothaina: I don’t care for the historical knowledge, especially when it is not related to me

**The author:** do you think that literature reflects history?

Bothaina: yes, but with an added point of view.

The relationship we (Bothaina and I) have established between literature and ourselves suggests informed realisations both as political versus apolitical. The articulation of this relation as antithesis to the modernist view of literature that holds literary meanings to transcend its locality; time or space suggests perceptible resistance to the claims of universality. The relationship also enunciates a reversal conceptualisation to canonical assumptions of English literature as representative of human conditions (Author, 2013b). It seems that the relationship between the English Anglo-American literary canon and its readers in the post-colonial world provokes antagonist sentiments. It becomes a disclosure of the role of literature as a critique of political and economic systems of societies attesting a role of literature as uninterrupted critique of modernist systems (Loomba, 1998). Nonetheless, this does not deny the value of literature as being interesting to read and as a source of enjoyment. Outstanding the apparent antagonisms between our ‘enunciations’, it seems we endorse a Foucauldian’s sense of literature as ‘discursive practice’ where truth about joy and critique could be bracketed (quoted in Eagleton, 1996).

Meanwhile, Bothaina’s realisation of literature as an outlet of the nation’s thoughts and her emphasis of the ways writers depict circumstances around them evince another articulation of literature as domineering 'social action' (Eagleton, 1996), which places the idea of the universality of canonised literature under pressure. Specifically, her emphasis of the particular ways writers depict circumstances around them implies ‘worldly’ (Said, 1983) critique of the
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Text. To Said, the ‘worldliness’ of the text is located in its ‘materialistic’ context, its social, political, institutional, and cultural contexts. Said argues that the text is “a web of affiliations with the world” (1983, p. 106), that is, meanings are not limited to a text or its intrinsic structure (in a structuralist sense) or deferred (in poststructuralist sense), but rather are located in the materialistic world from which the text emerges. The materiality of the text for Said could be revealed through several ways: “the way in which the text becomes a monument; a cultural object sought after, fought over, possessed, rejected, or achieved in time” (Said, p. 108).

Ultimately, the argument is that readers similar to Bothaina, embrace the worldliness of the text as an ongoing on and engrossed concern with the materiality of the text’s origin, where the reality of text itself is embedded in the very materiality of the matters of which it speaks including disposition, injustice, marginality, subjection that the hegemony and monolith of the prescribed Anglo-American canon is burdened with.

Linking this view to her remark about literature as an outlet of the nation’s thought suggests a conceptualisation of literature as subservient to social and cultural ‘beliefs’ that are contingent upon locality, time, and place. It also underpins a realisation of literature that goes beyond the humanist and apolitical assumptions that literary meanings are either too personal or too universal, into more socially and culturally context-dependant meanings. Further to this, Bothaina’s elaboration regarding the relationship between literature and history, but with an added point of view accentuates her empathetic standpoint of literature as an encompassing ‘ideological apparatus’ (Abu-Shomar, 2013b), wherein reality that the text imposes on the reader a set of ‘culturally informed’ presumptions. Arguably, such a conceptualisation reconstructs the humanist claims of The Anglo-American literary canon as an apolitical discourse of knowledge, and hence a critique of the ‘authority’ of Eurocentric and North American texts, or, to use Said’s words “the authorial text” (1983). The authorial text, as Said puts it, the tradition of the authoritative text and its informed representational devices as well as their utilisation at post-colonial sites project strategic practices that defy the formation of discourses of resistance. Said (1978) reminds us of what he rightly calls "representational devices", the ideological incorporation and production of literary texts, has shaped discourses of power relations.

Literature, on the other hand, is negotiated as the highest type of writing which brings about ever renewed meanings wherein the relationship between the reader and the text is constructed dialogically and critically.

Bothaina wrote:

My idea of literature is that it is the highest type of writing whether it is poetry or prose. It is not direct, but always figurative and meanings are imbedded. Literature for me is a lifelong-learning process; the numberless experiences that I gained from reading different texts and even in the same text I read it over again and again because I think every time I read the text, I gain another meaning, and every reading gives me a new experience.

The author replied:

We people students of literature (or precisely, English Literature) imbibe our personal and intellectual experiences in the texts we read, or sometimes we imbibe the text in our own experiences. For me, this process of imbibing is something I call a ‘survival strategy’. When I was an undergraduate student, I liked to carry the Norton Anthology of American Literature around most of the time. I though then that this will empower me when people see me carrying
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this giant book around most of the time. But funny things happen to me all the time, people think that this book is a dictionary, and for me carrying a dictionary around all the time means that I am not competent in English and I need to refer to a dictionary. Believe it, this was causing me some pain and I had to explain it to those who saw it that it is not a dictionary ... (Facebook communication).

Bothaina’s acumen of literature evinces the plurality and dynamicity of ‘knowledge’ that could be inferred from literary texts. On the one hand, Bothaina takes up the literary discourse as different from ‘ordinary language’ by endorsing its figurative, indirect and embedded meanings. Although her view echoes those formalist approaches to literature, I recognise in Bothaina’s comment an opinion that aims to distinguish literary meanings from scientific ones in terms of their ‘objectivity’. This, on the other hand, becomes evident through her account of arriving at different meanings each time she reads the text. An identification of the literary paradigm, therefore, requires reconsideration of the subject/object relation as well as of the methods that mediate between the two while inferring literary meanings, which suggests liability of the claim of the literary text as self-defining and a unified object sufficient in itself (Easthope, 1991).

More importantly however this particular exchange of both of us touches upon our identity construction process. A process that the corpus of literature we have in mind and currently talk about has its authority upon us; it informs our epistemological perceptions and, to me, an ontological construction of how I used to perceive myself during my graduate days. During my undergraduate days, I estimated that my study of English literature would haul me up the ladder to complete social acceptance, even admiration, if I identified myself with the big anthologies of English literature. To me, doing English then was not just a mere specialisation, but also a survival strategy through which I was devoured to ingest my academic and social identity as a student of English literature. In my interpersonal relations, I created an ‘imagined’ class struggle that even smattering in these anthologies can provide. I rolled over everything that was English escaping (or reconstructing) social constitutions that are not English. Yet, the effect of this has been profound of what yet-to-come; I, Pygmalion-like, performed English literature creating my own ‘theatrical realties’; between the artificiality of the imaginary world created by the text and the ‘other’ reality which I strived to distance myself from. The metaphoric existence abetted by the survival strategies ‘empowered’ me to endure the journey into graduate studies in English.

This is not a matchless experience; Bothaina’s literary education, as she puts it, involves sentiments of intimacy with text, authors and characters:

I build my own meanings from the literary work and make it matching my life. When I read “Passage to India”, I wrote down a quotation I always use it in my life: [life never gives us what we want at the moment we consider appropriate]/ I always search for something like that to help me in my life.... When I read Pamela by Richardson, every time I want just put the novel aside and start with another material but I can’t really leave it because I find in the character of Pamela a similarity between her and myself... In “Sense and Sensibility”, the daughters Eleanor and Marian in the way of their thinking, I compare myself and my elder sister, I compare how she has more sense than I; I tend to be more emotional. The novel taught me how to be patient and to recognise things logically for instance...Even the myths of antiquity, “The Midair” by Euripides, if you take some quotations they are applied to our lives. I always take some quotation and give to my sister and say: ‘Oh my God, even though we have quarrel between Jason and his
wife we still listen to the same words to the same way of quarrelling between any husband and his wife, so you can’t call it just reflecting the Greek civilisation; it is just universal (Facebook communication).

The internalisation of literary meanings becomes a salient feature of Bothaina’s discourse and narratives; literature, or more precisely, canonised literary texts, and held as an ‘educator’ that has significant bearings on readers’ personal lives. In her narratives, Bothaina seeks identifying meanings in literary texts she studied through which she could identify herself with, or in Kouritzin’s (2004) words, reflecting on her undergraduate literary experience: “I learned to identify with statements made by people at different points in history from different social classes… I thought I learned to be a humanist. I thought I ‘understood’ something deeper and more powerful than my life” (p. 191). Within such phrases, I realise Bothaina’s responses an evocation of literary meanings, through which she transforms into her own or she is transformed by these meanings or both. Therefore, students of English who share the power and passion of literary meanings in “the moment of shared insight, in the moments when both [sensual] and intimate thoughts and ideas are formed and given birth, it is so tempting to fuse … [Forster’s “life never gives us what we want at the moment we consider appropriate”] with someone younger who flails and flames more strongly than ourselves and thus find immortality” (p. 206). I recognise these responses in the words of an educator’s privileged position saying: “my students will do anything for me, to see what I see, and to know what I know” (ibid, p. 206). But others would read Forster’s remark “life never gives...” differently. For example, Buzard (1988) reads this line as expressing “Adela Quested’s desire to see the ‘real India’ [which] carries sexual overtones reminiscent of those found in Lucy Honeychurch’s situation, and it brings her into a contact with the alien that takes the form of another projected, liberating rape (which, like other Forster heroines, she both desires and fears). She flees madly through some cactus – a detail that has immediate and familiar results, for it allows Forster to linger over the vision of her body as it lies tortured by a thousand penetrations” (p. 176).

Bothaina’s experience of reading literature in this ‘particular’ passionate way is similar to most of the students I worked with. Remarks such as I live literature, I’m fond of literature, and I’m passionate about literature are recurrent phrases in the students’ discourses, especially female ones I have taught. Although Bothaina’s reflections could be argued from several perspectives, I take up the argument that although the these reflections demonstrate resistance to canonical ideological assumptions, in ways they tend to take on new subjectivities and positionalities they appear to ‘imbibe’ the ‘norms’ and values associated with canonical textual meanings (Zubair, 2006). This is to suggest that the students’ exposure to English literature underpins what Hall (2005) calls the emergence of ‘literature as social practice’, where students are viewed as social agents who turn to literature to help them in larger purposes in life, such as reflecting on their identities and possibilities for moral and emotional engagements. However, following such an approach within the repertoire of post-colonial theory and feminist pedagogy (these responses are mostly evident in the female students’ reflections), where students identify themselves with imaginary characters in literary texts at this particular time of their life, raises the issue of the hegemonic and dominant assumptions regarding the representativeness of the English literary canon. For students to be evoked by canonical authors from different times and sensibilities is what underlies the power of the canon to ‘naturalise’ and ‘legitimise’ subordinates’ sentiments through a process of ‘interpellation’ (Ashcroft et al., 2000) where those subjects are constructed by particular ideological and discursive operations.
In fact, our narratives regarding English literature covers multitude of topics and is stretched out in several directions; what might be identified as ‘approaching the literary text’ is another salient topic we discoursed. Two different approaches to the literary texts could be identified in terms of how we negotiated the cultural constructs of these texts. On the one hand, the beauty of the literary discourse is prioritised in terms of its metaphorical, aesthetic and artistic aspects. Valuing these aspects is rationalised on the basis that literature is an elevated human discourse, and that its value should not be reduced to its cultural meanings. In other words, textual meanings are internalised as universal truths surpassing their localities, political and ideological assumptions both diachronically and synchronically; timeless Hellenistic meanings transcending time and space. In our dialogue (or, probably, contesting argument) I realise how Bothaina’s narratives could demonstrate remarkable tolerance for textual meanings that (mis)represent the lives of ‘Other’ groups of people, or cultures (loosely defined). Within this tradition of interpreting English literatures, one would exhibit accentuated tolerance to ‘cultural’ constructs these texts are burdened with, and, the result is espousing these texts as a source of wisdom and universal moral values (AbuHilal & Abu-Shomar, 2014).

Nonetheless, and coming from an ‘ideological’ perspective, I would contest with these assumptions. Ascribing to post-colonial discourse, I have become sensitive to textual ‘cultural’ representations, and thus cannot simply conform to textual aesthetic aspects when cultural constructs are at stake.

Bothaina wrote:

_You know literary works are beautiful. The music, intonation, and metaphor are beautiful elements. The style writers use is elevated and more beautiful than any other discourse; when reading literature, I feel overwhelmed. After all, I believe that art is for learning. When I read literature, I always read between lines so that I can analyse the text on the basis of the psychology of the writer; what’s his position. I try to find positive ideas that help me to get through the text. For instance, when I read a text that misrepresents our culture, I should ask myself ‘why?’ before judging that text. While others may misjudge or undervalue that text, I think this it is unfair to deal with literature like this._

Whether to take up literature as a piece of art, enjoying its language, metaphors, and aesthetic value or to reconsider literary texts in terms of their cultural constructs was a topic we discussed in our reflections on the possible ways to approach the text. In her narrative, Bothaina embraces literary language, images, music, and etc. It is tempting to interpret such an attitude as an idealisation of the aesthetic value of literature in a modernist sense, hence, apolitical and humanist approaches to literature. However, in my reading Bothaina’s accounts, I recognise several dialogic elements in the ways her relationship with the text is constructed. First, Bothaina adopts a dialogic interaction with the text in the ways she transcends dualistic and dichotomous oppositions into assuming the right for textual meanings as an ‘Other’ having the right to be voiced, represented, and acknowledged. She gives equal, ‘dialogical attention’ (Author, 2013c) to her own voice and the voice of the text; such a mode of textual interaction promotes a critical reflection on the process of ‘difference’ exploration. Therefore, readers’ subject positions become ‘double-voiced’ or ‘constructing the ‘self’ in relation’ instead of ‘single-voiced’ or expressing ‘adherence of the ‘self’ viewpoint’ while realising textual ideas (Dunlop, 1999). Thus, in their search for an understanding of the writers’ psychology and position, dialogic
readers such as Bothaina would attain for an exchange of voices rather than offering antithesis to a given thesis or an answer to a proposed question (Bialostosky, 1986).

Second, Bothaina’s search for elements in and beyond the text registers another dialogical element in terms discovering the experience of the cultural context behind the text that gives the words their validity and meaning, through which she could explore the ‘borderland’ of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ represented by textual meanings (Moore, 1994). Therefore, acknowledging the psychological and cultural positions of textual ideas enables ‘third-space positioning’ which surpasses dialectic binaries into a ‘multi-dimensional’ field that transcends and infuses the text in such a way readers get through a complex process of cultural exchange instead of binary absorption between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ where ‘culture’ operates outside the exchange since the aim turns into ‘dialogic survival’ rather than ‘dialectic synthesis’ (Dunlop, 1999). Third, the primacy of context and the impossibility of textual resolution are implied in Bothaina’s approach to valuing the text. This appears not only in her search for wider contextual elements, but also in the ways she understands and evaluates the text in terms of these elements. She gains deeper knowledge about textual background and practices critical reflexivity, which appears in her remark I should ask myself ‘why’. Islam participates in a genre of dialogic reading that shifts into not only a participatory epistemology, but also contextual exchange. As such, the reader and the text turn into dialogic interlocutors where readers and ideas could discover mutual oppositions and affinities.

The author replied:

*I may belong to those people who read while issues of textual representations (or more precisely, misrepresentations) are always in the backdrop of their minds. When I realise that there is something insulting about Islam and the group of people whom I belong to, I develop negative position to the text. If for example I see something insulting Islam, this affects all my reading of the text, for example, I read Frankenstein which is completely far from issues related to cultural representation, you know, it is a horror story about a monster..., but in chapter 14, I spotted an insult to our prophet Muhammad, so this affected my reception of the novel, and would build my whole reading on this particular issue. Unfortunately, the canon we study is loaded with such misrepresentations.*

It goes without saying that sensitivity to cultural misrepresentations is most expected from a scholar whose area of expertise is post-colonial and cultural studies. Adopting the tradition of cultural criticism, the work of scholars such as Said (1994) Boehmer (2005), Loomba (2005), Viswanathan (1987) and Mukherjee (1995) would primarily put under scrutiny issues of cultural representation. These scholars among many others have produced a huge corpus of literary criticism whose main focus is cultural and political criticism. In this line of thought, I have consciously or unconsciously developed a particular reading of the text, one that accentuates the cultural aspects of the literary texts as a key issue in textual value-judgment, which impedes ‘objective’ reading of the text. Juxtaposing the two positions, Bothaina’s and mine, of how we come to read and value the text, each may represent a discrete case. Whereas, Bothaina’s approach embodies the case of a dialogic reader, mine articulates what Eagleton (1996) calls ‘unconscious consensus valuation’ that underlies social ‘ideologies’ in literary value judgement. Ideology in taking up or rejecting the work, according to Eagleton, is not simply what is entrenched as unconscious believe that people hold, it is however those modes of feelings, valuing, perceiving and believing which have some kind of relation to social power.
Therefore it becomes the strong ties of cultural and social commitment that calls readers, like myself, to give prominence to an ideological critique of the text. It is however worth emphasising that this interpretation is not an argument against ideological positions, but rather, an argument which stresses the need to reconsider textual misrepresentations of the culture of the ‘Other’ in terms of the ways they are approached in the literatures classroom. Furthermore, when the line between personal and professional attitudes of the text becomes blurring, any apolitical or ‘objective’ reading of literature would be not possible.

The author wrote:

*I think literary discourse is different from any other in terms of how it constructs its own reality and representation of the human condition. We need to be objective in the discourse of science disciplines, say medical or engineering, but objectivity in the way we consider literary discourse is quite not possible. This is because when we read literature we understand it in our own ways, there is culture involved and our own ideas are reflected on what we read. So, if you seek objectivity, it is not what literature is, it is an experience that is understood by our own judgement and the involvement of our own culture, ideas, personality with what we read.*

The claim is cultural and personal involvement while reading literary texts can lead to attaining a multiplicity of textual interpretations. It could also be recognised as an alternative participatory and resistant approach working against universalistic conceptual frameworks that call for monolithic and homogenising approaches to understanding literary meanings. I realise this position as a resisting one to ‘aesthetic universalism’ that ignores the particular, different, and other culturally specific modes and codes of reading the text (Moore, 1994). This position also suggests that meanings cannot reside in the text, but are transient and create a ‘temporary retrospective fixing’ (Derrida, 1994). I recognise in this approach a different reality created by a different set of relationships with the text, where variability of the possible textual meanings can be made in relation to particular cultural and personal involvement with that text. Therefore, apolitical and objective approaches where the reader is fully complicit in the textual assumptions are not what literature should be. Instead literature is the experience one understands through personal and cultural engagement.

In addition to our discussion or narratives regarding the English literary canon we studied, we also rambled to talk about how the majority of professors of English literature disseminate these literatures to their students. Recalling our undergraduate literary education, our reflections on the institutional practices seem to move around one major theme that could be encapsulated in Kouritzin’s (2004) evocation of her (Literature 12) teacher’s statement: “I am the teacher and you are the students. I know something and you know nothing. I am going to give that knowledge to you” (p. 190). During those times, our deep down feelings of lacking knowledge and inability to read and interpret literary texts is augmented by our instructors’ practices and statements regarding the ways a literary text should be approached.

In the following passage, Bothaina recalls how she used to put her faith in on her instructor’s opinion and perceives herself as unable to *understand* literary texts and hence not in a position to provide a point of view of literature:

*I think we were not in the position to say our point of view of literature because we didn’t have enough experience about literature ... I read ‘Young Goodman Brown’ five times and I couldn’t*
understand it until my doctor told me it is about the puritans. I said in myself, yea, what would happen to me, if my doctor didn’t tell me what the idea is, how can I know by myself?

I recognise Bothaina’s reflections on her undergraduate literary education not only a position of powerless and marginalised learner in a system regimented in power relations, but also a conformity and assimilation of this position. During her undergraduate stage of studying a prescribed literary canon, she was made to believe that she lacks experience, knowledge, and ability to read and understand literature. This response in particular indicates that Bothaina and students alike are made to believe that the text holds a particular interpretation and thus one ‘truth’, which is waiting for an authorised professor to decipher and approve. Therefore, she does not know what would happen to her if her doctor did not tell her that ‘Young Goodman Brown’ is about Puritans. Such faith in her doctor’s ‘authorised’ interpretation raises an issue of the legitimacy of ‘knowledge’ that suppresses the learners’ voice. I recognise this claim to gain more validity when considering her analogy of doing literature in the following quote:

I read a story about a man who is very naïve, he is from the countryside and who is going to the city to his cousin, to work there, to get money, to get knowledge, to get something new, but he remains naïve, people always mock him during his journey. I think at […] University we are like this we are always affected by this statement said by our professors when they enter the classroom and they put the novel on the table and say “this is the masterpiece”. So, what is the effect of these words on us, I think that I have no choice for myself to say that’s a good or bad text.

Probably, this passage could tighten the claim that an institutional ‘culture’ in the current context not only perpetuates the canon as an ‘authorised’ source of knowledge, but also disseminates and propagates this ‘appropriate’ knowledge in the ways it encourages students to absorb a perception of themselves as naïve and unable to learn on their own. Yet, Bothaina realises how her educational experience turns her into a naïve seeker of knowledge and she challenges the assumptions that knowledge is a ‘thing’ a ‘product’ that is transformed into learners’ minds (Gilbert, 2005). Further to this, I understand his comment on his doctors’ behaviour towards the selection of certain texts as this is the masterpiece in Foucault’s (1983) words when warning against educational ideological apparatus and its distribution of knowledge, in what it permits and what it prevents. The students’ reflections on their literary education imply that educational systems are political systems that maintain or modify the appropriation of particular discourses, with the knowledge and the powers that carries them (ibid). In fact Bothaina’s evocation and narrative indicates a discourse of resistance and challenge to this institutional tradition. Recalling this experience from the past and introducing it as such now, she seems no longer complicit to such a tradition.

Last in our narratives, we sought to challenge this hegemonic institutional ‘culture’. In one of her messages, Bothaina, challenges Shakespeare’s location as a key figure in the students’ literature programme:

We have a course called ‘Shakespeare and the Renaissance’, the word ‘Renaissance’ may refer to all literatures at that time, let’s say it was a movement throughout Europe. Can we say that literature was only British during that time? Shakespeare is the only figure we studied and if they replaced one of his plays, they choose another of Shakespeare himself. So we ended up learning Shakespeare, not the Renaissance or any other literatures in the world.
This reflection of Bothaina registers some signs of challenge to the ways her literary education is perpetuated and nurtured in ‘authoritative’ and persona of a canonised syllabus. On the one hand, it points out that the literary tradition adopted in her programme revolves around certain literary figures who are located as key authors in the English literary canon where Shakespeare is positioned on the top of those figures. This emphasises that “the study of English literature, as traditionally conceived in high schools and universities, reinforces Eurocentrism, racism, […] and) elitism” (Kouritzin, 2004, p. 185). On the other hand, her response is suggestive of the ways the students realise their education as ‘an object of unquestioning reverence’ and as “a set of lived experiences and social practices developed within asymmetrical relations of power” (Bourdieu quoted in Giroux, 1992), which they feel a need to encounter. As such, these reflections on our literary education suggest a realisation of the ways this system holds the tradition of teaching English literature that ostensibly concern British persona, locations, cultures, and history as the best in art as the lasting values are those of the Englishman (McLeod, 2000).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have presented some critique of a prescribed literary syllabus by means of using a radical methodology of storytelling and narrative protocols. We know the power of literature especially for passionate learners that a bond of intimate relation is so easily confused with identity construction; of what we love and hate. In the moments of shared insights, we realise how our literary education with its nurturing, enveloping power and involvement with our subject-positions is both monolithic and hegemonic. When intimate thoughts and ideas are formed and given birth, it is so tempting to fuse in the imaginative realities of literary texts with passionate students flail and flame more that our personality to reconcile their agony and love of English literature.

In addition to offering a critique of canonicity, the paper contributes to a wider cultural debate by addressing and articulating the relationship between literature, culture, and education. It also raises educators’ critical awareness of cultural diversity, identity, and ‘self’ representation. Furthermore, it contributes to theory and research practice through its engagement and utilisation of radical critical research methodology. Through our dialogic narrative and personal engagements with our literary education, we enable a ‘Pedagogy of Tolerance’ that constitutes sites for both resistance and better understanding of the ‘self’s’ and ‘other’s’ authority over meanings. Additionally, this engagement provides an opportunity for students of English literature to examine and voice their opinions of various cultural constructions.

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References


**Narrative Protocols, Dialogic Imagination and Identity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
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The Importance of Prosody in a Proper English Pronunciation for EFL Learners

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Abstract
The present article deals with the acquisition of Received Pronunciation (RP) English prosodic features namely word- sentence stress and intonation by Algerian learners of English as a foreign language. It aims at identifying ways of helping learners achieve a good pronunciation through the mastery of these features. The work was based on data retrieved from the observation and study of 30 third year students of English at the University of Oran as they majored in BA English. The corpus was collected through recordings which were carried out on two phases, prior and after being taught the prosodic features and their rules in order to evaluate their pronunciation accuracy. Results were analyzed acoustically with Praat software (Boersma, 2001) and show that by placing stress and intonation patterns in the right place in words and utterances, 20% of students achieved nearly a prefect pronunciation, 46% clear and 33% understandable, suggesting that the aforementioned features play an important role in pronunciation accuracy and speech intelligibility. Based on these results the current study makes recommendations for prioritizing supra-segmental features in pronunciation teaching classes, and suggests real and computerized environments to assess students’ progress (Hardison, 2004).

Keywords: EFL Orani students, intonation, pronunciation, supra-segmental features, stress
Introduction

In the field of applied linguistics, pronunciation with its different aspects is considered as a subcategory of speaking skill and a central factor which contributes to intelligibility, yet its study has always been marginalized. In fact, Baker & Murphy (2011) recognize that “an overall neglect of pronunciation teaching has been observed in teacher preparation programs” (p. 30). This lack of awareness seems to have some influences on teachers, learners and to a lesser extent the development of English where this language has got the status of a foreign language. Algeria might be considered as an example in case.

It is found that, in our specific context- the English Department at the University of Oran and certainly in other academic environments in Algeria, teaching pronunciation is neglected while teaching grammar and vocabulary is important. (Lightbrown & Spada, 2006). This is generally based on the belief that pronunciation is just a pretty musical note used to make speech sound beautiful (Derwing & Munro, 2005, p.384). This restricted understanding of pronunciation leads to the neglect of teaching it properly. As a consequence, Algerian learners of English cannot develop and enhance their pronunciation skill in this language. It is precisely why the authors have decided to pay a special attention to pronunciation, stress and intonation in particular and interpret the correlation between the improvement of students’ intelligibility and pronunciation when using these supra-segmental features.

The present article focuses on two prosodic elements, stress and intonation. Its main objective is to interpret their impact on Algerian EFL students’ spontaneity in speech, intelligibility and communicative competence. Another objective is to investigate a possible correlation between prosodic features targeted lectures and pronunciation accuracy.

Literature review

Before the writers engage into the phases of their study, they thought it would be important to have a brief review of the literature on stress and intonation and the functions of these prosodic elements in speech.

The Function of Stress

In real life, stress generally refers to the worried or anxious situations that people suffer from 24hours a day; however, stress in linguistics is a means to reach a good pronunciation as well as to develop skills in communicative competence for EFL learners. This significant feature of English pronunciation generally refers to the emphasis that we put on certain syllables in a word and even in a sentence during the process of speaking. (Roach, 1991). Therefore the achievement of an accurate pronunciation and an intelligible communication requires appropriate use of stress patterns.

Actually, stress has a crucial role in the intelligibility of speech. To start with, placing stress patterns in the wrong place in both words in isolation and context may seriously impair meaning and understanding. In fact, according to Culter & Clifton study (1987), shifting stress position may not only compromise intelligibility, but also entail a change of vowel quality, as shown in this example WALlet waLLET -- /'wolit/ -- /wo'let/. Thus, misplacing stress can undoubtedly damage the global understanding of words.
It is also important to consider the psycholinguistic function of stress in speech processing. Grosjean & Gee (1987:148) discoverer that a listener can recognize a word in his mind only by hearing its stressed syllable. Hence, the latter is considered as a code that links directly to the word. Said differently, a stressed syllable guides the search of word in processing speech. For example; /hæ/ guides the listener for the search for the word (happy)/hæpiː/, as the syllable /næ/ for the word (international) /ɪntəˈnæʃənl/.

This suprasegmental feature appears to be an important element in determining the semantic and grammatical meaning of homophones. Its function is to distinguish between lexemes that have the same spelling while they are different in meaning when used in context. For instance, I present /preˈznt/ to you this present /ˈpreznt/. In this utterance, stress gives both grammatical and semantic functions of the word ‘present’. When stress is put on the first syllable, the word takes the function of a noun and means ‘gift’; however, when it is on the second one, the word functions as a verb and means ‘to give’.

The Function of Intonation

We may consider intonation as the backbone of English pronunciation (Bailey, 2005; McDonough & Shaw 2003; Cook 2001). It is an essential prosodic feature that plays an important role in all aspects of speech. Patel (2008) defines it as the melody of speech, where we study how the pitch of the voice rises and falls. This feature also carries different functions which contribute to the achievement of meaning and intelligibility in conversation. This point is sustained by Bolinger (1986) arguing that:

Intonation is important for who is speaking, for who will be taking the next turn, for how the act is to be understood (explanation, apology, challenge), for how the speaker will be evaluated (as an individual, as a native speaker, as a member of social class)—to mention only a few of the things that affect our roles as speakers and listeners. (p. 21).

This quotation embodies the view that intonation is a meaningful feature that has a role which is central in interactions. As a matter of fact, it carries different functions which are essential at determining the nature of a conversation and the meaning of an utterance. Intonation contours that characterize a stretch of an utterance are used to send specific signals that express various pieces of information which lighten the meaning of the message (explanation or apology for example), and give a clear image of the speaker’s identity and his intention (native or foreign speaker). Tench (1996:22) lists five major functions of intonation, which are:

1. Organization of information
   Organizing information in an utterance is seen as the most important function of intonation. In an utterance we can distinguish between two kinds of information, given (not important) and new (significant). These pieces of information are distinguished and determined by the use of pitch. English High pitch indicates that a syllable in a word is the most important and has a contrastive focus in an utterance; therefore, regarded as the new information. Below are examples illustrating this.
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John bought a red car. (Not David or Francis).

John bought a red car. (Not a blue or yellow one).

2. Realization of Communicative Functions

Intonation is able to modify the function of an utterance by altering a simple statement to a question, request or an order. For instance:

1- John is coming to Algeria. (Statement; falling intonation)
2- John is coming to Algeria? (Question; rising intonation)

We can notice from the above examples that both sentences are morpho-syntactically equivalent. Yet, if we use a falling intonation, a simple statement will be uttered; however, if we use a rising intonation keeping the same order of items, the utterance will be interpreted as a question.

3. Expression of attitudes

4. 

Intonation has an important role in expressing attitudes. Researchers try to make rules regarding the choice of tone that correspond to a particular attitude. For example

**Table 1. Examples of Expressing Attitudes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rise</td>
<td>-Encouraging</td>
<td>- It won’t /hurt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Listing</td>
<td>-Red/ blue/ yellow/ or \green.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Indication of Syntactic Structure

Intonation is used as a punctuation marker to indicate grammatical units in order to help the listener understand what is uttered. In example a, the pitch changes are wrongly used, thus the meaning of the sentence will be altered.

while EAting my DAD       my SISter and MOther were in the living room

while EAting               my DAD my SISter and MOther were in the living room

6. Discourse Function

Another important function of intonation is the regulation of discourse which leads to successful conversations. Actually, it regulates the flow of a conversation and its behaviour by indicating the beginning and the end of speaking, or turn taking process. For instance, low pitch, reduced loudness, and rallentando (lengthening of turn-final elements) indicate the end-of-turn in a conversation with an air of finality.

*It was very successful.*
In the above example we understand from the pitch changes (low pitch with lengthening) that the speaker has finished his utterance, and is ready to turn the floor to the hearer or somebody else.

**Research Methods**

**The Participants**

The present paper is based on a micro qualitative experimental research procedure administered to a sample of thirty students from the English department at the University of Oran, Algeria. These informants majored in BA English and seem to have a satisfactory command of English after a number of years studying this language. The participants’ ages vary from 21 to 25. The sample choice is a random one.

**Data Collection and Procedure**

The corpus of the study was collected through audio recordings which were carried out during two phases. The first phase is referred to as the diagnostic phase (before prosodic features targeted lectures); whereas, the second one is labeled the experimental phase (after prosodic features targeted lectures). The authors prepared three sentences containing different types of word stress, sentence stress and intonation to be read by the students and then recorded.

To examine the recordings, variables were proposed to detect and try to interpret the possible sources of pronunciation and intelligibility problems. These variables are mistakes that students may make when uttering. These are the following mistakes: 1. mispronunciation of sounds, 2. problems with word stress, 3. Difficulties in sentence stress 4. Inadequate loudness 5. problems with articulation 6. speed 7. tone level. Praat speech analyzer software was used in order to analyze acoustically the recordings.

The aim of the first recordings is to find out whether Algerian students of English have problems with stress and intonation. The writers hypothesize that the elicited sample are native speakers of Algerian Arabic. This language variety has a stress and intonation systems that is different from the English one. Subsequently, the purpose of the second recordings is to discover whether students improve their pronunciation when using the right stress and intonation contours and prove the sub-hypothesis of whether lectures in pronunciation are helpful to the improvement of students’ performance.

Before the writers started recording the respondents, each one of them was given three minutes for preparation in order to get familiar with the sentences. After this short period of time, the informants were recorded individually so that they would not be distracted by other students and be fully concentrated on the sentences.

**Results**

**The Results of the First Recordings**

After the first recordings were collected and analyzed. The findings are highlighted in a graph demonstrating the amount of mistakes made by the students. The different colours in the graph symbolize the variables: Word stress problems, sentence stress problems, tone level, sound mispronunciation, speed, inadequate loudness and problems with articulation.
Figure1. Diagnostic Phase Recordings

As shown in Figure1, it is clear that all the students have problems with supra-segmental features with differing levels. In nearly all cases they make mistakes when putting stress in the right place. Besides, they do not produce the correct tone level which leads to a wrong intonation of utterances. This might be interpreted by the difference between the Algerian Arabic and British English stress and intonation systems. Therefore, there also seem to have some kind of correlation between these supra-segmental features and students’ performance problems.

First, there seems to be a general tendency in the sample that most of the students’ pronunciation performance is relatively low. The three sentences are very easy to read with no difficult words. The first two sentences have exclamation mark which facilitates or predicts the right tone which helps detect the right stress in the sentence. However, the informants did not seem to use this key and some of them didn’t even notice it. We may suggest that students’ performance might be challenged by anxiety in addition to the prosodic features.

The findings of this analysis prove that the most significant threat to intelligibility is posed by intonation and stress errors. The highest percentages are given to tone level, sentence stress and word stress mistakes, where 76% of the students made tone level mistakes. For instance, student26 did not use the needed falling tone at the end of the exclamation utterance; instead he used a level tone. As a result, her/his speech sounds monotonous.
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Table2. Intonation mistake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informants</th>
<th>Correct Articulation</th>
<th>Wrong Articulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student26</td>
<td>You look TERRIBLE!</td>
<td>You look terrible!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, 63% of the students made word stress mistakes and 73% sentence stress. Some of them put the stress in the wrong word or syllable and others didn’t use it at all. It is also important to note that the percentages of students making tone level and sentence stress mistakes are approximately the same, accounting for 73% sentence stress, and 76% tone level mistakes. We might interpret that sentences stress (tonic stress) is a key element to determine where to put the right tone level.

Second, in addition to stress mistakes, 43% of students had troubles with loudness. Some of them used it when not necessary; student 2 and others avoided it completely. This might have resulted in an influence in their intonation, pronunciation and intelligibility. In addition, 40% of the students mispronounced some phonemes. This could be related to the influence of their mother tongue sound system. For instance, some of them troubled pronouncing the /ŋ/ sound in working, because /ŋ/ sound does not occur in Algerian Arabic dialect, it is imitated and replaced by /nk/ or /ng/. They have also problems of final ed. For example, student 1 pronounced the word ‘Crashed’ /kræʃt/ as /kræʃɪd/. However, this variable does not considerably affect their intelligibility or pronunciation. This is followed with articulation mistakes with 36%. Some students tended not to articulate words correctly especially when reading the second sentence. Others seemed to swallow some phonemes and this leads to a mispronunciation of phonemes and the whole word. Look at these examples:

Table3. Articulation errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informants</th>
<th>Articulation Errors</th>
<th>The nature of the error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student7</td>
<td>/'kræʃt/</td>
<td>Omission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student28</td>
<td>/iːtn /</td>
<td>/'iːtən/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, only 20% of students’ speed was not constant. Some of them read the sentences too quickly and others were too slow. This variable influences their rhythm and intonation, because when reading slowly the sentences, in particular exclamatory ones, rhythm seems to be somehow biased; therefore, the occurrence of rise and fall is not respected.

In conclusion to the diagnostic phase, it is noticed that the commonest mistakes made by the majority of respondents of the elicited sample are tone level, word and sentence stress. The results of the diagnostic analysis seem to corroborate the hypothesis that the researchers have put forward in the beginning of the research. And, advocates that Algerian Arabic students in English departments may have challenges with these supra-segmental features. These challenges also seem to have a direct influence on the students’ English pronunciation.
The findings of the diagnostic phase give the researchers a somehow clear picture on the challenges of their informants in relation to pronunciation and prosody. They then move to the second phase of their study. This experimental phase is directed towards the improvement of students’ performance in relation to the supra-segmental features investigated during the first phase of the study. The second phase tries to reveal whether the practice of stress and intonation permits the achievement of an accurate pronunciation.

**The Results of the Second Recordings**

During the experimental phase the second phase of recordings is carried out. Firstly, before starting the recordings, students were taught about word-sentence stress and intonation with a hypothesis that this might have influences on their language performance and oral skill. The informants were cooperative and conscious during the whole process. The lectures were about the prosodic features, including exercises which show to the informants where to put the right stress and intonation patterns in the sentences.

The elicitation procedure of the second recordings gives insights on the possible correlation between stress and intonation and the acquisition of a proper English pronunciation. In addition, it reveals whether learners’ practice of pronunciation is helpful to intelligibility and communication. The resulting pieces of information from the evaluated recordings are, like in the previous case, collected and presented in the following graph.

![Figure 2. Experimental Phase Recordings](image-url)

As seen in Figure 2, the percentages of mistakes in all cases have considerably decreased. The differences between the diagnostic and experimental phases seem to be significant in terms of progress. First of all, in comparison to the first recordings the number of stress and intonation mistakes decreased by 50% where only 13% of the students did not put the right stress in some
words. The researchers obtained similar results in relation to sentence stress. In fact, the decrease is obvious where only 26% of the students struggled when stressing some words in context in comparison to 73% of the first recordings. The mistakes are just in some words in the sentences, like student25 when reading the 3rd sentence.

Table 4. Sentence stress errors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correct Sentence Stress</th>
<th>Misplacing Sentence Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student25</td>
<td>What is she so PLEASED about? She looks like the CAT that's eaten the CREAM!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, it might be said that the lectures given during the experimental phase are of a great help in the respondents’ pronunciation performance. The researchers observe that 60% of the students did not have problems with both word and sentence stress after the experimental phase. Students 1, 3, 20 and 27 achieved a clear pronunciation and intelligible speech after the training. Therefore, the sub-hypothesis that students need practice of supra-segmental features during their lectures is corroborated to some extent by the experimental phase. Students can benefit from pronunciation lectures in order to achieve a good pronunciation and be intelligible by the same way.

Secondly, based on these results, the hypothesis that stress and intonation are important elements in the achievement of a good pronunciation is confirmed. By placing the stress in the right place in words and sentences, 20% of students achieved nearly a prefect pronunciation, 46% of them achieved clear pronunciation and 33% of the elicited students achieved an understandable pronunciation. There were very few students who were not intelligible. 4 students only have made the same word stress mistakes and 8 of them had problems with sentence stress in addition to intonation patterns. The brief training was not that sufficient and the students’ pronunciation was not satisfactory. One possible explanation of this finding is that the lack of practice at home considerably influences students’ overall pronunciation abilities.

It is interesting to note that when students improved their use of stress in isolation and in context, their loudness mistakes have automatically decreased. In the first phase of the recordings, 43% of the student did not succeed performing loudness, but in the second one, only 6% of them did not. This feature seems to have a significant impact on student’s performance. The writers hypothesize that loudness which is closely related to word stress, sentence stress and intonation is also important in the acquisition of a clear pronunciation. Actually, if a student achieves well in stress and intonation, her/his loudness will be correct.

After the experimental phase, the authors also noticed a progress in the phoneme pronunciation variable, where only 23% of the informants mispronounced some phonemes. In fact, there are students who corrected themselves unconsciously in the second recordings. Take this example:
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Table 5. Self correction of phoneme mispronunciation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informant</th>
<th>First Recordings</th>
<th>Second Recordings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student2</td>
<td>/kræʃɪd/</td>
<td>/kræʃt/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These errors might be related to the lack of concentration and awareness. Learning rules of final /ed/ and /s/ can be very helpful. However, mispronunciation of phonemes does not influence a lot the informants’ pronunciation, because a foreign learner is not able to achieve a perfect pronunciation of all phonemes.

The authors also tested the achievement of articulation on their informants because of its importance in speech perception. In fact, a good articulation leads to an intelligible and fluent pronunciation. Hence, when students misarticulated sounds and words, their pronunciation was not that clear; however, when reading several times the sentences and repeating the sounds, they became familiar with them and succeeded in correcting their errors. Consequently, during the recordings their performance has changed positively.

After the experimental phase, 77% of the students articulated correctly, thus their pronunciation was clear. The 23% students who did not articulate correctly did not have a clear pronunciation. For instance, student 18 omitted the sound /s/ in the second sentence: what’s she so 'pleased about? In addition, he/she substituted the sound /oʊ/ in look /lʊk/ with /u:/, resulting in /lu:k/. As a result, articulation feature is an important element to achieve a clear pronunciation in addition to word and sentence stress.

The analysis of speed revealed that 23% of the informants did not have a constant speed. Some of them were very rapid and other too slow. There seems to be no improvement of this feature. In fact, the results are approximately the same. In the diagnostic phase 20% troubled with this feature; whereas, 23% in the experimental one. However, speed variable does not influence pronunciation. Each student is characterized by his/her own speed and has his/her own manner of speaking.

Discussion

The present paper permits the readers to have several insights which highlight the contribution of stress and intonation on intelligibly and comprehensibility. The diagnostic phase reveals that students display many problems with pronunciation and their use of both stress and intonation are very low. During the training phase, the informants were administered lectures on the use and practice of stress and intonation. Shortly afterward they were recorded for the second time. The experimental phase corroborates the hypothesis that students’ pronunciation might be improved by practicing the suprasegmental features. As a matter of fact, training has a positive effect on students’ pronunciation accuracy and oral performance. These features should be an area of concern for pronunciation teachers.

The findings from the experimental phase also infirm the hypothesis that stress and intonation alone lead to a good pronunciation. Therefore, another central insight is that good articulation and adequate loudness are also important. They are essential features that shape
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pronunciation because they include comprehensibility and avoid misunderstanding. In fact, as Thornbury (2006) puts it: “faulty pronunciation is one of the most common causes of misunderstanding” (p. 185). Thus, English language learners need practice in all areas of pronunciation (sounds, sounds in connected speech, word stress, sentence stress and intonation) if they are to become fully effective communicators.

It also becomes clear that word and sentence stress in addition to intonation play an important role in the students’ pronunciation accuracy. Their pronunciation, performance during the diagnostic phase was low. The researchers further corroborate a significant progress in the informants’ pronunciation improvement after the training phase. Yet, it might need deeper analysis on a larger population and with a lengthier study. One might conclude, then, that the general hypothesis that stress and intonation might be helpful in achieving a clear and good pronunciation is confirmed.

**Conclusion**

Foreign learners of English in general and students of English department in Algeria universities do not need to have a prefect British accent, but good pronunciation is required. Systematic work of the students on pronunciation, which is regarded as a subcategory of speaking skill, can help them perceive and produce accurately the suprasegmental features. Thus, the issue at stake in this article is the impact of prosodic feature, stress and intonation, on learners’ intelligibility and speech accuracy.

It is fundamental for teachers of ESL/EFL to introduce the prosodic features in the classroom in order to improve students’ pronunciation of English and increase their fluency and comprehensibility. Yet, it should be done in a modern way by using real and computerized environments. Hence, the use of softwares like Praat and other research based approaches are highly recommended (Hardison, 2004; Pennington, 1999, 2002).

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**References**


The Importance of Prosody in a Proper English Pronunciation

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Cohesion in Written Discourse: A Case Study of Arab EFL Students

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Abstract
This study analyses cohesion and coherence in selected discourses written by advanced learners in the Department of English at Najran University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A case study of Master Degree (M A) students in the female section of Najran University English Department discovers a number of results that show that writing is still a great difficulty for them even at a relatively higher level of education. They show weakness in logical thought and organizational pattern. They lack the fundamental knowledge of the rules of syntax, inter-sentence relations, cohesive devices and other advanced methods of composition. The study is expected to help L2 Saudi teachers to address the problems of cohesion and coherence at discourse level and take pedagogical precautions to prevent them. The study follows content analysis method.

Keywords: cohesive devices, cohesion errors, discourse analysis, lexis, organization
Introduction

Writing is a spontaneous process combining thoughts and techniques simultaneously. The proper organization of thoughts in writing leads ideas from one sentence to another and from one paragraph to the next logically and coherently. It is a skill in which we produce a sequence of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain ways. It involves manipulating, structuring and communicating seemingly disconnected ideas into an organized whole. English language students are carefully taught these mechanics of writing right from elementary to advanced levels.

Just as visual art needs content, concept and style to produce a piece of unified drawing or painting that beams aesthetic beauty, so does a piece of writing to convey a coherent meaning by integrating lexis into discourse. And the most important catalyst in discourse is cohesion. It combines content, concept and style to produce an effective piece of composition.

The basic unit of a composition is paragraph. Again, a paragraph is a group of related sentences dealing with a central idea. An ideal paragraph has a well knitted structure: topic sentence, body and conclusion. Usually, a paragraph begins with a topic sentence. It contains the subject matter as well as the attitude of the paragraph. For example, "Mr X is a teacher" does not make a topic sentence, because it is a statement of fact. It does not express any attitude, and as such, does not call for further explanation. But if we say "Mr X is an ideal teacher", immediately we need to explain why he is "ideal". So a topic sentence should have both a subject and an attitude. The body of the paragraph explains, supports and expands the topic sentence. No irrelevant ideas or information can be inserted in the body of the paragraph. The concluding sentence brings the paragraph to a logical end.

There is a close connection between the structures of a paragraph and a composition. Just as the paragraph has a topic sentence to introduce the main idea, in the same way, a composition has a topic paragraph to introduce its central focus. Secondly, in a paragraph the sentences in the middle serve the purpose of expanding or developing the main idea. Similarly, the middle part of the composition supports and expands the topic paragraph. There is a concluding sentence in a paragraph to bring the ideas to a logical conclusion. In the same way, in a composition there is a concluding paragraph to summarize all the ideas developed in the middle and bring them to a logical end. It is to be noted that for a successful composition, the number of the middle paragraphs should ideally equal the number of supporting sentences selected in the topic paragraph---neither more, nor fewer. Moreover, the developers in the paragraph or the composition should be connected by different cohesive devices so that ideas smoothly pass from one sentence to another or one paragraph to the next. Any abrupt breach of ideas will destroy the inherent beauty and symmetry of the discourse---an essential component of cohesion.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics by Matthews (1997) defines cohesion in term of syntactic unit (Sentence). A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics by David Crystal (1997) defines cohesion in terms of a grammatical unit (words). Halliday and Hasan (1976) argue that the concept of cohesion is a semantic one. For them it refers to relation of meaning that exists within text, gives the text texture and defines the text as text.
Thus, writing a free composition involves combining lexis into text that produces meaningful communication. Heaton (1988, p. 135) emphasizes that writing skills require mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual abilities. He divides cohesion skills in four groups: language use, mechanical skills, judgment skills, and stylistic skills. While the use of language involves the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences, mechanical skills help to combine those isolated sentences into an organic whole. Judgment skills mean the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind, together with an ability to select, organize and order relevant information. Thus a piece of writing is constructed in such a way that one sentence leads naturally to the next and there should be a regular progression of thought.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) emphasize intimate inter-sentential relationships, which distinguish a text from a sequence of isolated sentences. According to them, cohesion refers to the intra-textual relations of the grammatical and lexical items that make the parts of the text together as a whole to convey the complete meaning of it. Therefore an interconnection of different cohesive devices is essential to produce a cohesive piece of writing. Halliday & Hasan (1976) describe text connectedness in terms of reference, substitution, ellipses, conjunction and lexical cohesion. According to these authors, these explicit clues make a text a text (1976:13). Cohesion occurs "when the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another" (1976:14).

Therefore, one of the main objectives of this study is to focus on the attitude and organizational problems that Arab students encounter while composing their essays in English. An investigation into students' written work will provide a means to help L2 teachers in KSA to recognize the importance of the mechanics of writing as one of the challenging areas in teaching discourse.

Literature Review

A great deal of empirical studies has been conducted by researchers to see the use of cohesive devices in students' writing. However, little has been done to find out the problems of attitudes and organization in the field of discourse. So here is a brief survey of researches done in this area to justify the feasibility and validity of the present work.

Neuner (1987) conducted an analysis of twenty good essays versus twenty poor essays written by college first year students. The essays were randomly selected from a pool of 600 essays on the topic "write a letter giving advice to students at school." Two readers from a panel of twelve holistically evaluated each essay using a four-point scale. Three independent coders conducted analysis on the essays after instruction and practice. Finally, the results revealed that the frequency or percentage of cohesive ties did not show any significant differences between well-written and poor essays. Another researcher, Khalil (1989), investigated the relationship between cohesion and coherence in 20 compositions in Arab EFL students' college writing. The relationship of cohesion and coherence was tested by the use of multiple correlation statistics. Finally, a weak correlation \((r=0.18)\) was found between the number of cohesive ties and coherence score of the text. Another researcher was Jonson (1992), who examined cohesion in expository essays written in Malay and in English by native speakers of both languages. Sample compositions evaluated holistically as good or weak in quality were submitted by Malaysian
teachers of composition in Malay and by American teachers of native and non-native speakers of English. The results revealed no differences in the amount of cohesion between good and weak compositions written in Malay by native speakers (20 persons) or in English by native (20 persons) and Malay speakers (20 persons). His empirical study on cohesion in written discourse of native and non-native speakers of English also indicated that judgments of writing quality may depend on overall coherence in content, organization, and style rather than on the quantity of cohesion.

Tonder and Louise (1999), in their study, investigated the relationship between amount of lexical cohesion and lexical errors on one hand and the perceived coherence ratings and academic scores of student academic writing on the other. Findings indicated that the amount of lexical cohesion showed highly significant relations with the coherence ratings. Furthermore, the results reported in the studies reviewed indicate that the relationship between writing quality or textual coherence and cohesive device use has not been concretely established. However, there are studies in which opposite results were reported. For example, Zhang (2000) conducted a study to examine the use of cohesive devices in the writing of Chinese undergraduate EFL students. He asked 107 students of two different universities to participate in his study. The results indicated that no satisfactory relationship exists between the frequency of cohesive ties used and the quality of writing. On the other hand, most of the researchers have found that there is no significant relationship between the quantity of cohesive devices used and the quality of writing.

Ezza (2004) thinks that EFL students’ writing problems, especially those relevant to cohesion and coherence, might be caused by employing outdated approaches and resources for teaching writing, especially in the Arab world. Consequently, he applied a content analysis to existing writing courses in three Arab Universities and reached the conclusion that English Departments adopted approaches and materials characteristic of the 1940s and 1950s. Thus, he recommends incorporating the new developments of the linguistic and writing theories into the writing syllabus.

Affected by Halliday and Hasan’s indication that cohesion is in effect a linguistic property in relation to textual features, Achili (2007) believes that ESL/EFL novice learners tend to rely heavily on cohesive devices, as a consequence of their teachers’ emphasis, to link their ideas while they neglect other discourse features. She conducted an experiment that included two groups, control and experimental, from the second year students of English at the Department of Foreign Languages in University of Mentouri, Constantine. A pre-test and post-test were administered and the results confirmed that the proposed method of teaching coherence helped the experimental group improve, especially in the areas with which the participants were found to have most problems.

From the above brief literature review we can conclude that most of the researchers have concentrated on the presence or absence of cohesion devices in written discourse. None of them has examined the learners' ability in generating and organizing ideas and developing these ideas into readable text logically and coherently. Therefore, the present research is concerned with such an investigation into some selected compositions written by some advanced learners of
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Applied Linguistics. It focuses more on mechanics and organization of in written discourse than on sentence-level error correction or small-scale grammatical deviations.

Methodology

The participants in the present study are selected from the Department of English, Najran University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The medium of their undergraduate education was English. They share a homogeneous mother tongue, and their background and prior education lend a touch of homogeneity to the group. The students are supposed to use English both inside and outside the classroom. The socio-economic position of this group can be considered high by Saudi Arabian standard. Data was collected from these students so as to make this discourse oriented analysis meaningful.

The number of the participants is eight. Although the sample size is small, hopefully it would be representative for Arab learners as a whole for the reason that the selection includes only the advanced learners, i.e., the newly appointed Teaching Assistants of English Department who are doing their M.A in Applied Linguistics.

The study was conducted utilizing writing compositions only. The students were asked to write a free composition based on some techniques they learnt in their undergraduate studies. The test was conducted during a two-hour class session under the supervision of the class teacher concerned. The titles of the compositions were: a) Qualities of a Good Citizen (composition development by "listing", b) Islam and Christianity (Composition development by "comparison and contrast", and c) Global Warming (Composition development by "definition" or "Cause and effect"). The learners are already familiar with all these "techniques" of composition writing, avoiding complicated, unfamiliar patterns. Samples were collected in the months of Feb-March 2015, from Department of English, Najran University, KSA.

Analysis and discussion:

The analysis mainly and primarily focuses on organization of thought and mechanics of writing discourse in accordance with the texts usually prescribed for the students in their undergraduate education. These texts include: Interactions 1, 2 Gold Edition (2012) written by Tanaka and Baker. Both these are published by McGraw Hill, UK. Other reference books are From Paragraph to Essay: Developing Composition Writing, Longman, 1975, written by Maurice Imhoof and Herman Hudson, Writing Power 1 by Karen Blanchard, Sue Peterson and Dorothy E Zemach and Academic Writing: From Paragraph to Essay by Dorothy E Zemach Lisa and A Rumisek. These books meticulously teach students the structures of ideal paragraphs and developing paragraphs into long, consistent and coherent compositions. Taking the instructions of these prescribed books as general standards for composition writing, we will evaluate the samples under investigation. To begin with, we will analyze the introductory paragraphs of all the 8 samples to show whether these topic paragraphs are written in the light of their knowledge the learners gathered at undergraduate level.
Composition sample 1: Introductory paragraph

A Good Citizen

The qualities that people should have in order to be considered good citizens are really ambiguous to some extent. There have been many controversies regarding this topic. It's a kind of privilege for the society to have good citizens.

This introductory paragraph is remarkably free from grammatical mistakes except one concerned with spelling ("privilage"). The discourse also begins with its title placed at the middle position of the upper margin. The opening sentence is also dented. However, the introduction shows weakness both in techniques and cohesion. The topic sentence does not focus on either the subject matter or the attitude expressed by the title. Consequently, there are no developers in the body of the introduction and, as such, no satisfactory concluding sentence. Therefore, any logical development of the composition is difficult. The introduction is poorly written and does not follow any standard rules of paragraph writing.

Composition sample 2: Introductory paragraph

Good citizen is a blessing to society. The good citizen is the person who certain duties and responsibilities along with rights. While he has all rights to participate in political, legal, social, economic and religious affairs of the country. He has the responsibility to have respect for the culture and heritage of the country.

This introductory paragraph suffers both grammatical and cohesive errors. The word "citizen" is a count noun which should have a determiner before it (like "a"). Secondly, the second sentence does not have a finite verb, and as such, grammatically incorrect. And finally, the third sentence is also unacceptable as it does not have any main clause. On the other hand, there is no organizational pattern in the paragraph. There is no topic sentence, and it does not speak anything about the "duties and responsibilities" of a good citizen except that in the last sentence the writer mentions "to have respect for the culture and heritage of the country." There is no concluding sentence either. The paragraph is also devoid of its title. Therefore it may me noted that this "introduction" of the composition lacks both ideas and method of an ideal discourse.

Composition sample 3: Introductory paragraph

Every country has a certain number of population. People who live in different countries reflect a good or bad image of their countries. In fact, a good citizen has a number of characteristics, however, these qualities differ from those which existed in the previous periods. For example, the good citizen used to be one who help others, obey his parents, practice his religion and depend on himself. On the other hand, a good citizen is now seen in a different way. For example, a good citizen is one who loves for the environment and pursue his studies so that he can serve the community in which he or she lives.
Although this introductory paragraph seems to focus on the "characteristics" of the population of a country, if not on their "duties", the author veers away from this idea of the topic sentence and makes the introduction a "contrast paragraph" by showing some differences of characteristics of the citizens of the past and the present time. The introduction does not show any logical development of the central idea of the composition, nor does it indicate any pattern in the organization of thought. It does not have a concluding sentence either to bring the ideas to a logical conclusion. So it may be said that the introductory paragraph of the composition under investigation does not meet the rules of a standard paragraph. Moreover, there are also grammatical errors. The third sentence shows punctuation errors and as such makes it an unacceptable grammatical unit. There is no subject-verb agreement in fourth sentence: "the good citizen… who help others … obey his parents … practice his religion … depend on himself". The same type of errors continues in the last sentence. This "Introduction" is also devoid of its title.

**Composition sample 4: Introductory paragraph**

A citizen is the member of various social groups in a society. For any community, having good citizens is a great blessing. Certainly, good citizenship needs to fulfill many qualities or personal traits such as honesty, patriotism, responsibility, self-respect and others.

Although this introductory paragraph seems to center around the main idea suggested by the title (which it lacks), it does not systematically develop that idea through logically written developers. On the other hand, it has bundled up all the different arguments in one last single sentence. As such, it does not have any concluding sentence. The paragraph lacks cohesion, pattern and forward movement. As a result it fails to meet the standard rules of composition writing. Moreover, the author does not mention the title of the composition.

**Composition sample 5: Introductory paragraph**

Qualities of a Good Citizen

*There are about 250 countries on the face of earth. These countries are competing to reach the top in all domains, i.e. counties' governments work to achieve high levels of success in industry, agriculture, commerce, etc. These levels of success depend to a great extent on the citizens of the country, unless they work to achieve tranquility of their country, the government would not be able to reach its goals.*

This introductory paragraph seems to focus more on the competition among countries of the world to achieve development in different fields than on the specific responsibilities of the citizens concerned. So there is no proper organization of thought or logical development of the arguments through coherent developers. It does not contain a concluding sentence either. The paragraph suffers both grammatical and spelling mistakes ("counties" instead of "countries" or the last sentence which is a grammatical hotchpotch).
Composition sample 6: Introductory paragraph

Qualities of a good citizen

As known to be a good citizen; there should be a certain positive qualities. Nowadays, with the revolution of special media which considered as a fatal & positive weapon; a lot of malicious roots aim to ruin the citizens' loyalty towards his/her country. Therefore, our mission here is to defend our country & and not suspecting our good leaders.

Although this introductory paragraph seems to focus on loyalty of citizens towards their country, it does not expand the qualities leading to that loyalty. So there is no logical development here nor is there any well organized structure of ideas to be focused on. The writer seems to be very poor in written discourse. The opening sentence should have been written in this way: "To be known as/ In order to be a good citizen, one should have certain positive qualities". Such a beginning could have made a very good topic sentence and a very good impression as well. The paragraph also suffers other grammatical mistakes (for example, the second sentence is a grammatical hotchpotch). The writer also seems to lack the proper knowledge of writing the title of a paragraph or composition. Although in all titles the main words except articles, prepositions or short conjunctions begin with capital letters and the title is not underlined, in the above sample, the main words such as 'Good' and 'Citizen' do not begin with capitals and the title itself is underlined. Moreover, the title is underlined. So the introductory paragraph falls short of standard rules of written discourse.

Composition sample 7: Introductory paragraph

Qualities of a good Citizen

Actually, since we are muslims, we are raised on the principles and values of Islam that we have to follow in all aspects of our lives. One of the most important values is the faithfulness and loyalty towards your country and homeland. This is what we call citizenship.

Although the writer mentions in her topic sentence" the principles and values of Islam" as the qualities of a good citizen, she does not elaborate on the specific qualities and fails to develop the central idea into an organizational pattern. She mentions two qualities in one sentence, which are in fact, one. So the writing is immature and the writer shows a lack of knowledge of the mechanics of composition writing. Again, there are other mistakes also. The title is not written in the acceptable way and the writer should know that the word "Muslim" always takes a capital letter.

Composition sample 8: Introductory paragraph

Global Warming

Global warming is increasingly getting attention of individuals and governments. According to many scientists, it occurs mainly as a result of pollution. This phenomenon can be defined as the increase in the average of the temperature. In
recent years, the global climate is going through many changes. Blizzards, tornadoes, and earthquakes are now more common than ten years ago. The number of wildfire is growing. Many severe droughts occur everywhere.

This introductory paragraph is written following the technique of "Cause and Effect". The writer has mentioned the cause of global warming and its consequent effects. However, the four effects have been written in two sentences. This is a technical mistake. The writer should have written the four effects in four separate sentences. As such, the paragraph would have total five developers to focus on the five issues. What is disappointing is that this paragraph, like the most others, does not contain a concluding sentence.

In the analyses above, we have observed that all the introductory paragraphs of the sample compositions lack essential characteristics of standard composition writing. They do not have good or effective topic sentences. There are no developers to carry the central ideas forward, and as such, no question of cohesion among sentences. And finally, there are no concluding sentences that bring the arguments to a logical end. Obviously, something is seriously wrong somewhere.

The middle paragraphs of the compositions just follow suit. There is no logical development or organizational pattern. The middle paragraphs have no connection with information provided by the introductory paragraphs. The students have started with one idea and then have veered away into other discussions. There are hardly any concluding paragraphs. The ones given at the end are unsatisfactory, as they hardly contain enough sentences to summarize the middles to bring the compositions to a logical end. It is highly disappointing to see such a miserable failure at discourse level by students of higher level of education. As already mentioned, there are other grievances as well. The wrong use of reference and collocations and grammatical mistakes also destroy the symmetry and beauty of discourse. The following is an analysis of some of these problems of cohesion in the selected samples.

1. Reference
From the samples, the researcher has randomly highlighted the lapses and loopholes in grammar and cohesion throughout the discourses.
Example-
(a) Superfluous references---
1) Global warming is increasingly getting attention of individuals and governments. According to many scientists, it occurs mainly as a result of the pollution. This phenomenon can be defined as the increase in the average of the temperature.
This is a superfluous reference, as emphasis is laid more on the words 'pollution' and 'temperature' with a definite article 'the'. But the statements here are general, not specific. The correct ones should be, 'According to many scientists, it occurs mainly as a result of pollution. This phenomenon can be defined as the increase in the average of temperature'.

2) An ignorant or a selfish man cannot be a good citizen. If he is timid, he lacks the courage to defend any encroachment on his rights. If he is a selfish, he lacks the generosity to respect others' comfort.
This is, again, an example of superfluous reference. The qualities "courage" and "generosity" as used here are general, not specific. So the correct forms of the sentences should be, 'If he is timid, he lacks courage to defend any encroachment on his rights. If he is a selfish, he lacks generosity to respect others' comfort.

b) Vague references—
   1) Another quality of a good citizen is to stay away from anti-social activities like smuggling. They shouldn't betray the country or to respect policies and constitution of this country.

Here the phrases the country and this country seem to show that the writer is talking about a particular country. But there is no mentioning of the name of any country in this paragraph or elsewhere. Therefore, the reference here is vague. The readers are unable to understand which country the writer is talking about. So the writer should have used some other modifiers instead of the definite article "the" or the demonstrative "this". The sentence may be written like 'They shouldn't betray their country or to respect policies and constitution of their country'.

   2) It is a race, and as long as a country has good citizens that put its tranquility and welfare first, ... such country will win the race.

This is the opening sentence of the last paragraph of the composition. A new paragraph should not begin with a pronoun reference, particularly when it is a concluding one. This is because the last paragraph summarizes all the major points of the middle paragraph and brings the central idea to a smooth and logical conclusion. Secondly, the pronoun reference "its" is vague. Does it mean the "country" or the "race"? Of course, it is understood that by "its" the writer wants to mean the country, not race, but the wrong construction of the sentence confuses the pronoun reference. The correct form should be, 'It is a race for a country, and as long the good citizens put its tranquility and welfare first, ... such country will win the race'.

C) Wrong reference choice—
   1. As known to be a good citizen; there should be a certain positive qualities.
      Nowadays, with the revolution of special media which considered as a fatal & positive weapon; a lot of malicious roots aim to ruin the citizens' loyalty towards his/her country.

While the possessive "citizens'" is a plural noun, the reference pronoun is singular, his/her. So the correct reference form should be 'a lot of malicious roots aim to ruin the citizens' loyalty towards their country'.

   2. Inaccurate Collocations

Example:
   1) We should as good citizens spread to the outside world a great concept and a nice reputation about our lovely country.

Here "a great concept...about our country" indicates a wrong lexical cohesion. Concept means an idea or a principle that is connected with something abstract. For example, we speak about the concept of social class or the concept of civilization. So the use of 'concept' before a 'country' is a
wrong lexical cohesion. The correct use is: 'a great idea…about our lovely country. Secondly, the word 'nice' does not collocate with abstractions. It means something pleasant, enjoyable or attractive. For example, we say: a nice day/smile/place, etc. Therefore, the expression 'a nice reputation' is a wrong lexical collocation. The right one should be: 'a good reputation'.

2) They also should be **courage** not only in facing enemies, but also in making decisions in everyday life.

Here the words 'they should be courage' signify wrong lexical cohesion under deviant collocation. The word 'courage' should be **'courageous'**.

3) For example, many **Arabic countries** lack skillful individuals in many areas.

The above sentence shows that the writer does not know the difference between the two adjectives, 'Arab' and 'Arabic'. The adjective 'Arabic' is used in connection with the literature and language of the Arab people. For example, we say 'Arabic poetry', not 'Arab poetry'. On the other hand, the adjective 'Arab' is used in connection with 'Arabia' or 'Arabs'. For example, we say, 'Arab countries' or 'The Arab World' etc.

Thus the sample essays are replete with different cohesion anomalies. These errors are caused by the ignorance of rule-restriction and inappropriate language training of the learners and also partly by lack of proper supervision by their teachers. Errors in lexical items weaken the cohesive force of the discourse and have a disorganizing effect on the unity of discourse. The chart below provides an over-all view of the cohesive, lexical and grammatical errors in the samples. The list, however, is not exhaustive. This list should be a table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Types of errors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Error Types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conjunction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellipsis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substitution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collocation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agreement(SV)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
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<td>Total Items= 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table 1 shows that the combined percentage of cohesion anomalies is higher than the individual grammatical and syntactic errors. The findings, therefore, confirm the hypothesis that though the students are fairly competent to handle sentence level grammar, they are weak in dealing with cohesive devices in written discourses.
Conclusion and recommendation

There is no denying that Arab learners' proficiency in English is low. Most of them can hardly write acceptable English even at the sentence level. On the other hand, those who can do that find themselves at a loss when they are asked to write a discourse. And when they write any composition, they simply heap up their sentences in a jumbled way. This fact has been revealed by the sample compositions taken for our investigation and analyzed above. The results indicate the learners' inefficiency at the application of language as well as the basic mechanics of writing. The analysis shows that students are not aware of a clear-cut model of standard written English which they could follow and emulate. Most students even do not know how to differentiate between a well written discourse and a badly organized one. On the basis of the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made for pedagogical implications.

Since errors in grammar and punctuation can be hard to spot, the learners may read their discourse aloud. This will increase their chances of spotting them and thereby correcting them. In the process, they should concentrate on fragment sentences (incomplete grammatical units), dangling modifiers, run-on sentences, misplaced modifiers, unclear and faulty shifts in pronoun references, inaccurate agreement of subject and verb and faulty tense shifts. If the learners pay attention to these areas of their discourse, it is expected that their writing will largely be free from lexical errors.

The problems of cohesion and coherence may be overcome by using effective transitions between sentences in a paragraph and between paragraphs in a composition. If the paragraphs are well-structured and well written, with a selection of clear-cut ideas to be expanded, it would be easy for learners to write long discourses maintaining logical development, structural organization, and satisfying conclusion.

Emphasis should be given on the identification and rectification of errors causing ambiguity and inappropriateness in the language. This should be done by giving the students ample drilling in the use of these cohesive devices, not in isolation but in the writing of actual discourse, where these features could be isolated first and then incorporated into the total framework of the discourse. The students should be provided with the format, structures, model, and brainstorming activities while teaching discourse writing.

The advent of the new technology in the modern age has assisted L2 instructors and pedagogues to engage learners in several activities to aid language skills (Mohsen, 2016), to adopt some software to track students’ errors in writing and to give corrective feedback (Abusaleik & Abualsha’r, 2014; Lee & Lyster, 2016; Yu & Lee, 2016), to use visual aids in multimedia settings (Aldera & Mohsen, 2013; Mohsen & Balakumar; 2011; Mohsen, 2015) and to trigger writing activities in learning management systems (Mohsen & Shafeeq, 2014). Teachers are advised to leverage the rapid advancement of a new technology to help learners identify their errors and receive instant corrective feedback to bridge the comprehension breakdown that L2 learners face during the process of second language acquisition.

Finally, it may be asserted that as the failure in writing in most cases is due to outdated teaching methods and inexperienced teachers with limited discourse knowledge in teaching cohesion and coherence, the academics and education authority concerned should prioritize
professionalism over random selection. Strong motivation on the part of the learners as well as their awareness of the complexities of the writing skills may also substantially contribute to the production of comprehensive and well-organized discourse.

References


Instructi on through the English Medium and its Impact on Arab Identity

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Abstract
This study investigates the impact of English medium instruction on students’ Arab identity and mastery of Arabic. The study, undertaken at two high schools in Abu Dhabi, UAE, examines students’, teachers’, and parents’ perceptions about the effect of instruction in the English medium on students’ identities and Arabic proficiency. A total of 140 students, 30 teachers, and 40 parents responded via survey questionnaires and structured interviews about the impact of English Medium Instruction (EMI). Results suggest that students are gradually becoming more competent in English and less fluent in Arabic. In addition, even though the students are aware of the fact that Arabic is part and parcel of the Arab identity, it no longer represents the core of their social identity. The study calls for the need to design a bilingual curriculum in which Arabic and English are used as media of instruction in an equitable manner, such that English neither displaces Arabic nor poses a threat to national identity and heritage.

Keywords: Arab identity, Arabian Gulf, English-in-Education; bilingualism, English as a medium of instruction, national identity, UAE
Introduction

Among many essential elements that constitute identity, language remains the major component, since it is present in the nation’s history and is the symbolic system used by the members of a group to interpret the world (Masri, 2012). Language is embedded in a community’s culture, and reflects people’s behavior, thinking and understanding of oneself and the surrounding. The people’s myths, values and traditions are expressed through their language. The language gains its value depending on who is using it, in which context and for what purpose (Ricento, 2010). Holes (2011) explains that language is an important tool which people use to create the sense of self and to present themselves. It is also the lens through which they are seen by others. In Holes’ words: “Speech is the counterpart of how people dress” (p. 132).

It is thus no wonder that language plays a major role in shaping the identity of individuals and nations. Language is often seen as an element that needs to be preserved and protected from foreign influence. This issue has been raised by many scholars mainly due to the English language becoming the dominant medium of communication around the world. Having an official status in at least 75 countries worldwide, it is considered by many scholars as the lingua franca of the modern world and is the only hypercentral language among existing languages (de Swaan, 2001). This ascendancy has attracted the attention of language scholars as it is becoming more evident that it can have significant repercussions on learners’ identity and sense of self.

In her analysis of language and identity, Norton (1997) strongly argues that educators should take the relationship between these two entities, language and identity, seriously. She postulates that speech, speakers and social relationships are inseparable entities. She believes that when language speakers interact verbally, they not only exchange information, but also engage in identity construction by organizing their perceptions of self, who they are and how they relate to the world. Norton adds that there is a social and historical relationship between the learners and the target language, which determines their willingness to learn and practice it. Such kind of relationship between the learners and the target language also determines the construction of their social identities, which are dynamic across time and space (Norton, 1997). Hornberger (2010) supports this concept by affirming that learning is the construction of the identity and not just the construction of the academic knowledge.

Defining Identity

In recent years, interest in the concept “identity” has been on the rise. Many scholars have conducted studies which aimed at identifying the meaning of Individual Identity, Social Identity, and National Identity. One reason behind this sudden interest is the rapid spread of globalization and the English language as a lingua franca, which has gained a reputation as a threat to the identity of those whose mother tongue is not English. In Iran, for example, a study by Afghari et al. (2012) tackled the issue of changing identities due to the inculcation of foreign values through the English medium, curriculum and pedagogy. In Turkey, Atay and Ece (2009) investigate the impact of the Western culture on the Turkish identity, and concluded that it led to the identity crisis, since Turks are faced with the task of being recognized as a Western nation, or preserving their own Muslim identity.

But what is identity? To begin with, identity starts with the person’s ability to answer the question: “Who am I?” In finding the answer to this question, people identify themselves as
independent individuals, thus, defining their individual identity. Erikson (1963) explores individual identity from a psychological perspective. He explains that the formation of personal identity starts at a very early stage in life, when the person is ready to recognize his or her individuality, away from the influence of the parents. Erikson identifies eight stages of identity formation. As a child, an individual starts forming his/her identity as soon as he/she gains confidence in his/her surroundings, and realizes that there is consistency and regularity in the experiences and the people who provide them. In this stage, the individual goes through the process of identification by developing the ability to form relationships with others. As the person moves into adolescence, which Erikson considers a crucial stage for the development of the identity, he/she develops a sense of success and self-esteem, and is ready to gradually develop a sense of moral responsibility. In the stages that follow, the identity of the person dynamically changes due to the constant exposure to different experiences and responsibilities. Erikson believes that identity formation is a dynamic process throughout the person’s life and is influenced by ideologies, vocations and relationships.

In addition to Erikson’s theory about the individual identity, other studies and references provide a number of definitions, which clarify the concept. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines the identity as follows: “those attributes that make you unique as an individual and different from others” or “the way you see of define yourself” (as cited in Spieberger & Ungersbock, 2005, p. 352). Atay and Ece (2009) describe individual identity as the construction of the ways people interpret the world and interact with their surroundings. In this view, people’s identities determine their perspectives and evaluation of the world. Based on these definitions, it can be deduced that individual identity describes the traits, characteristics, and values that a person gains through life, and which distinguish him from other individuals.

While individual identity provides answers to the question: who am I?, social identity is seen as the answer to: Who am I as a member of my group, and in relation to the other groups? According to Erikson (1963), in seeking the acceptance and recognition from the others, a young person merges his individual identity with that of others, through committing to new relationships, which results in forging a social identity. Norton (1997) explains that social identity describes the relationship between the person and the society, and the concomitant values transmitted through social institutions such as workplaces, law courts, families, social services and teaching institutions. It is important to recognize that social identities are shaped in particular by political and economic contexts, and are affected by factors, such as race, religion, ethnicity, language, and culture. In such social contexts, individuals strive to maintain group distinction, dignity and historical discourses (Fearon, 1999).

In addition to emphasizing the importance of the individual and social identities, other studies have focused on identifying and exploring the concept of national identity. Suleiman (2003) contends that national identity does not grow naturally among the people who present it, but is rather an intellectual and historical construct. Based on this assumption, we can elicit the meaning of the national identity and its elements from the definition stated in the Oxford English Dictionary: “An extensive aggregate of persons, so closely associated with each other by common descent, language, or history, as to form a distinct race or people, usually organized as a separate political state and occupying a definite territory.” Bloom (1990) defines national identity as the condition in which a group of people have made the same identification with
national symbols and have internalized the symbols of their nation. Smith (1991) explains that a nation is a named group of people who share five major characteristics. They are stated verbatim as follows: 1. a historical territory or home land, 2. common myths and historical memories, 3. a common, mass public culture, 4. common legal rights and duties for all members, and 5. a common economy with territorial mobility for members.

Suleiman (2003) argues that it is difficult to provide a scientific definition for the term national identity due to the complexity of the issue. However, he proposes that description of the nation and national identity should include the following key elements: a common language shared traditions, and religion. Suleiman provides further description of the nations and the national identity and distinguishes between two types: the political (or “old nation”) and the cultural nation (or “newer nation”). He cites Seton-Watson & Auty’s (1981, p.4) explanation of both types: in the political nation “the state came first, then national consciousness, and then the nation”, for the cultural nation, national consciousness came first, “then the nation and the nationalist consciousness, and last the state”. Regardless of the sequence in which the nations are formed, and despite of the variety of definitions, it can be concluded that identity encompasses a number of traits shared among the individuals of a community in ways that render them distinct from other societies and nations.

Arabs, Arabic and Arab Identity

Patai (1983) and Barakat (1993) agree that Arabs are a group of people who share the same language, culture, sociopolitical experiences, economic interests, and a memory of their history. They live in Arabic countries and share common traditions and customs. Despite the fact that the Arab world is fragmented into political units, Arabs share a strong belief in the Arab brotherhood, unity and belonging to the Arab Umma (Patai, 1983). Patai (1983) adds that Arabs can be recognized by their supreme ethics and values, which are derived from Islamic teachings and pre-Islamic, nomadic ideals. He describes them as people with courage, generosity, hospitality, self-respect and honor, and considers these as some of the virtues that are constitutive of Arab identity. Islam is yet another trait which characterizes Arabs. Even though it is a religion of other non-Arab nations, Arabs consider themselves the originators of it, and were the ones who introduced it to the world (Patai, 1983).

On the other hand, Suleiman (2003) argues that being Arab does not necessarily mean being a Muslim or Semitic, or living in an Arab country, and argues that language is the most defining component of Arab identity. Salameh (2001) also agrees with the Arab nationalists in their definition of the Arabs, and quotes Al-Hussari who argues that: “Every person who speaks Arabic is an Arab. If he does not recognize his Arabness, we must look for reasons that have made him take this stand.” Furthermore, Suleiman acknowledges the role of the Arabic language as a symbol of the Arab identity since the pre-modern era. For him, Arabic is the language which embeds the Arab’s intellectual enterprises and is the language of their religious sources and Islamic theology (Suleiman, 2003).

Even though Arabic is considered a key component of the Arab identity, today it faces several challenges that threaten its existence. First, a number of speech forms or so-called dialects are being largely accepted and spoken in the Arab countries. Salameh (2011) argues that these dialects might not be Arabic at all, and are standing in the way of using the Modern
Standard Arabic. He believes that the use of different dialects and the influence of the foreign languages weaken Standard Arabic, and therefore lead to identity confusion in the Arab minds. He suggests that Arabic vernaculars be normalized and standardized in order to unify the national language.

Second, the Arabic language and identity have nowadays, more than ever, come under threat due to the wave of globalization and its attendant Western values and culture. Countries of the Middle East and North African (MENA) region consider English a necessary means of communication and an inevitable tool for development in different domains. While Arabic is seen as the language of cultural authenticity, localism, tradition, emotions and religion, English is associated with modernity internationalism, business, material status and secularism (Findlow, 2006). Therefore, English is widely used by Arabs in many aspects of their daily lives. According to Zughoul (2003), teaching English in the Arab world serves the purposes of the development sought by the Arabs. This is evidenced by the fact that more and more schools and institutions are using English as a medium of instruction. In the UAE, Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) has been implementing strategies to further enhance the use of English in both private and public schools. Belhiah and Elhami (2013) describe the current situation of the English language by saying that the UAE is showing increasing interest in educating young Emiratis in English, as it is the language of business, technology and science. However, they caution that this is happening at the expense of Arabic proficiency and suggest that decision-makers develop a bilingual curriculum “that is clearly designed to foster a sense of additive bilingualism in which English does not eclipse the Arabic language and marginalize its culture.” (p. 22)

It is such debates and controversies that this study seeks to address. The study is motivated by questions like: Have Arab students been disadvantaged by the English Medium Instruction (EMI) mandate? Is the impact on students’ Arab identity always negative?; and finally, can bilingual education in Arabic and English be conducted in an equitable and “additive” manner (Lambert, 1980? While this study cannot provide exhaustive or comprehensive answers to such complex issues, this research begins to address the impact of English as a medium of instruction on identity based on students’, teachers’ and parents’ reported observations.

Data and Methodology

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effect of English as the medium of instruction on the identity of the Arab students in the UAE. To collect data, three surveys were designed to elicit students’, teachers’, and parents’ views. The surveys were conducted in two private English medium schools in Abu Dhabi. The first group of participants was composed of 140 Arab male and female students in grades 8, 9, 10, and 11. Their ages ranged from 12 to 17. The second group of participants consisted of 30 Arab teachers. Their degrees include BA, BS and MA. The third group of participants included 40 mothers and fathers, all of whom were Arab and resided in Abu Dhabi.

The data collection took place in the third semester of the school year 2012-2013. Two schools were visited on two separate days, and with the permission of the administration, paper survey questionnaires were distributed to students and teachers by one of the co-researchers. As
for the parents’ surveys, 11 surveys were collected from parents whose children are in grades 8 and 9 in one of the schools visited. Other parents were contacted via email and phone and given the paper survey questionnaires. All the participants were informed about the purpose of the study through the cover letter attached to the survey. They were also assured that their answers and identity would remain anonymous.

One questionnaire was designed for each group of participants in order to obtain their views. Each questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section 1 investigated students’ linguistic preference. The participants were asked to choose one of the three options: Arabic, English or other (languages). Students, parents and teachers were asked to determine in which language the students preferred to read, to write, and to express their emotions. The three groups of participants were also questioned about the students’ linguistic preference when using the Internet and conversing with their Arab friends. Students and parents had to determine the students’ preference when listening to music, watching TV programs and speaking with their family members. In sections 2 and 3, the participants were asked to rate their agreement on a 1-5 Likert scale regarding the relationship between the English curriculum and Arab identity on the one hand and western identity on the other.

Data Analysis and Discussion
Linguistic Preference

In the first section, the participants were asked to state their views regarding which language they preferred when performing different linguistic functions, such as reading, surfing the internet, and expressing emotions. The findings exhibited in table 1 show that the majority of the students (85%) prefer to read in English, while 90% of the students preferred to write in it in lieu of Arabic. Interestingly, 92.2% of the parents and 100% of the teachers agreed with this view. Some teachers said that the students were only interested in reading English novels. They believed that their students lacked the knowledge of Arab writers and Arab literature. On the other hand, the students linked their preference to read and write in English to their daily exposure to English through the English curriculum, and to the fact that they were encouraged to use English at all times.

On the other hand, when asked to choose the preferred language to express their feelings and emotions, half of the students (50%) chose English, whereas the other half (50%) preferred Arabic. In addition to that, only 45.7% of the students said they spoke English with their Arab friends. In their comments, the students supported their choice of communication in Arabic by saying that this reinforces their Arab identity. Many chose the word “proud” to describe their feeling towards their Arabness. Some students linked their use of spoken Arabic to their Islamic practices and to the desire to preserve their culture and traditions.

The parents’ and the teachers’ responses regarding this part were slightly different (see tables 2, 3). 65% of the parents and 73.3% of the teachers believed that the students expressed their feelings and emotions in English rather than Arabic, while 52.5% of the parents and 70% of the teachers believed that the students spoke with their friends more often in English. The teachers further supported these findings by saying that the students used English in their daily interaction with their peers through games and playtime. One parent said that the students were being peer-pressured into using English as a way to express their Western identity, which is becoming very popular among the youngsters.
When asked which language the students used when speaking with their family members, the majority of the students (90.0%) and parents (72.5%) agreed it was Arabic (see tables 1, 2). The main reason behind this, as reported by both groups, was the role that parents play in encouraging their children to speak Arabic at home. Parents affirmed that their constant guidance and teachings at home geared their children towards using Arabic rather than English. One parent pointed out that, in order to teach their children Arab and Islamic values, it is necessary to speak Arabic. In addition, many parents and students said that their religious practices reinforced the use of Arabic at home (e.g., performing prayers, reading the Quran, and fasting in Ramadan).

To summarize, it seems that students are growing up in a linguistic situation characterized by diglossia. Depending on the situation, the students are capable of alternating between English and Arabic. However, in spite of the parents’ encouragement to use Arabic, the majority of students showed a preference for English. Whether at school, with friends, or even during their leisure time, English is the language they find easier when communicating and expressing their thoughts. Schools’ regulations, the English curriculum and peer-pressure are seen by many participants as some of the reasons that reinforce the use of English and therefore might eventually lead to poor mastery of Arabic.

Table 1. Linguistic Preference - Students’ Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In which language do you prefer to read?</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In which language do you prefer to write?</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In which language do you find it easier to express your feelings and emotions?</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Which language do you prefer when using the Internet?</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>98.6%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Which language do you prefer when listening to music?</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. In which language do you watch TV programs?</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Which language do you use when speaking with your Arab friends?</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Which language do you use when speaking with your family members?</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Linguistic Preference - Parents’ Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In which language does your child prefer to read?</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In which language does your child prefer to write?</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In which language does your child find it easier to express his or her feelings and emotions?</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Which language does your child prefer when using the Internet?</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instruction through the English Medium and its Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Belhiah &amp; Al-hussien</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Which language does your child prefer when listening to music?</td>
<td>20.0% 80.0% 0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. In which language does your child watch TV programs?</td>
<td>30.0% 70.0% 0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Which language does your child use when speaking with his/her Arab friends?</td>
<td>47.5% 52.5% 0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Which language does your child use when speaking with his/her family members?</td>
<td>72.5% 27.5% 0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Linguistic Preference - Teachers’ Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In which language do students prefer to read?</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In which language do students prefer to write?</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In which language do students find it easier to express their feelings and emotions?</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Which language do students use when speaking with their Arab friends?</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Which language do students prefer when using the Internet?</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The English Curriculum and Arab Identity

In this section, the participants were asked to express their opinions regarding the potential impact of the English curriculum on different elements of the students’ Arab identity, including history, heritage, literature, culture and values.

The findings show that only 14.3% agreed with the statement that the English curriculum exposed them to Arab history and heritage. This view is further supported by the parents, since about two thirds disagree or strongly disagreed with the statement. Similarly, only 16.7% of the teachers indicated agreement with the statement. In their comments, many students pointed out that the English curriculum lacked lessons which taught them the history of the Arabs. Some parents supported this by stating that their children had no knowledge of the Arab history and heritage. A parent pointed out that her daughter knew the names of Arab countries in English only.

Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of the students, parents and teachers conveyed their disagreement with the statement that the English curriculum provide students with sufficient exposure them to Arab literature. A teacher wrote in her comments: “My students don’t know most Arab writers”. In one of the classes we attended, the teacher asked the students to name five Arab and five Western authors. The students failed to mention any Arab authors, while a long list containing the names of the Western authors was supplied in no time. Many parents attributed their children’s lack of knowledge and interest in Arab literature to their poor
knowledge of Arabic. One parent explained that since they preferred to read in English, it was only natural that they chose to read English instead of Arabic literature.

In their responses to the statement whether the English curriculum exposed students to the Arab culture and values, 40% of the students and parents disagreed with the statement, while 17.9% of the students and 27.5% of the parents strongly disagreed. The teachers shared the same opinion. 36.7% disagreed and 16.7% strongly disagreed. Only 16.9% of the teachers actually believed that the English curriculum exposed the students to Arab culture and values (see table 6). In their comments, both the parents and the teachers expressed their worries that the students were embracing Western culture in their daily lives.

In another statement, the participants were asked whether the students were encouraged to use Arabic in school. 39.2% of the students revealed that they were not. This disagreement was also made manifest in the parents’ and the teachers’ responses. More than half of the participants in these two groups also believed that the students were not provided with sufficient encouragement to use Arabic in school (see tables 5, 6). On the other hand, the majority of the student’s responses showed that they were encouraged to celebrate National, Arab and Islamic festivities. The students’ results were confirmed by the agreement of the parents (52.5%), and the teachers (93.4%), who believed that the school did encourage these celebrations (see tables 5, 6).

The findings regarding the impact of the English curriculum on the students’ Arab identity were also consistent with the parents’ and teachers’ responses to the previous statements in that they reflected the failure of the English curriculum to accommodate aspects of the Arab identity alongside its culture and values. 36.4% of the students disagreed and 20.0% of them strongly disagreed that the English curriculum reinforced their Arab identity (see table 4). Two thirds of the parents (70.0%) and almost half of the teachers (46.7%) agreed with the students. Less than 10% of them believed that the English curriculum reinforced the students’ Arab identity (see tables 5, 6). It is also worth mentioning that even though in their written responses some students stated that the English curriculum did not affect their Arab identity in any way, none of them supported the idea that this curriculum might have positively reinforced it.

To conclude this section, the results suggest the English curriculum did not seem to reinforce the students’ Arab identity since it failed to expose them to Arab culture, history, heritage, and values. Moreover, the schools’ regulations, which discouraged the use of Arabic in the classroom, seem to be detrimental to the schools’ significant efforts to reinforce the students’ Arab identity by holding festivities that promote Arab, national and Islamic values.

Table 4 The English Curriculum and Arab Identity - Students’ Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The English curriculum exposes me to the Arab history and heritage.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The English curriculum exposes me to the Arab literature.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The lessons taught in the English curriculum expose me to the Arabic</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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culture and values.

4. The English curriculum reinforces my Arab identity. 2.1% 10.0% 31.4% 36.4% 20.0%
5. In school, I am encouraged to use Arabic. 7.9% 13.6% 39.3% 22.1% 17.1%
6. In school, I am encouraged to celebrate National, Arab and Islamic festivities. 42.1% 40.0% 15.0% 1.4% 1.4%

Table 5. The English Curriculum and Arab Identity - Parents’ Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The English curriculum exposes my child to the Arab history and heritage.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The English curriculum exposes my child to the Arab literature.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The English curriculum exposes my child to the Arabic culture and values.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The English curriculum reinforces my child’s Arab identity.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In school, my child is encouraged to use Arabic.</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. In school, my child is encouraged to celebrate National, Arab and Islamic festivities.</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. The English Curriculum and Arab Identity - Teachers’ Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The English curriculum exposes my students to the Arab history and heritage.</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The English curriculum exposes my students to the Arab literature.</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The English curriculum exposes my students to the Arabic culture and values.</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this section the participants were asked to express their views regarding the potential role of the English curriculum in inculcating Western history, heritage, literature, culture and values into students’ thinking. The results show that 79.3% of the students, 80% of the parents and 83.4% of the teachers believed the English curriculum exposed the students to Western history and heritage (see tables 7, 8, 9). In their written responses, some students claimed that the contents of the social studies and history courses were predominantly about the West. Some parents pinpointed the fact that the students were instructed to seek information from Western references in order to complete projects and classroom requirements, thus increasing their exposure to Western history and culture. Others believed that the students were only interested in reading English books and novels. In their opinion, their choice of English literature was based on their ability to understand the language easily. In addition, the students indicated that they found the English literature more interesting and entertaining.

The participants also agreed that the English curriculum exposed the students to the Western culture and values. While almost half of the students supported this idea, more than 80% of the parents and teachers strongly agreed with it (see tables 7, 8, 9). Many participants expressed their concern about this state of affairs in their written responses. One teacher wrote: “the English curriculum is creating the sense of belonging to the Western culture”. Furthermore, a student stated the following: “The English curriculum constantly imposes the Western culture on me, and infuses it into my thoughts to the point where I no longer feel I am in an Arab environment”.

Due to the constant exposure to all that was Western in the curriculum, approximately half of the students believed they had been embracing Western identity. Though 37.9% of them remained neutral, only 15% disagreed. According to many students, the English curriculum geared them towards adopting the Western way of thinking, behavior and how they viewed the world. A teacher described the students as being “Westernized” due to the contents of the English curriculum. It is worth mentioning that 57.5% of the parents 73.3% of the teachers agreed with the students’ point of view that the English curriculum encouraged the students to adopt some form of Western identity.

In the statement that followed, the participants rated their extent of agreement regarding the students’ use of English in school. In their responses, more than 80% of the participants agreed that the students were constantly encouraged to use English in school. In their written responses, some students reported that this use was a major catalyst in their tendency to use English rather than Arabic. Some parents stressed the fact that the students were constantly asked to use English in school. In their opinion, this had a negative impact on their children’s mastery of Arabic. As a matter of fact, several teachers admitted they encouraged the students to use
English frequently even during recess and extra-curricular activities. A teacher made another point by referring to the issue of recruiting native speakers of English as teachers, a matter which left the students with no other choice but to converse exclusively in English.

In the final statement, the participants were asked whether the students were encouraged to celebrate Western festivities, such as Halloween and Christmas. The findings indicated that 34.2% of the students believed this was the case. 36.6% of the students disagreed, while 27.5% remained neutral. Around 30% of the parents and teachers agreed with the statement. Even though many parents suggested that the celebration of the Arab and Islamic occasions should be more frequent, the schools considered all the occasions similarly important, and encouraged the students to participate in these celebrations.

Table 7. The English Curriculum and Western Identity – Student’ Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The English curriculum exposes me</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to the Western history and heritage.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The English curriculum exposes me</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to the Western literature.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The English curriculum exposes me</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to the Western culture and values.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The English curriculum reinforces</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>my Western identity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In school, I am encouraged to use</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. In school, I am encouraged to</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>celebrate Western festivities (e.g.,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halloween, Christmas, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. The English Curriculum and Western Identity – Parent’s Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The English curriculum exposes my</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child to the Western history and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heritage.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The English curriculum exposes my</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child to the Western literature.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The English curriculum exposes my</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child to the Western culture and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>values.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The English curriculum reinforces my</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child’s Western identity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instruction through the English Medium and its Impact

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5. In school, my child is encouraged to use English.  60.0%  30.0%  10.0%  0.0%  0.0%
6. In school, my child is encouraged to celebrate Western festivities (e.g., Halloween, Christmas, etc.). 12.5%  32.5%  27.5%  25.0%  2.5%

By and large, the above findings suggest that the English curriculum plays a major role in promoting some form of Western identity amongst students via heavy exposure to Western culture, values, and literature. In addition, the fact that in schools, the students celebrated different Western occasions seems to be in contradiction with the schools’ efforts to reinforce their Arab identity by promoting the Arab, national and Islamic traditions. Furthermore, the schools’ role in encouraging the students to use English rather than Arabic while in schools could result in low levels of Arabic proficiency.

Table 9. The English Curriculum and Western Identity - Teachers’ Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The English curriculum exposes my students to the Western history and heritage.</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The English curriculum exposes my students to the Western literature.</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The English curriculum exposes my students to the Western culture and values.</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The English curriculum reinforces my students’ Western identity.</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. In school, my students are encouraged to use English.</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. In school, my students are encouraged to celebrate Western festivities (e.g. Halloween, Christmas, etc.).</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

In their endeavor to achieve global standards of modernization and development, UAE policy makers have decided to switch gradually from Arabic- to English-medium instruction. However, many educators and policy makers have recently concern that Arabic and Arab identity are under threat due to the excessive use of English and the influence of Western culture and values. Therefore, they argue that there is an urgent need to preserve both entities. This study has sought to find out whether there is a decline in the use and mastery of Arabic and due the English-medium instruction and whether this has an impact on students’ Arab identity.
First, students have indicated a strong preference for the use of English in their day-to-day activities. By being exposed to English rather than Arabic at school, through media and internet, the students are becoming more competent in the former and less fluent in the latter. The study also reveals that in comparison with the number of the English periods offered, the number of Arabic periods is not sufficient for the students to master Arabic. Although the findings indicate that the students are involved in a diglossic situation, in which Arabic is used with family members and English at school, English is gradually becoming their first choice. It is used not only to communicate with their teachers and friends, but also to surf the internet, carry out leisure activities, and to express feelings and emotions. As a result, students are becoming more and more fascinated with the Western culture. This fascination is exhibited in their choice of Western means of entertainment and appreciation of Western values. According to many adolescents, to be Western is tantamount to being “cool”.

Second, the study reveals that students do not receive sufficient exposure to materials that promote Arab values and reinforce Arab identity. Even though the students are occasionally introduced to the aspects of Arab identity during Arabic classes and school celebrations, this exposure is eclipsed by the abundance of Western cultural and historical references in the English curriculum. The latter does not include any materials about Arab history, literature, culture and heritage. Furthermore, the English curriculum excels in meeting the students’ expectations by promoting pedagogical practices based on critical thinking and problem solving, a matter which fulfills their cognitive needs and broadens their horizons. Besides, the English curriculum provides a wide range of programs, which facilitate students’ access to higher education. For instance, obtaining international certificates such as The International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) or The International Baccalaureate (IB) secures better academic opportunities in North American universities.

Finally, the study has highlighted the issue of identity crisis, which the adolescents face due to the contrasting values conveyed through English and Arabic. Granted, the dual use of Arabic and English and the exposure to two different cultures, many students have pointed out, provides them with a wide spectrum of values and perspectives. According to them, a mixed identity provides effective ways to deal with a variety of situations in a flexible and open-minded manner. However, many of the values are contradictory, which creates a sense of confusion and loss vis-à-vis which values to privilege or adopt. Several students expressed a sense of loss and detachment from Arab identity. Even though the students are aware of the fact that the Arabic language is part and parcel of Arab identity, it no longer represents the core of their social identity.

The study has a number of theoretical and pedagogical implications, which can contribute to persevering Arabic and reinforcing Arab identity. First, there is no denial that the Gulf countries’ endeavor to achieve global standards of development in different sectors and to adapt to modernization and globalization forces make it necessary to adopt English, though not exclusively, as a medium of instruction. At the same time, it is crucial that the students remain attached to their indigenous language and Arab identity. To meet these objectives, a complete bilingual system should be implemented. The education system should continue to adopt EMI, but should also ensure that the students master Arabic. Therefore, administrators in the English medium schools should emphasize the importance of Arabic and Arab identity in their mission and vision, and set regulations which allow more frequent use of Arabic in school.
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In addition, the contents of the Arabic courses should provide sufficient knowledge about Arab culture, heritage, history and literature. These courses should also be revised and modified in ways that promote critical thinking and problem-solving to meet the students’ needs and expectations. Teachers of Arabic should be provided with continuous professional development opportunities to enable them to apply novel approaches to language teaching, and therefore increase students’ interest in the Arabic language and its heritage.

In conclusion, a new curriculum should be introduced to meet international education standards, yet maintain the Arab culture and its values. This curriculum should be designed to cater to the needs of the Arab students, and restore their attachment to Arabic and its heritage. In so doing, schools should strive to recruit bilingual teachers who can teach effectively in the English medium, without compromising students’ indigenous culture and societal values.

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Mrs. Arua Al-hussien is a freelance English instructor and teacher trainer. She has worked as an English teacher in a number of schools in Jordan and the UAE, and has conducted training courses for teachers in Abu Dhabi, UAE. She holds a Masters degree in Education and a BA in TEFL.

References


Reconiling Two Opposing Cultures: The Bamboo Stalk and the Arabic Bildungsroman

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Qassim University
Almulayda, Qassim, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
Although many have discussed the complicated themes of culture and identity in the The Bamboo Stalk by the Kuwaiti novelist Saud Alsanousi, a few critics have examined its protagonist’s coming of age journey. The present paper thus seeks to read The Bamboo Stalk within the context of the Bildungsroman tradition, especially with reference to the Arabic Bildungsroman’s distinguished narrative and thematic concerns. Bildungsroman is a literary genre that presents a young protagonist’s quest to search for meaning. While examining the novel against the characteristics of Arabic Bildungsroman, the present study highlights the success of the protagonist’s coming of age journey wherein he painstakingly transitions from childhood into adulthood in a bid to realize his identity through reconciling two cultures and hence his bicultural identities. The key finding of this paper revolves around the demonstration that The Bamboo Stalk resonates with sufficient affinities to warrant its classification as an Arabic Bildungsroman.

Keywords: Alsanousi, Arabic novel, bildungsroman, Kuwait, The bamboo stalk
Introduction

Saud Alsanousi is a Kuwaiti novelist and journalist, born in 1981. He published his first novel *The Prisoner of Mirrors* in 2010, which won the fourth Laila al-Othman Prize, a prize awarded for novels and short stories by young writers. His second novel *The Bamboo Stalk* won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction 2013. Receiving this prestigious prize, he becomes the youngest author to win the prize. In 2015, he published his third novel “Mama Hessa’s Mice.” In his novels, Alsanousi raises complicated themes related to religion, discrimination and identity. His sharp criticism of Kuwaiti society particularly in his last two novels is an attempt to inspire a positive change in the way Kuwaitis view both others and themselves.

*The Bamboo Stalk* (2012) explores the sociocultural ramifications of ethnic prejudice and economic disparity in Kuwait. The novel recounts the Kuwaiti-Filipino protagonist José’s coming of age journey, a quest to embrace his bicultural identities. In *The Bamboo Stalk*, Alsanousi employed a distinctive pattern of the thematic and narrative characteristics of the *Bildungsroman*, a type of novel that traces the moral, psychological, and intellectual development of a protagonist during his quest for authentic selfhood. This distinctive pattern is linked particularly to the Arabic Bildungsroman of which *The Bamboo Stalk* is an example.

The Bildungsroman

Coined by German authors, Bildungsroman emerged during the 18th century, with Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister Lehrjahre* (1795) long considered a prime example of the genre. One of the most typical definitions of this genre was supplied by Harmon and Holman in their *A Handbook to Literature* (1992): Bildungsroman is “A NOVEL which recounts the youth and young manhood of a sensitive PROTAGONIST who is attempting to learn the nature of the world, discover its meaning and patterns, and acquire a philosophy of life and ‘the art of living’” (p.34). The German term “Bildungsroman” translates as a “novel of formation” and is also called a “novel of initiation” or a “novel of education” (Abrams, 1999, p. 193). Von Morgenstern coined the term *Bildungsroman* in the 1820s, but it was Dilthey who applied the term to particular German novels in which

a regulated development within the life of the individual is observed, each of its stages has its own intrinsic values and is at the same time the basis for a higher stage. The dissonances and conflicts of life appear as the necessary growth points through which the individual pass on his way to maturity and harmony. (as quoted in Swales, 1978, p. 3)

In *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* (1974), Buckley further defined the genre, adding that a Bildungsroman’s plotline must include “childhood, the conflict of generations, provinciality, the larger society, self-education, alienation, ordeal by love, and the search for a vocation and a working philosophy” (p. 18). Though Buckley (1974) conceded that writers do not strictly follow this pattern while writing a Bildungsroman, he argued that no Bildungsroman “ignores more than two or three of its principal elements” (p.18). He also emphasized that the protagonist’s journey towards self-discovery is key to the plot and that the journey must be initiated by some type of difficulty facing the protagonist. Grappling with tension and experiencing obstacles help the protagonist to gain self-knowledge and maturity.
The Arabic Bildungsroman

While the genre was first linked to European culture, Bildungsroman has also appeared in Arabic culture with “its definitive, culturally determined themes and structures, distinctive basic tension, and established literary conventions” (Al-Mousa, 1993, p. 223). The Arabic adaption of the genre revolves mainly around the cultural-specific challenges that the Arabic Bildungsroman protagonist faces during his quest for reconciling two opposing cultures and achieving self-realization. In “The Arabic Bildungsroman: A Generic Appraisal,” Al-Mousa (1993) analyzed six Arabic novels in an attempt to draw the profile of the Arabic Bildungsroman tradition in Arabic literature. Al-Mousa (1993) defined the genre in the following way:

In a Bildungsroman, action hinges on the fortunes of an ambitious young hero as he struggles to live up to his poetic goals against the negative forces of prosaic reality. Typically, he grows up in a humble family in the provinces, but, endowed with an adventurous spirit, leaves home to seek his fortune and realize his ambitions. In the course of his adventures, the hero falls in love with an aristocratic lady whose inaccessibility awakens him to the harshness and complexities of life, which is part of his education. His adventures bring him into contact with various guides and mentors who volunteer to initiate him into life's realities and a series of disenchantments designed to contribute to his internal growth. Only by shaking off all the traces of his romantic orientation does he come to accept reality and his apprenticeship to life comes to its end. (p. 223)

However, though his definition of the Bildungsroman includes the same elements as proposed by Buckley (1974), Al-Mousa (1993) proposed three additional themes that distinguish the Arabic Bildungsroman from the Western Bildungsroman. The first theme is a cross-cultural conflict of the East and the West, the second is the occurrence of a spiritual crisis during the protagonist’s journey, and the third replaces the typical theme of teaching the protagonist the art of living in the Western Bildungsroman with the theme of teaching the protagonist to reconcile two opposing cultures. In any Bildungsroman, the protagonist’s journey should end in some form of self-realization or identification of life purpose. Though the protagonist in a Bildungsroman might be shown to have morally, intellectually or spiritually developed, the success focus of the protagonist’s cultivation and edification process in the Arabic Bildungsroman is demonstrated by the protagonist's ability to reconcile two cultures. The development of the protagonist in the Arabic Bildungsroman thus “involves a great deal of bicultural stress and conflict” (Al-Mousa, 2006, p. 263).

The Bamboo Stalk and the Arabic Bildungsroman

José Mendoza/Isa al-Tarouf, the protagonist of The Bamboo Stalk, struggles to define an identity apart from the rejection he experiences. The result of an urfi marriage (a kind of marriage in which the marriage contract is not announced or registered officially) between parents of distinct social classes, his bicultural identity stems from his mother, Josephine Mendoza, a Filipino domestic servant, and his father, Rashid al-Tarouf, the Kuwaiti son of her employer. Since birth, José has experienced rejection and isolation at the hands of both cultures and so embarks on a pilgrimage to find his authentic self. Leaving behind his mother’s land, the Philippines, José imagines that the Kuwaiti culture will provide him with the acceptance and, ultimately, the fulfillment he has been lacking. José believes Kuwait to be his true home, and that
only there he will find his authentic self. By undergoing the thematic stepping-stones common to the Arabic Bildungsroman, José will reconcile his feelings toward both cultures.

José’s birth is socially unacceptable in class-conscious Kuwaiti society. Denounced for his relationship with a domestic servant, José’s father, Rashid, succumbs to social pressure and sends José and his mother, Josephine, to the Philippines. Rashid ultimately rejects both mother and son by announcing that he is divorcing Josephine and remarrying. Though Rashid keeps his promise to send financial support, the money ceases when Rashid is killed during the Second Gulf War. At the cessation of the support, José begins a life in the Philippines now defined by poverty and loss. However, he retains his dream of one day experiencing prosperity in his native Kuwait, and with the assistance of his father’s friend, Ghassan, José returns to Kuwait. Upon landing in Kuwait, José experiences discrimination for not being fully Kuwaiti; his partial Filipino ancestry, as well as his parents’ scandalous relationship, engenders immediate rejection. José also begins to fall victim to the rigid, prominent Kuwait caste system. Again, he finds himself being oppressed by a culture and its people. Unraveling his complex ethnic and cultural roots enable José to transcend the confines of his birthright. Through his many struggles, and the power of his own experiences and observations, he gradually finds his place within both cultures. He learns he is able to transcend his past and define himself; he is both José Mendoza and Isa al-Tarouf. He is Kuwaiti-Filipino. The novel closes showing José, his wife and son, Rashid, leading a comfortable life in the Philippines. His self-concept is his own, and his journey to self is a success. In The Bamboo Stalk, the protagonist’s strenuous journey toward maturation serves to recognize and resolve the complexity of bridging opposing cultures.

The general themes of the traditional Bildungsroman can be found throughout The Bamboo Stalk. In the Philippines, José endures emotional alienation, among many other challenges and obstacles. His maternal grandfather, Mendoza, mocks José as being fatherless and blames his birth for his mother’s unemployment: “Although I was still young, Mendoza became openly hostile towards me. ‘If there was any good in this boy, his family there wouldn’t have abandoned him,’ he said” (Alsanousi, 2015, p. 64). While the emotional rejection is particularly painful, it motivates the protagonist to begin the all-important quest for self. The many instances of societal reproach serve as necessary growth points. Rejected by both his maternal grandfather and parental family, he learns that he must become self-sufficient. The aspiration to develop his own mind and character is a controlling feature of the typical Bildungsroman protagonist, one who eventually learns that it is unwise to depend upon others for sustenance. The rejection in the Philippines does not destroy the young José, who ultimately endeavors to live in his homeland, Kuwait. He believes that he will one day live peacefully and prosperously in Kuwait, and be fully embraced by his father’s people. At this point in the novel, José is a passive child who lacks all keys to self-realization. He pins his hope on his chances for individual fulfillment upon the unknown—another place, another time, and the actions of others. While José’s mother naively supports this plan, she does supply him with something he will need throughout his journey: hope. Her encouragement gives José the motivation and fortitude he needs throughout his journey.

The Cross-Cultural Conflict Theme

At the age of 18, José gains the opportunity to begin the next leg of his quest. Here, the theme of cross-cultural conflict begins to evolve. Although the Arabic and Western
Bildungsroman both involve a journey, the Arabic protagonist heads not to a city, but to a foreign culture. Throughout, he will endure multiple challenges and experiences that will assist his understanding of self and world, and also help to reconcile the opposing cultures. Al-Mousa (2006) explained that “the young hero’s exposure to a foreign culture proves to be beneficial, in that it enables him to form better insight into himself and to develop a more accurate understanding of the native and foreign culture” (p. 263). Thus the outcome of the quest in the Arabic Bildungsroman pivots on the character’s coping with bicultural stress. That the journey to a foreign culture benefits the individual’s personal growth and the cultivation of his or her mind is best expressed by Said (2006) who pointed to the journey’s influence on the individual’s development:

The more one is able to leave one’s cultural home, the more easily one is able to judge it, and the whole world as well, with the spiritual detachment and generosity necessary for true vision. The more easily, too, does one assess oneself and alien cultures with the same combination of intimacy and distance. (p. 259)

In *The Bamboo Stalk*, José does not take his journey West, but rather returns to the East, specifically to Kuwait. Although no Western journey occurs, the educational benefits of a trip to another culture, as proposed by Said (2006), are comparatively dramatized in José’s journey to Kuwait, ensuring affinity with the Arabic Bildungsroman. Since José’s childhood had been spent in the Philippines rather than in his native Kuwait, his direction home conflicts only superficially with Al-Mousa’s (1993) model of the Arabic Bildungsroman. Being exposed to another culture allows José to evaluate things from “a cross-cultural perspective” (Al-Mousa, 1993, p. 224).

In Kuwait, José is immediately confronted by discriminatory treatment typically enacted against people from the Far East. José experiences discrimination as soon as he arrives in Kuwait when scolded by the passport officer for lining up with Kuwaiti passengers. He is not only subject to the prejudicial attitudes of strangers, but finds he is also disdained by his parental family. José discovers that his grandmother disapproved of his parents’ marriage. Thus, worried that José’s presence could irreparably damage their reputation, his aunts try to disown him from the family. His childhood dreams of Kuwait quickly begin to erode. While he would prefer acceptance, he is given the option of housing and money if he remains hidden. Ghassan explains to a bewildered José that Kuwaiti society is complicated, but José cannot initially comprehend the complexity of the class system:

I didn’t understand what Ghassan said about Nouriya’s attitude. Why was she so upset? What was it that threatened her reputation and made her the laughing stock of her husband’s family? Why did my presence complicate marriage for her son and her daughter? Those were the same words Grandmother had said to my father years earlier when she found out my mother was pregnant: “And your sisters, you selfish, despicable man. Who’ll marry them after what you’ve done with the maid?” These were things I didn’t understand. When I was in the Philippines my mother couldn’t explain them to me. I asked Ghassan what it all meant.

“It’s impossible to explain such things to you, Isa,” he replied, “and it’s hard for you to understand.” (Alsanousi, 2015, p. 195-96)
José’s bitter disappointment nevertheless motivates him to act. Separated from the family, he gains financial independence and begins to make his own observations of Kuwaiti society. Meeting the Kuwaiti young men he had once known from the Philippines further helps José to sort out the country’s complex class system. He learns through his own experience with rejection that in Kuwait, unlike the Philippines, class standing is paramount:

“...There was something complicated in Kuwait that I didn’t understand. All the social classes looked for a lower class on whose back they could ride, even if they had to create one. Then they would climb on to the shoulders of those in the class below, humiliate them and use them to ease the pressure from the class above. (Alsanousi, 2015, p. 250)”

Socio-economic classes remain distinct, and thus do not inter-marry. José finds that this imbalance is the reason why Kuwaiti cannot get to know “the other.” However, this inflexibility enables José to appreciate memories of the Philippines, where everyone, except for the harsh treatment he received from his troubled grandfather, never judged his origin. While his growing disappointment with Kuwait is profound, it yields poignant lessons. His childhood dreams were naïve and based upon an unfulfilled promise. Having lived within both cultures, he is able to interpret his own experience with each. He perceives materialism as the controlling force within Kuwaiti culture. In particular, he is unimpressed with his wealthy paternal family’s offer of money in return for his silence. Similarly, his father sent José money when he was a child, but neglected to give him a parent. While the family lives in luxury, José observes that their lives appear bereft of meaning:

“Giving without love has no value. Taking without gratitude has no savour. That’s what I have discovered. I looked at the floor in the middle of the sitting room. I imagined my mother there, sitting cross-legged by her suitcase a week after coming back from Bahrain. The family were around her on the sofas, everyone waiting for their present…..

I can still remember how happy everyone looked. Why wasn’t I as happy with the presents from my Kuwaiti family as Uncle Pedro was with a cigarette lighter that wasn’t worth more than 100 fils? It’s love that makes things valuable. (Alsanousi, 2015, p. 276)"

Self-realization is achieved when the individual finally makes his or her own decisions and choices. Throughout his stay in Kuwait, José cultivates the habit of comparing and contrasting the two cultures. This process is integral to his gradual maturation. This stage, the conflict between two cultures, proves to be foremost in José’s educational journey as it widens his vision to assess himself. He is able to identify and reconcile his own values and beliefs within a cross-cultural context. He neither needs others to offer him a sense of place, nor an explanation of his role within it. The exposure to these two opposing cultures enables José to gradually gain control over his life and further his growth. José’s self-education through this stage prompts his quest towards reconciling these two cultures.

“A love affair is a salient theme in the Arabic Bildungsroman that also helps to bring “opposed cultural values into dramatic focus” (Al-Mousa, 1993, p. 225). The male protagonist of the Arabic Bildungsroman typically falls in love with a female from an opposing culture, typically a Western country. The disparities within the relationship sharpen the conflict between the two cultures, thus furthering the protagonist’s maturation. Although José does not experience
a romantic relationship with a Kuwaiti female, his correspondence and love for his Filipino cousin, Merla, serves a similar purpose. Typically, the Arabic Bildungsroman protagonist is ultimately rejected by the Western female, an event that drives him to compare his native culture to her own. In *The Bamboo Stalk*, José is not rejected by the girl he romantically loves, yet his love for Merla still sharpens the tension between the two cultures. Merla accepts him without any bias; she judges him on account of neither his rejection in Kuwait nor his father’s abandonment. While he is in Kuwait, her emails are instrumental to José’s progress. She warns that without seizing his own power, he will never realize his potential: “Prove to yourself who you are before you prove it to others. Believe in yourself, and those around you will believe in you, and if they don’t believe that’s their problem, not yours” (Alsanousi, 2015, p. 282). She aims at inspiring José to know himself better. By shedding light on both cultures, and more importantly on himself, this love guides and nurtures his maturation. José eventually marries Merla. This love affair, and eventual marriage, is the embodiment of bicultural unification. Two cultures can peacefully coexist.

**The Spiritual Crisis Theme**

Al-Mousa (1993) considers the spiritual crisis as a theme typical to the Arabic Bildungsroman. Like the love affair, this theme dramatizes the cultural values in the opposing cultures. In the West, the protagonist feels his spirituality fading, a feeling which causes him to adopt the materialism of the West, eschew it in favor of his devotion to the spirituality of the East, or else create a hybrid of the two, as Al-Mousa also concludes. In *The Bamboo Stalk*, José is without a previous devotion worthy of return; however, he still experiences a genuine spiritual crisis. Since childhood, José has questioned faith and pursued truth. Certain that he would one day return to Kuwait and become Muslim like his father, his mother ignores his questions. While exploring the religious diversity true to the Philippines, José attends services with Christians and Buddhists, but Islam remains foremost in José’s mind. José believes that his Kuwaiti homeland will eventually resolve his religious questioning.

At his first visit to a mosque in Kuwait, José meets a young Filipino religious scholar, Ibrahim Salam, who has been living in Kuwait and working as a correspondent for a Filipino newspaper. Ibrahim gives him a DVD of the movie *The Message*, a movie chronicling the life of Prophet Mohammed, and begins to answer José’s questions. This encounter encourages José to pursue his interest in Islam while continuing his search for universal truths. He observes that Islam encourages people to be kind, yet he has experienced mistreatment by Muslims in Kuwait. As he continues to engage in religious discussion with Ibrahim, he begins to question Ibrahim’s stories about miracles. Here, José finds himself at a cross-cultural impasse. By using the skills of examination and assessment he has acquired throughout his journey, José is able to reflect on spirituality through a cross-cultural lens.

While still a boy in the Philippines, José had been christened in a church. He recalls the priest asking questions during the ceremony and how he, purely out of obedience, nodded affirmatively. José’s personal beliefs were never questioned. Similarly, he experiences the Kuwaiti people holding tightly to the edicts of one religion, Islam, yet neglecting to honor José’s appeal for spiritual knowledge. After a lifelong search, José openly critiques those who superficially ascribe to the tenets of religion, yet neglect its humanistic application. He argues with Ibrahim that Islam does not need superficial miracles to be credible and that people do not
need material objects to worship God:

Religions are bigger than their adherents. That’s what I’ve concluded. Devotion to tangible things no longer matters as far as I’m concerned. I don’t want to be like my mother, who can only pray to a cross, as if God lived in it. I don’t want to be like one of the Ifugao and never take a step unless it’s sanctioned by the anito statues, which help my work prosper, protect my crops and save me from the evil spirits at night. I don’t want to be like Inang Choleng, tying my relationship with God to a favourite statue of the Buddha. I don’t want to seek Baraka from a statue of a white horse with wings and the head of a woman, as some Muslims do in the south of the Philippines. (Alsanousi, 2015, p. 299)

These years of spiritual questioning precipitate a chain of events that assist José in clarifying his values, ones that positively contribute to his spiritual maturation and the likelihood of his self-actualization. Undergoing a spiritual crisis, José has refined a concept of spirituality based on his own understanding and not someone else’s doctrine. This experience of the spiritual crisis typical of the Arabic Bildungsroman has paved the road for José’s search for authentic self.

The Theme of Reconciling Two Cultures

The last stage of the Arabic Bildungsroman protagonist’s journey is the reconciliation between two opposing cultures. For José, the acceptance of his biculturalism has been earned through cultural shock, his love affair with his cousin and his spiritual crisis. His three years in Kuwait have culminated in self-awareness. Through his painful experiences with his grandfather and father’s family, he has come to understand that he, alone, is capable of assigning his worth. His value cannot be assigned by another, regardless of the person’s cultural, socio-economic or spiritual standing. José has gained the wisdom to create a life devoid of classification. He returns to the Philippines where he marries his cousin Merla and has a son, Rashid, named after his father.

The essence of the Arabic Bildungsroman is the protagonist’s ability to reconcile two opposing cultures; however, by returning to the Philippines, José neither turns his back on Kuwait, nor declares his journey a failure, but rather experiences his journey full-circle. He returns because he has achieved his ultimate goal: to know José. José went to Kuwait at 18 because he needed to harmonize his opposing cultures and prove and reconcile his bicultural identities. This point in the voyage afforded José the opportunity to both confront and challenge aspects of the life he had once dreamed of. At one time, José had perceived Kuwait to be his homeland—a place where he would experience religious mastery, peace, and prosperity. He had expected to find his personal, intellectual, and spiritual worth within its folds. On the contrary, Kuwaiti culture serves as a foil rather than a reflection. The challenges and hardships he has endured in Kuwait, including his spiritual search, were critical turning points in his journey. His marriage to his Filipino cousin is a sign of true cultural reconciliation.

When he returns to the Philippines, José brings a small bottle containing dirt from his father’s grave, a Kuwaiti flag, a prayer rag and an English version of the Koran. These objects are meaningful symbols of his newfound peace with his bi-ethnicity. In the novel’s final scene, José sits with his family watching a football game between the Philippines and Kuwait and roots for both countries: “I don’t want one of my teams to defeat my other team. I don’t want to take
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Al-Mutairi

sides” (Alsanousi, 2015, p. 370). The scene clearly shows that José has transcended the need to belong solely to one culture. His physical and spiritual journeys between both countries have availed him of the positive and negative aspects of both cultures, ultimately allowing him to form a hybrid self. At the end of his quest, José emerges different as his self-perception has been shaped and solidified and is no longer dependent on outside classifications. During the first months of his stay in Kuwait, José felt that his dream of belonging to Kuwait was false and that he would never become like the bamboo stalk, which even when cut and planted on the other side of the earth would grow its roots again. However, he eventually acquires a clear, and authentic vision of the real José, a vision follows his overcoming a series of trials and ordeals.

**Conclusion**

José’s journey follows strictly the Arabic bildungsroman pattern of steady growth culminating in the protagonist's reconciliation of two opposing cultures and thus possession of a whole and authentic self. Although some may read José’s return to the Philippines as an indication of the failure of his journey, reading *The Bamboo Stalk* against the thematic features of the Arabic Bildungsroman highlights, on the contrary, the success of José’s journey to self-realization and to reconcile two cultures. José’s return was preceded by awareness of his growth after going through many hardships and tribulations. Alsanousi wielded the features of the Arabic Bildungsroman to emphasize this process of maturation and growth. Just as personal growth and the reconciliation between two cultures in the Arabic Bildungsroman are journeys from the inner heart to the outside world, in *The Bamboo Stalk*, the protagonist’s inner dissatisfaction drives him to search for his identity by reconciling his bicultural identities. José goes through all of the stages of the transition of the Arabic Bildungsroman protagonist. This transition culminates in his return to the Philippines when he comes to the full realization of who José is and what his newfound principles are. The return to the Philippines thus becomes the culmination of Alsanousi’s story about his Kuwaiti-Filipino protagonist’s coming of age, as well as the culmination of his protagonist’s years of bewilderment and pain.

**About the Author:**

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**References**


Features of Saudi English Research Articles Abstracts

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Abstract
The research article (RA) abstract genre has attracted significant attention in the academic community. A well-written abstract can draw journal editors’ attention and improve an author’s chances of being accepted for publishing and later being read and cited by peers. This study is a contrastive genre analysis of Saudi English RA abstracts within a World Englishes (WE) perspective. It aims to answer two questions. What are the genre structure and periodicity patterns in abstracts written by Saudi researchers for a local audience? What are the differences and similarities in genre structure and periodicity patterns between abstracts written by Saudi researchers and abstracts written internationally? The data comprised three sets of RA abstracts: the first was a Saudi English set with 37 abstracts; the second was an international set with 29 abstracts; and the third was an Arabic set with 27 abstracts. The three sets were analysed based on Swales and Feak’s (2009) five-moves CARS model through which this study investigated the moves’ presence, sequence, cycicality, length, use of citation, use of acronyms, use of percentages, use of listing, and paragraphing. Findings show that Saudi English RA abstracts differ from the international RA abstracts in showing more move presence fluctuation; verbosity; move cycicality; excessive use of citation, acronyms, and listings; and multi-paragraphing. Due to the scarcity of studies about Saudi English in general, this study could shed some light on this emerging variety of English and trigger more studies on Saudi English RA abstracts from new perspectives.

Key words: Abstract, Saudi English, Swales’ abstract model, moves
Introduction

During the last few decades, an increasingly significant body of scholarly research has been devoted to an exploration of the features of different varieties of English as used in different parts of the world in diverse social and cultural contexts. Kachru (1986b, 1990) divides these varieties of English into three concentric circles. The Inner Circle includes countries in which English has traditional historical and sociolinguistic origins, such as the UK, USA, and Australia. The Outer Circle includes countries in which English spread through colonization, such as China and Nigeria. The Expanding Circle includes countries in which English is widely used as a medium of communication without playing a historical or constitutional role. According to this stratification of World Englishes (WE), English spoken in Saudi Arabia is considered an Expanding Circle variety.

WE focuses on studying the emergence of localized or indigenized varieties of English that are not considered as an exclusively European or Western language, and its development is not entirely dictated by the usage of its so-called native speakers (Ferguson, 1982). It is more concerned with being inclusive of all varieties of English and examining them, not in terms of correctness but in terms of appropriateness and equality (Proshina, 2014). Kachru (1986a) asserts that an important aspect of identifying an emerging variety of English is examination of its formal features: phonological, phonetic, syntactic, and lexical. According to Mahboob (2013), despite English playing an important role in education, the economy, and politics in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the number of studies examining English as produced by Saudi people within the framework of WE is very limited.

One of the areas of Saudi English (SE) that has been studied is the features of research article (RA) abstracts and how they could be indicative of Saudi English as an emerging variety. Hence, the research reported here aimed to address the following questions:

1. What are the genre structure and periodicity patterns in abstracts written by Saudi researchers for a local audience?
2. What are the differences and similarities in genre structure and periodicity patterns between abstracts written by Saudi researchers and abstracts written internationally?

Literature review

WE is a product of a linguistic phenomenon in which language adjusts to new environments and changes to suit its new realities. This is what Kachru and Smith (2009) explore as one of the two main ways in which English impacted the world: the Englishization of local languages and the nativization of the English language. WE is primarily interested in the latter. A leading researcher in this area was Kachru (1997) who presented one of the most influential models of the spread of English in the world, and captured it in the previously mentioned three concentric circles model of languages. The WE field has expanded to include numerous research studies employing this model, such as those by Gonzales (2010), Hartford and Mahboob (2004), Mahboob (2009), Evans (2011), and Al-Rawi (2012).

There is limited scholarly attention paid by linguists to the level of the English varieties spoken in the Arab World within the WE framework. Despite considerable research conducted on English in the Middle East from pedagogical and macro-linguistics perspectives, very few studies have used the WE framework to investigate the features of English as spoken by Arab...
speakers in these countries (Mahboob, 2013). For example, Reynolds (1993) examines the pragmatics of language use in Egyptian English newspaper editorials. Similarly, Atawneh and Sridhar (1993) test the pragmatics of Arabic English as displayed in the politeness strategies employed in English language use by Arab bilinguals. While Stevens (1994) investigates the characteristics of Egyptian street hustlers’ routines, Schaub (2000) has given a relatively more recent account of Egyptian English from a macro-linguistics perspective. A more recent study has been conducted by Fussell (2011) in which he investigates the features of what he terms ‘Gulf English’, which is spoken in the Arab Gulf area. This study provides a syntactic, phonological, lexical, and sociolinguistic account of the English spoken and written in the Gulf region and how it is pragmatically used to reflect the local, cultural, religious, and social attributes of the region.

In the context of Saudi Arabia, there have been studies that focus on features of Saudi English. For example, Wood (1983) explores the features of Saudi English (SE) by drawing attention to the semantic, syntactic, and phonological differences between SE and the other English varieties spoken in other Arabic countries. Al-Haq and Ahmed (1994) explore the features of Saudi students’ argumentative written discourses for pedagogical purposes. Al-Haq and Smadi (1996) explore English in Saudi Arabia from a macro-linguistics point of view. The latter two studies, however, do not employ a WE perspective but instead label these features as errors and deviations. Other studies include those of Al-Rawi (2012), who investigates syntactic features, and Mahboob (2013) and Mahboob and Elyas (2014), who explore features of SE in textbooks.

The limited literature found about SE indicates that it is an understudied area of research that needs further investigation from different angles and within various perspectives. Hence, this research aims to fill the gap in the literature by providing an analysis of the language used by Saudi researchers in RA abstracts and identifying their distinct qualities that might be features of SE. In addition, this study could inform Saudi writers’ knowledge of abstract genre writing conventions, which will improve their chances of getting their RAs accepted in international journals.

**Methodology**

**Data Collection**

This research is based on an analysis of RA abstracts written by Saudis and published in scholarly journals. The primary data source consisted of three sets of RA abstracts. The first set consisted of twenty English RA abstracts published in the *Journal of King Saud University: Languages and Translation*, henceforth referred to as ‘the Saudi texts’. This journal is based in Riyadh, KSA, and published for a local audience. This set was the source from which features of SE were identified and compared to the next two sets of data. The second set consisted of ten international RA abstracts written by researchers of different nationalities and published for an international audience, henceforth referred to as ‘the international texts’. Because this set was the norm against which the Saudi features were compared, the researcher considered that ten abstracts were sufficient to be indicative of the norm and enable a valid comparison to be drawn. The third set consisted of ten abstracts collected from an Arabic journal, henceforth referred to as ‘the Arabic texts’. This set consisted of ten Arabic RA abstracts that were written by Arabic researchers and published in Jordan for a local audience. This set provided points of reference for
SE features that might be due to language transfer from Arabic to English. This number of abstracts was chosen because it can provide sufficient linguistic material to establish comparisons. All RA abstracts in the three sets were in the field of linguistics and published after 2011.

Data Analysis

The main framework that was employed in this research was Swales’ (1981) and Swales and Feak’s (2009) model of abstract analysis, in which the structure of RA abstracts is described in terms of ‘moves’. ‘A ‘move’ is a functional term that refers to a defined and bounded communicative act that is designed to contribute to one main communicative objective, that of the whole text’ (Lorés, 2004, p. 282). The five moves and their functions are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Adopted from Swales and Feak’s (2009, p. 5) five moves and their function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moves</th>
<th>Function/description</th>
<th>Question asked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Move 1: Situating the</td>
<td>Setting the scene for the current research (topic generalization)</td>
<td>What has been known about the field/topic of research?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research &lt;STR&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 2: Presenting the</td>
<td>Stating the purpose of the study, research questions and/or hypotheses</td>
<td>What is the research about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research &lt;PTR&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 3: Describing the</td>
<td>Describing the materials, subjects, variables, procedures…</td>
<td>How was the research done?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>methodology &lt;DTM&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 4: Summarizing the</td>
<td>Reporting the main findings of the research.</td>
<td>What did the research find?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>findings &lt;STF&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 5: Describing the</td>
<td>Interpreting the results and/or giving recommendations, implications/applications of</td>
<td>What do the results mean? So what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research &lt;DTR&gt;</td>
<td>study.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the issues arising when applying Swales’ model is that identifying moves within abstracts can sometimes be ambiguous. However, regardless of differences in types, moves in RA abstracts aim at achieving the same functions that can be identified, regardless of the overlap in the structure. Hence, a single clause or phrase can include more than one move based on its function in the abstract. In order to clarify any ambiguity, the data was analysed by another linguistics researcher. Then the two analyses were compared for consistency. Very few inconsistencies occurred and these were discussed until agreement was reached on moves identification.

The Saudi and international texts were analysed on the level of genre for moves structures; this included the moves’ presence/absence, sequence, overlap, use of citation, and use of listing. The findings were compared to identify persistent features in the Saudi texts that were distinctive from the norm as set by the international texts. Arabic texts were analysed only for move patterns and then were compared to the Saudi patterns.
In order to take a closer look at the language used within each move, thematic analysis was conducted at the clause level using Halliday’s (1994) Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework. Thematic analysis is concerned with ‘the point of departure of the message’ and how information is organized within it (Halliday, 1985, p. 64). It shows how the writer adjusts the beginning of the clause (theme) to direct the reader to how he or she should interpret the information in the rest of the clause (rheme).

Every move within the Saudi texts was analysed for textual patterns, then compared to the international patterns. There was no comparison between the Saudi and Arabic texts on the level of the clause for two reasons: first, the textual structures of the two languages are very different since they belong to different language families; and second, SFL is developed within the context of English language structure, which makes it difficult to apply to Arabic language structure.

In addition, transitivity analysis was conducted on the Saudi and international texts for a better understanding of the structure of the whole clause. Comparison was made concerning emerging patterns of process types, circumstances, participants, voice, and negation.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the analysis and suggests explanations for the main findings, using extracts from the data in order to demonstrate some of their relevant aspects.

Table 2. Percentage of move presence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column</th>
<th>Move 1</th>
<th>Move 2</th>
<th>Move 3</th>
<th>Move 4</th>
<th>Move 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saudi</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of the whole text (genre analysis)

![Figure 1. Percentage of move presence](image)

This figure illustrates the percentage of move presence in the Saudi, international, and Arabic texts.
As Table 2 and Figure 1 show, Saudi texts were different from both the international and Arabic texts. Only one Saudi text out of the twenty analysed contained all five moves. Move 1, which is concerned with situating the research, was present in 45% of the Saudi texts and move 5, which is concerned with recommendations, was present in 50%. The unexpected fact about the moves was that none were 100% present in any Saudi text. Move 2 was 90% present, which was the highest, move 4 was 75% and move 3 was 65%. The international data, in contrast, had moves 2, 3, and 4 present in all texts, and move 5 was present in 90% of the texts, while move 1 was the least present (40%). This indicates less consistency among Saudi researchers about which moves are obligatory or not for the formation of a good abstract. However, the Arabic texts showed a consistent pattern that differed from both the Saudi and the international sets. Moves 2, 3 and 4 were almost 100% present with percentages of 100%, 90%, and 90%, respectively. Move 1 had a 10% occurrence while move 5 did not occur in any Arabic texts.

Although abstracts could include all five moves, that is not always the case (Swales & Feak, 2009). The fact that the Saudi texts did not always include all five moves is unlikely to be caused by the word-count restrictions of the journals in which they were published. The average word count for the Saudi texts was 168.5, which is well within the common limit for an RA abstract. Furthermore, one of the longest Saudi abstracts in this data (396 words) only included move 1 and move 5, while the shortest one (85 words) included moves 1, 2, and 4, indicating the irrelevance of text length to the number of moves included.

The inclusion of move 1 (which is the orientation phase) in the RA abstracts is governed by an important factor in the three data sets. Arabic writing tends to be reader-responsible while Western writing tends to be writer-responsible (Mohamed & Omer, 2000). Therefore, it is expected that the international writers have a sense of responsibility towards the reader to include move 1 (40%), while Arab writers tend to depend on the reader to predict such information, therefore move 1 was included in only 10% of the Arabic texts. The fact that the Saudi texts presented a higher percentage (45%) for move 1 than the Arabic and international texts could be due to hypercorrection and a tendency to ‘play safe’ by trying to include every move.

Regarding move order, unlike the international and Arabic texts, Saudi data showed fluctuation in move order. As shown in Example 1 and 2, moves were ordered 2^3^4^5 in 50% of the international texts, and 2^3^4 in 80% of the Arabic texts. Moves are numbered and highlighted for clarity.

Example 1. International text:
(2) This article reports a study on metaphor comprehension … a British university. (3) The study participants identified words or multiword items that … misinterpretations. (4) We found that of the items that were difficult … 4 percent of cases. (5) As university lecturers use metaphors for important functions… metaphor comprehension.

Example 2. Arabic text
(2) تتناول هذه الدراسة صوت (الضاد)، والسعى مركز في هذه الدراسة على حل جوانب هذا الصوت، سواء الجوانب المباشرة أو غي... الحرة والمقيدة للضاد(3) وتحليلها على اهتماء من الثقافة اللغوية اللسانية المعاصرة(4) وأظهرت الدراسة أن صوت الضاد صوت... (الفوناتيكية) لصوت الضاد، سواء التهانات المقدمة (الفونولوجية) والمماثلة بالمخالفة والمماثلة والإدغام.
The Saudi texts follow no pattern; although certain moves tend to start or end the Saudi RA abstracts, different types of move sequences are used, such as the order used in Example 3.

Example 3. Saudi text

(1) Given that accurate stress assignment rules can help enhance speech technology applications, (2) the present paper provides a digital processing of stress in Standard Arabic. (4) The findings indicate that stress in this language is manifested by a variety of correlates… stress assignment.

Furthermore, move overlap occurrences are different in the three sets of data. Move overlap means when a move reoccurs in a single abstract or when two or more moves are embedded in a single clause. In the Saudi data, 25% of the RA abstracts showed move overlap, in the international data the percentage was 30%, and in the Arabic data it was 0%. However, the major difference between move overlap within the Saudi and international data was in the way moves are realized within a clause. Saudi researchers tended to realize each move in a separate clause while the international researchers tended to embed one move into another, such as in Examples 4 and 5.

Example 4. Saudi move overlap

(1) The concept of equivalence is believed to be … ([Bolaños, 2005], [Snell-Hornby, 1988] and [Nord, 1997]). (5) This paper argues that … equivalence. (1) Many researchers have discussed equivalence in translating … the English speaking readers (Baker, 1992). (5) In such cases, I argue that … metaphors and proverbs.

Example 5. International move overlap

(3) Using a corpus-based approach (4) investigates the construction of stance in finite reporting clauses with that-clause complementation

Such differences in the method of move realization in the Saudi text may indicate the writer’s desire to be clear about move boundaries for the sake of abstract clarity; however, it could also be due to difficulty in creating a complex semantic structure despite being able to create a complex grammatical structure.

One of the most common strategies in abstract writing is for writers to establish a niche for themselves by considering prior scholarly research and finding gaps in it, or raising some questions about it, and then announcing how their contribution proposes to remedy these deficiencies (Swales, 1990). Justifying the importance of the research topic is often accomplished in two main ways: citing other research to indicate the attention given to the topic by other scholars, stating the significance of the topic through employing textual resources, or both. Focusing on the first, Table 3 shows that Saudi texts have the highest percentage of citation usage (30%), the international texts have 10% and the Arabic texts have no citations.
Table 3. Use of citations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Texts including citations</th>
<th>Total number of citations</th>
<th>Topic importance claims</th>
<th>Number of occurrences of topic importance claims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saudi texts</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International texts</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic texts</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 6 from the Saudi texts and Example 7 from the international texts illustrate how citations are utilized by each group to justify the topic’s importance.

Example 6. Saudi text citation
Several theories on the concept of equivalence have been elaborated within this field in the past fifty years. [Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995], [Jakobson, 1959], [Nida and Taber, 1982], [Catford, 1965], [House, 1977] and [Baker, 1992]. Indeed, “Equivalence” has provided a useful theoretical …translation processes. However, the notion of equivalence has also been criticized …ill-defined” ([Bolaños, 2005], [Snell-Hornby, 1988] and [Nord, 1997]).

Example 7. International text citation
Central theme were our attempts to reduce power differentials between researchers …(Norton, 2000) in our collaborative research project. Drawing on numerous small stories (Bamberg, 2004; Georgakopoulou, 2006), we argue that several researcher identities were realized… teacher educator.

In the second approach, differences can be seen in stating the significance of the topic across the three datasets. The Saudi texts state topic significance in only 15% of the abstracts, while the international texts have double that percentage. This could be cautiously interpreted in terms of comfort zone; Saudi researchers who write in English find themselves, to a certain degree, more compelled to solidify their claims with sufficient evidence, hence, they refer to other scholarly research for support. Conversely, the international writers often feel more at ease since they are writing in English to the English academic community, which leads to an assumption of shared knowledge about the topic, and therefore they may feel less compelled to justify what can be considered as common knowledge. Furthermore, it is worth noting that 7% out of the 15% of topic importance claims are accompanied by citations, which indicates that Saudi writers are more inclined to emphatically prove their point in English.

Example 8. Saudi text
The concept of equivalence is believed to be a central issue in translation although its definition, relevance, and applicability within the field of translation theory … in the past fifty years. [Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995], [Jakobson, 1959], [Nida and Taber, 1982], [Catford, 1965], [House, 1977] and [Baker, 1992].

Example 9. International text
There has been much research on language and identity with respect to learners, teachers, and teacher educators, an important stakeholder in language education.
Finally, analysis shows that in 20% of the Saudi texts, move 4, in which results are stated, is placed in the form of a list, which is more congruent with the Arabic findings than the international ones, as illustrated in Table 4. Such occurrences could be because the Saudi researchers have transferred Arabic rhetorical properties into their English writing, resulting in a textual organization that is incongruent with the international norm. It is worth noting that one Saudi text contained two lists each of five items.

Table 4. Percentage of Listing Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of texts containing lists</th>
<th>Max. of list numbering</th>
<th>Min. of list numbering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saudi texts</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International texts</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabic texts</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level of the clause**

In order to have a better understanding of the thematic and textual organizations of the moves of RA abstracts on the level of the clause, thematic, process, and tense choices were examined across the Saudi and English texts.

Regarding thematic structure, apart from move 2, there is a lot of incongruence between the Saudi and international researchers. The Saudi texts employed approximately 3.84% of textual resources while the international data employed 47.82%. As stated earlier, the role of the theme is to direct the reader towards how to interpret the information. In addition, any change from unmarked theme to textual or marked theme signals a shift of topic focus (Rose & Martin, 2007). Hence, these changes work as small signs for the reader that a shift is about to take place. The fact that Saudi writers keep this textual resource to a minimum shows their reader-responsible writing pattern, which is more associated with Arabic writers than with Western writers. Examples 10 and 11 illustrate the most common textual resources employed by each.

Example 10. Saudi text

Nevertheless, similar to other types of… disharmony and even revenge.

Example 11. International text

However, the study provides … studies can be measured.

Table 5. Move 2 thematic analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Textual</th>
<th>Marked</th>
<th>Unmarked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saudi</td>
<td>3.84%</td>
<td>11.53%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>47.82%</td>
<td>13.04%</td>
<td>69.56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding process type choices, apart from move 1, all moves employed relatively similar process choices. Move 1, which orients the reader to the field by describing its current state, understandably employs more relational and existential processes than do material, mental, or verbal ones. Hence, the fact that only 12% of the Saudi texts were relational and another 12% were existential is worth consideration, especially since international texts employed more than
33% of each process type in this move, as illustrated in Table 6.

**Table 6. Move 1 process type analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Relational</th>
<th>Verbal</th>
<th>Mental</th>
<th>Existential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saudi</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
<td><strong>33.33%</strong></td>
<td>16.66%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples 12 and 13 illustrate how these processes are realized in each dataset.

Example 12. Saudi text

It is still conceived as a subdiscipline of applied linguistics. *(relational)*

There has also been a shift towards studies that have incorporated models from functional linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, locating the text within its sociocultural context. *(existential)*

Example 13. International text

Truscott claimed that it is ineffective, harmful and should be abandoned. *(relational)*

There has been much research on language and identity with respect to learners, teachers, and teacher educators. *(existential)*

Regarding the tense choices in the Saudi and international texts, findings show that they are, apart from the future tense, very congruent, as illustrated in Table 7. Furthermore, despite their overlap, moves in Saudi texts were firmly separated with clause boundaries and not embedded into each other. This lexicogrammatical feature signals the cautious nature of Saudi writing in regard to English grammar.

**Table 7. Percentage of tenses within texts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Present tense</th>
<th>Past tense</th>
<th>Past and present</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saudi</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Points of difference that** distinguish SE from international English

Looking at the findings and discussion of the data from a WE perspective gives a hint to some linguistic patterns that may be features of SE in abstracts as an emerging variety. On the level of abstract genre, Saudi researchers have a fluctuating move pattern. This is evident in two main aspects: first, the reader-responsible style, which does not give textual signals to guide readers through the text to help them adjust their expectations; and second, the use of listing, which is not a feature of English RA abstract writing style. However, Saudi researchers tend to hypercorrect their text by trying to follow the rules and playing safe, while international researchers are more concerned with getting the message through. Apparently, Saudi academic language is trying too hard to get approval from readers by using citations of scholarly literature and claiming topic importance. On the level of clause, the lexicogrammatical resources are used accurately, yet cautiously. Finally, thematic structure is not fully employed to guide the reader about the information in the rheme.
Conclusion
This research applied genre analysis to RA abstracts from a WE perspective by identifying the linguistic features of abstracts written by Saudi researchers and published to a local audience and comparing them to those written and published internationally. Swales and Feak’s (2009) abstract analysis model was applied to recurrent linguistic patterns of moves. Furthermore, Halliday’s (1985) thematic analysis was used to examine the texts on a clause level. Findings were placed in tables or graphs and discussed in detail. Finally, some features of the Saudi abstract text patterns were highlighted as possible features of an emerging SE variety.

Notes
1. The English translation of the Arabic text is not included in the body of the study because it will reflect the English structure, which is not the purpose of including Arabic. In all examples, moves are numbered in bold between round brackets to distinguish them from the text extracts.
2. By list I refer to using a paratactic phrase or independent clause after a colon, often with numbering, to state the findings in the RA abstract.

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References
Fallatah


Teaching Large Classes: What are the Beliefs of Yarmouk University Instructors?

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Abstract:
The aim of this study is to investigate the beliefs of Yarmouk University instructors regarding teaching EFL to large classes. The researchers distributed a questionnaire to 22 instructors at the Language Center. The questions mainly concerned the issues of teaching environment of large classes and instructors’ performance in such classes. The results show that instructors’ beliefs towards teaching large classes are medium in general and assert that teaching large classes is a problematic area. Moreover, they show that instructors’ beliefs towards their performance are high despite the difficulties they encounter. In addition, they show that there are statistically significant differences in their beliefs towards the teaching environment due to gender in favor to females. Lastly, the results show that there are statistically significant differences in their beliefs towards their performance in the classroom due to educational level in favor to PhD holders. The researchers recommend conducting further research in class size context.

Keywords: EFL, Jordan, large class, teachers’ beliefs, university education
Introduction

English language has become the language of international and inter-cultural communication worldwide. In today's business world, the trends towards globalization increase the demands towards learning the language as a key to interactions between nations and a ticket to guarantee a shelter under the globalization umbrella needed by all nations (Al-Khatib 2000).

In fact, interest in teaching English language in Arab countries has been increasing. Most Arab countries introduce English as a compulsory study subject at schools. At tertiary level most universities use English as a medium of instruction in most faculties. According to Zughoul(2003), a major Jordanian linguist, English is "still badly needed in the Arab world for the purposes of communicating with the world, education, acquiring technology, and development at large" (p.2). Frankly speaking, more efforts need to be exerted to raise the quality and standard of English of the Arab learners at all levels.

Concerning the Jordanian context, the widespread of English language and the accelerated globalization have made English indispensable to almost every field in Jordan. English language is a mandatory study subject at schools from the first grade and in many cases from KG1. At Jordanian universities, English is the medium of instruction and learning in most academic disciplines.

In spite of the fact that students enrolled in Jordanian universities have studied English for at least 12 years, their low proficiency has raised many concerns among educators. Students have relatively low exposure to the language and low need to use English in their daily life exposure (Jdetawy, 2011). Besides, the students' background knowledge after completing the school stage and before joining the university may affect their proficiency level in English. Another factor is the level of difficulty of the courses taught to them at the university. Moreover, their proficiency may be affected by the competences of the instructors of English and the methodology they apply while teaching them.

Another reason that might be attributed to the students’ low proficiency in English is large classes and Yarmouk University students' have their share in this problem. At the present time, increase in class size is currently a universal phenomenon and perceived by administrators to be the only solution to deal with the shortage of manpower and resources. Large size classes do not provide an ideal environment for teacher-student interaction. They are more difficult to manage in that the teachers find it difficult to provide individualized help to students, which projects more burden on teachers. Hayes (1997) summarizes the problems of teaching in large classes as follows:

**Discomfort:** The physical constraints imposed by large numbers in confined classrooms make many teachers worried. They feel helpless when they want to promote student interaction, since there is no room to move about. Some teachers also feel that teaching in large classes is physically very wearing.

**Control:** The discipline aspects of large classes make teachers worry most of the time.

**Individual attention:** Many teachers worry that they are neglecting the students’ individual needs.
Evaluation: Teachers worry about not being able to check all of their students' work.

Learning effectiveness: All teachers want their students to learn English effectively. They are understandably worried if they don't know who is learning what.

In fact, teachers' beliefs of class size differ from one institution to another. Such beliefs are important in order to find solutions for various problems that may emerge in large classes. Oladejo (1992) indicates that many studies have to be conducted to investigate teachers' opinions about large classes to allow them to give their own ideas which may be considered as solutions to large class problems. This may help in increasing the quality of education at all levels, and may show the effectiveness of reducing the number of students inside the class room.

In order to fully understand the problem of large class size and its effects, teachers’ own points of view concerning such issues should be taken into consideration since teachers are cornerstone of the educational process as a whole.

**Teachers’ Beliefs**

Teachers, especially English teachers, prefer teaching in small classes because they believe that students of small classes learn better as teachers can employ plenty of activities and practice; however, their beliefs are not supported by much research in this respect (Bahanshal, 2013). Moreover, the literature review reveals that the amount of research about class size in developed countries far outweighs that in developing countries. Therefore, more studies are needed to investigate the issue of class size in developing countries such as Saudi Arabia, Oman, Egypt and Jordan (Bahanshal, 2013).

In order to develop more effective teaching approaches, teachers’ beliefs need to be understood well. Large classes are now a trend in tertiary education in Jordan where little is known about teachers’ beliefs. It is worthwhile though, to listen to what the lecturers believe concerning large classes before making decisions to implement any policy of increasing class size.

Teachers’ beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes have been often discussed in literature because they are important for understanding and developing the process of teaching and learning. Teachers’ beliefs for sure affect their strategies to cope with the challenges they face in their profession as well as their impact on student’ learning process, motivation and achievement.

Teachers’ beliefs about teaching and learning and how it could affect their teaching practices, activities, and outcomes are essential in finding effective teaching methods (Burns, 1992; Shavelson & Stern1981). Thompson (1992) describes beliefs as the personal views, conceptions and or theories. Teachers are highly affected by their beliefs which play a vital role in their development and are closely related to their values and their views of the world (William & Burdon, 1997). They stated that “teachers’ deep-rooted beliefs about how languages are learned will pervade their classroom actions more than a particular methodology they are told to adopt or course book they follow” (p. 57). According to Pajares (1992), belief systems represent a personal guide by helping individuals define and understand the world and themselves. He found that there is “a strong relationship between teachers’ educational beliefs
and their planning, instructional decisions, and classroom practice”. Moreover, Oppenheim (1981) stated that attitudes are reinforced by beliefs (the cognitive component) and often altered by strong feelings (the emotional component) that will lead to particular forms of behavior. For the purpose of this paper ‘Belief’ is defined as– the acceptance of something as true, or thinking that something could be true (Schwitzgebel, 2011).

Questions of the study

1. What are the beliefs of Yarmouk University instructors towards teaching large classes?
2. What are the beliefs of Yarmouk University instructors towards their performance while teaching large classes?
3. Are there any statistically significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the beliefs of Yarmouk University instructors towards their performance while teaching large classes and towards the teaching environment due to their gender?
4. Are there any statistically significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the beliefs of Yarmouk University instructors towards their performance while teaching large classes and towards the teaching environment due to their educational level?

Problem of the Study

Large classes are a big problem that encounters instructors of English as a foreign language in developing countries. Jordan, as a developing country, is no exception and has its own share of large class problems. The Language Center at Yarmouk University was established in 1979 and is one of the largest centers at Yarmouk University. This center serves more than six thousand students from various disciplines each semester. The center is responsible for teaching two compulsory EFL courses for undergraduate level. The average EFL class size is currently around 75 students as opposed to 30 students back in 2001. This growth in class size has meant that the instructors at the Language Center are teaching classes larger than they taught five years prior, and this increase is spiraling upward in the near future. Moreover a new building with twelve lecture halls each designed to accommodate 196 students in addition to four auditoriums is now under construction at Yarmouk University and it will serve up to 4000 students per hour studying compulsory courses. This is what actually makes Yarmouk University an ideal institution to conduct the needed research to investigate and ascertain the beliefs of the instructors regarding large classes. Moreover, it is hoped that the results of this research, along with other research papers, can lead to a positive change. The researchers, as instructors at Yarmouk Language Center, hope that the results of this research would be able to persuade university administrators to decrease the number of students inside the class rooms, specifically classes of English compulsory courses.

Purpose of the study

This study aims at investigating the beliefs of Yarmouk university instructors about teaching large classes.

Importance of the study

This study may broaden the base of knowledge of the university authorities, policy makers, researchers and other stockholders of education, since it is hoped that the results may shed light on the problems of EFL large classes. Thus, the results may present solutions that
target gradual improvements to overcome the problems of large classes and to improve the quality of education at the university level. Secondly, it may encourage the university authorities to employ more lecturers to teach general courses regardless of the expenses that may affect the university budget. Furthermore, the results may suggest the need for training programs for teachers targeted at how to teach and manage large classes. Moreover, the university may equip the instructors with the teaching facilities that are strongly needed to teach both small and large classes. Lastly, the results of this study may also add to the existing literature which can be used as a reference for other researchers to investigate the problem in other Jordanian universities and to conduct further research.

Limitations of the study
The generalization of the results of this study is limited to Yarmouk University instructors teaching 101 at the Language Center.

Literature Review
A great deal of effort has been exerted to uncover teachers’ beliefs in language teaching (Borg, 2006; Chen & Goh, 2011; Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood, & Son, 2004) as teachers’ beliefs have a great influence on their teaching practices (Borg, 2003; Chen & Goh, 2011). While extensive research was conducted on large class teaching, not much research has investigated teachers’ beliefs concerning large classes.

The attitudes towards teaching large classes vary from one teacher to another. It is not surprising to find some teachers enjoy teaching large classes (Felder, 1997). They think that if adequate strategies are adopted, students can achieve more and the ability to teach this large number of students well, can give instructors a sense of job satisfaction and pride.

According to (Hayes, 1997) most English teachers tend to view teaching English in large classes rather negatively. They often associate large English classes with disorderliness, lack of control, lack of students' attentiveness, lack of teacher-student interactions, and therefore, lack in the students' ability to speak the language fluently.

Shapson et al. (1980) investigate the effects of class size on teachers’ expectations; the attitudes and opinions of students and teachers, student achievement in reading, mathematics, composition and art, student self-concept, and a variety of classroom process variables such as teacher-pupil interaction and method of instruction. Overall, the findings of the study indicate that small classes offer more flexibility to the teachers compared with the larger classes.

Besides, Bennett (1996) designed a study to assess the attitudes and perceptions and experiences of head teachers, parents, chairs of governors, and teachers related to the class size in schools. According to the teachers, based on data gathered through a questionnaire from 325 primary schools, it was found that class size affects the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers consider that smaller classes provide more attention for individual children while larger classes make assessment difficult.

Çakmak(2009) used a questionnaire including open-ended items to collect data regarding the perception of student-teachers about the effect of class size with regard to
effective teaching process. The study reveals that there is a direct relationship between class size and motivation, teaching method used, classroom management, and assessment according to student-teachers’ views.

A very recent study was conducted by Nguyen and others in 2015. They researched the factors affecting the efficacy of teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Vietnamese higher education from twelve EFL teachers’ perspectives at Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology (HUTECH), Vietnam. The study explored both positive factors and negative factors. The large number of students was a common complaint raised by the majority of the teachers. At HUTECH, there were about 50 to 55 students in each English class, and this was believed to reduce the quality of English teaching and learning. Teachers of large classes found it difficult to control and manage the class well. It was also especially difficult and time-consuming for the teachers to employ communicative activities such as pair work and group work. In addition, the teachers said that it was impossible to bring the highest benefits and effectiveness to the students in such large classes.

After this brief review of literature on class size and teachers’ beliefs, it is apparent that teachers of large classes believe that teaching such classes is considerably difficult.

Method and Procedures

This section presents the methodology that the researcher followed in this study. It includes the design of the study, the sample of the study, the instrument, the validity and reliability of the instrument, the appropriate statistical analysis and the procedure of the study.

Design of the study

The quantitative method was used in this study. To answer the questions of this study, the researchers used a questionnaire to collect numerical data.

Sample of the study

The sample of the study includes all the instructors teaching 101 at the Language Center at Yarmouk University which consists of 22 female and male EFL. The sample of the study is shown in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variables</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PHD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>86.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrument of the study

To achieve the objectives of the study the researchers implemented a questionnaire adopted from Jimakorn and Singhasiri (2006). It consisted of three sections: section I is a demographic section to get the respondents’ background information on gender, teaching
experience, and education Section II concerns the respondents’ knowledge of the university policy on class size. Section III, the core of the study, contains facts and opinions concerning:
1- The general condition of their lecture halls.
2- Teaching and learning conditions in large classes.
3- Degree of teaching difficulty in large classes.
4- Opinions towards teaching in large classes and small classes.

The scoring scale followed in the questionnaire has the following five scales:
- Strongly Agree =5
- Agree=4
- Uncertain=3
- Disagree=2
- Strongly Disagree=1

Validity of the questionnaire
To validate the instrument, the content of the questionnaire was assessed by a jury of 5 lecturers and researchers at Yarmouk University, and their comments were taken into consideration in order to improve some of the items in the questionnaire. Thus, a number of items were omitted especially the open ended questions. Also, the researchers divided the two sections of the questionnaire into two domains in response to the jury's suggestions.
- The first domain is about teaching environment.
- The second domain is about teachers; performance in the classroom.

Reliability of the questionnaire
In spite of the fact that the researchers adopted Jimakorn's and Singhasiri's questionnaire, they computed the consistency coefficient using Cronbach alpha as shown in Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cronbach alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching environment</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures of the Study
The following procedures were followed for the purpose of collecting data:
- Determining the purpose of the study
- Determining the sample of the study
- Adopting the instrument of the study which is a questionnaire from Jimakorn and Singhasiri (2006).
- Distributing the questionnaire to the sample of the study
- Getting the results and analyzing them in light of the questions of the study
- Drawing conclusions and recommendations according to the results of the study.

Results and Discussions
To answer the first question (what are the beliefs of Yarmouk University instructors towards teaching large classes?), means and standard deviations of the beliefs of Yarmouk University instructors towards teaching large classes were computed as presented in Tables (3)
Table 3 shows that item 8 "Assessment will focus on tests and examination rather than homework or continuous assessment e.g. tasks, assignments, group projects." has the highest mean (3.91). On the other hand, it shows that item 3 "The university does not need many teachers" has the lowest rank (mean = 2.68).

In fact, the previous results showed that the beliefs of teachers towards teaching large classes were medium in general. This may be due to the fact that, large classes need extra effort from the instructors in terms of organizing the educational environment taking into consideration the individual differences among students. Such effort requires teaching facilities such as laboratories, computers, chairs and other instructional aids. This result partially agrees with most of the studies of the related literature except the study of Felder (1997) who stated that some teachers enjoy teaching in large classes because they think that if adequate strategies are adopted, students can achieve more and that large classes give instructors great satisfaction and self-pride that they can teach this large number of students.

To answer the second question (What are the beliefs of Yarmouk University instructors towards their performance while teaching large classes?) means and standard deviations of the beliefs of Yarmouk University instructors towards their performance while teaching large classes were computed as shown in Tables 4.
Table 4 shows that Item 11 "Having students work in groups in class" has the highest mean (4.64). This table also shows that item 2 "Setting up goals of the lesson" has the lowest rank (mean = 3.18).

The previous results indicate that the level of Yarmouk University instructors' performance was high. This result reflects the fact that these instructors practice the appropriate methods of teaching because they are highly qualified, skillful and experienced. In addition, they have strong feelings of loyalty to their university since they try their best to enhance the quality of learning in general and students' levels in specific despite the various problems they face during the educational process such as the lack of facilities.
To find out whether there are any statistically significant differences at $\alpha = 0.05$ in the beliefs of Yarmouk University instructors towards their performance while teaching large classes and towards the teaching environment due to their gender, t-test analysis was conducted and the results are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5 T-test results of instructors' responses on the questionnaire considering their gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td>-2.674</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.606</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>.800</td>
<td>-1.192</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>.312</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows that there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) in large classes instructors' beliefs towards the teaching environment due to Gender variable in favor of female. This result indicates that teaching large classes is more problematic for females rather than males because large classes need extra effort in terms of class room discipline. In other words, male instructors may be being able to control male students better than female instructors.

On the other hand, there were no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha= 0.05$) in the beliefs of Yarmouk university instructors towards their performance in the classroom due to Gender variable. This result is logical in terms of being in harmony with the educational situation at the university since all male and female instructors perform their teaching practices in similar circumstances in terms of having nearly the same number of students in their classes in general and in terms of facilities available for them.

To find out whether there are statistically significant differences in the beliefs of Yarmouk University instructors towards their performance while teaching large classes and towards the teaching environment due to their educational levels, t-test analysis was conducted and the results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6 t-test results of instructors' responses on the questionnaire related to their Educational level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master's degree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.812</td>
<td>.946</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 shows that there are no statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in large classes instructors' beliefs towards the teaching environment due to Educational level variable because both PhD holders and MA ones perform their educational practices in the same educational environment. On the other hand, there are statistically significant differences at ($\alpha = 0.05$) in large classes instructors' beliefs due to Educational level variable in favor of PhD holders. This result is may be due to the fact that PhD holders have more cognitive knowledge which is reflected positively on their performance since they have higher degree than their MA colleagues.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the results of this research show that Yarmouk University instructors’ beliefs towards teaching large classes are medium in general. However, the results show that the instructors’ beliefs towards their performance are high despite the difficulties they face, such as the lack of facilities. Moreover, results show that there are statically significant differences in large classes instructors’ beliefs towards the teaching environment due to gender variable in favor of female. Finally, while the results of this research paper find no statically significant differences in large classes instructors’ beliefs towards the teaching environment due to education level variable, statically significant differences are found in large classes instructors’ beliefs towards their performance due to educational level variable in favor of PhD holders.

The results of this research paper can be considered as a step forward towards a better understanding of the beliefs of large classes instructors at Yarmouk University.

**Recommendations**

This study provides information about the beliefs of EFL instructors at Yarmouk University in Jordan towards teaching large classes. Instructors showed some important beliefs which can be considered in class size context and, thus, more studies in different subject areas can be conducted.

The issue of large classes teaching should be addressed adequately as it affects the teachers’ beliefs about teaching. However, the limitations in this research area can’t be ignored. To better understand the teachers’ beliefs towards large classes, longitudinal studies with a larger number of participants and a well-designed questionnaire are needed to depict a more holistic picture of these beliefs and classroom decisions.

Moreover, lecturers should be trained to teach in large classes because they might encounter some difficulties while teaching such classes if they don’t have enough skills on how to teach in large class environment.
Furthermore, decreasing the number of students inside the class and increasing the number of instructors is also recommended in this area to avoid the problem of large class. Also, the university authorities are kindly recommended to provide instructors with the appropriate teaching facilities that enable them to deal with any obstacles that they may face when they are obliged to teach large classes.

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References


Teaching Large Classes: What are the Beliefs

Asqalan, Hijazi & Al Natour

Euromonitor.


English Pronunciation Errors by Jordanian University Students

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Abstract
This paper presents some of the major English pronunciation errors made by Jordanian students at the University of Jordan. The corpus is designed to investigate the production of English consonants, vowels, consonant clusters, and word stress by informants. The tested consonants are /p - v - f - ɹ - ɫ/ The tested vowels are /ɪ - e - a - ə - oʊ -. The tested consonants are square - explain or across words; best friend - ride and swim are tested for epenthetic vowels. The stress pattern is investigated in words such as isn’t - unfortunately. It is found that informants frequently confuse the following phonemes /p - ɳ - ɹ - ɫ/ with /b - ɲ - ɾ - l/ respectively. Moreover, informants frequently insert an epenthetic /ɛ/or /ɪ/ in consonant clusters whether within words; /sɪkɾi:m/ for /skɹi:m/ or across words; /bɛst fɹɛnd/ for /bɛst ʃɹɛnd/. Regarding vowels, informants commonly confuse the KIT-DRESS vowels producing both as /e/. The realization of the schwa /ə/ is greatly influenced by spelling. The LOT vowel is produced similar to its RP /ɒ/ realization as [ə] even though most informants adopt a General American accent and should therefore produce the vowel as /a/. The THOUGHT-GOAT vowel distinction is missing; both vowels are often merged as [ə:]. Finally, the informants very often shift the stress pattern from its trochaic English stress pattern; /ɪˈzɪnt/ for /ɪzɪnt/.

Keywords: Arabic L1, carryover, consonants-clusters, English L2, vowels
Introduction

Mastering English is viewed globally as an indication of good education and professionalism in different walks of life. As an international language, English has received a lot of attention in the Arab World. For over the past thirty years, many Arab and Arabic speaking linguists have researched the teaching of English to Arab speakers. In particular, the pronunciation of English has taken the lion’s share of research in that field, and rightly so. It is the speaking skill of English that many Arabs aspire to perfect in order to enhance their job opportunities and impress their potential employers with their communication skills in English, not least in the realm of business.

Many Arab and non-Arab researchers have worked on errors of English pronunciation by Arab speakers and remedial strategies to enhance Arab learners’ spoken English, notably (Mitchell, T, F. & Hassan, S. 1989; Kharma, N. & Hajjaj, A. 1997). This trend has increased in recent years as Arab English language teachers and Arab linguistics frequently produce work on English pronunciation errors by Arabic speakers.

Many Arab linguists attribute the common English pronunciation errors to the differences of the sound systems of English and Formal Arabic (FA), often referred to as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). Linguists who solely attribute such errors to influence of the mother tongue, First Language (L1), Arabic in this case, commonly follow the approach of Contrastive Analysis (CA) where the errors can be predicted based on comparing and contrasting the systems of the L1 and Language 2 (L2). However, those who analyze the produced errors themselves without particular reference to L1 often adopt an Error Analysis (EA) approach, where sources of errors might not always necessarily stem from a particular aspect or carryover effect from L1.

There are shared pronunciation errors among Arab speakers. It has been reported that some of the most common English pronunciation errors by Arabs are the consonantal phonemes /p, v, ɹ/ (El Zarka 2013; Binturki 2008). However, due to the different Colloquial varieties of spoken Arabic, it is inevitable that different Arab speakers would have different errors. For example, Arabic speakers from Egypt and Syria usually mispronounce /θ/ as /s/ so that sin is produced as [sɪn] and /ð/ as /z/ so that this is produced as [zɪs]. This difficulty in producing dental fricatives; however, does not exist for Jordanian, Palestinian or Gulf speakers of Arabic when they speak English (Mitchell, T, F. & Hassan, S. 1989, 96).

Types of pronunciation errors can be classified into three categories; segmental, stress related errors, and prosodic errors. Segmental pronunciation errors are manifested mainly in the realization of some ‘problematic’ consonants and vowels. These types of errors have been the most researched so far, as they can be easily pointed out perceptually as well as acoustically (e.g. El Zarka 2013; Binturki 2008; Al Saidat. E.M. 2010; El Khair M.I. 2014). Segmental errors represent the most obvious aspect of ‘foreignness’ in the speech of a non-native speaker of English. Very often segmental errors are attributed to direct influence from L1.

Table (1) presents the IPA consonantal phonemic inventory of English and Arabic; bracketed phonemes are found only in Arabic, highlighted phonemes are found only in English. The phonemes /p, v, ɹ, η, ʃ, dʒ/ exist only in English, and are more likely to be problematic for
native speakers of Arabic. Similarly, the bracketed phonemes that are specific to Arabic can be problematic for native speakers of English when learning Arabic.

Table 1  *IPA chart of Arabic and English consonants combined; bracketed phonemes are found only in Arabic, highlighted phonemes are found only in English*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place→Manner</th>
<th>Bilabial</th>
<th>Labiodental</th>
<th>Dental</th>
<th>Alveolar</th>
<th>Post-alveolar</th>
<th>Palatal</th>
<th>Velar</th>
<th>Uvular</th>
<th>Pharyngeal</th>
<th>Glottal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plosive</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>(tˁ</td>
<td>dˁ)</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>ġ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>m</td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tap/flap</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(r)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td>θ</td>
<td>ð</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>ʒ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(χ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateral</td>
<td>l</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximant</td>
<td>w</td>
<td></td>
<td>j</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affricates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another problem related to consonant production is consonant clusters. English is a language that allows for a wide variety of clusters in onset (0-3) and coda (0-4) position. Formal Arabic, on the other hand, only allows for two-consonant clusters in coda position. Table (2) summarizes the syllable structures in FA and English. The scarcity of consonant clusters in FA creates great difficulty for Arabic speakers who would likely change the structure of the English syllable using epenthetic vowels, a problem Japanese learner of English also encounter.

Table 2  *Syllable structures in Formal Arabic and English; syllables with consonant clusters are shaded*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Syllable Structure</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV</td>
<td>/wa.lad/ ‘boy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV:</td>
<td>/ʒa.di.da/ ‘new’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVC</td>
<td>/mək.ta.ba/ ‘library’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV:</td>
<td>/ka.bi.r/ ‘big’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVCC</td>
<td>/næs.r/ ‘eagle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV:CC</td>
<td>/fa.dd/ ‘he argued’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVCC</td>
<td>/hænt(s)/ ‘hunt(s)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCVC - CCVCC</td>
<td>/stæp(s)/ ‘stop(s)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCVCC</td>
<td>/stændz/ ‘stands’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCVCCC</td>
<td>/spriŋTS/ ‘sprints’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 shows the vowel charts of Arabic and English. The Arabic vowels are superimposed over the RP vowels, adjusted from Wells’ Dictionary (1991). The circled areas in
the monophthongs chart represent the Arabic vowels /ɪ-ɪː/, /u-uː/, and /a-a:/; the dotted lines in the diphthongs chart represent the Arabic diphthongs /aʊ/ and /aʊ/.

Figure 1  Arabic vowels superimposed over RP vowels, adjusted from Wells’ Dictionary (1991), circled areas in the monophthongs chart represent the Arabic vowels /ɪ-ɪː/, /u-uː/, and /a-a:/; dotted lines in the diphthongs chart represent the Arabic diphthongs /aʊ/ and /aʊ/.

It is clear that the Arabic vowels are much less than the English ones, this normally results in difficulties of vowel realization, distinction and perception by the Arab learner of English. In particular, the back area of the vowel space where English back-rounded vowels are articulated is non-existent in Arabic. Similarly, the English DRESS vowel area is pressed between the two front Arabic vowels /ɪ-ɪː/ and /a-a:/ Such vocalic differences along with the lack of the schwa pose serious challenges for Arab learners in articulating different English vowels.

Stress and rhythm errors are manifested in placing the English word stress on the wrong syllable, which in turn can result in the inability to properly produce a weak vowel (/ə/), an important aspect of English fluency. The stress rules of Arabic are highly predictable (Halpern 2009). Generally, in FA, the stress usually falls on the heavy syllable. In bisyllabic words, stress falls on the penultimate; /ˈwa.lad/ ‘boy’, in polysyllabic words stress falls on the penultimate if it is heavy; /ka.ˈli.mə.tɪ/ ‘my words’, if not, then the antepenultimate is stressed; /ka.ˈli.ma.tɪ/ ‘my word’. English stress rules are not as straightforward; and differ depending on the word’s part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, and adverb) and on the syllable number, not to mention compound words stress patterns and the influence of suffixes on word stress in English. There are also many exceptions to the English Germanic trochaic stress, particularly if the word is borrowed word from French, Latin or other languages (Carr, P. 2013).

Errors in stress placement in English can result in miscommunication especially in noun-verb distinctions as in ‘present (n.) vs. preˈsent (v.). However, in general, wrong stress placement contributes to the ‘foreignness’ of the non-native speaker of English which in turn distorts the proper English rhythm.
Prosodic errors are mainly manifested in producing a non-English intonation pattern. This type of errors is considered the most challenging for native speakers of Arabic, and indeed other learners of English. Inappropriate tonal patterns are not as clearly tangible and apparent as segmental or stress related pronunciation errors. More often than not, an Arabic speaker would be able to fluently produce all English consonants, vowels and stress patterns; however, there would still be ‘something’ non-native in their English speech. This ‘something’ is the melody of their utterance to which English native ears are susceptible. Such fine-grained differences in tonal patterns and details of pitch accents become discernable when analyzing the speech signal acoustically. Although Arabic and English are intonational languages that depend on tonal patterns and pitch accents to convey grammatical and attitudinal messages, they employ different tonal patterns for different purposes. Indeed, intonation errors play a major role in the staccato beat characteristic of English speech produced by Arabs and the common observation by English speakers that Arabic speakers sound abrupt and commanding.

Research Questions

In light of the various types and studies on English pronunciation errors by Arabic speakers, this study comes to complement some of the gaps in this field. Many researchers as mentioned above tackled the discussed errors from different aspects. However, the whole picture is often fragmented and incomplete for a single variety of spoken Arabic. Some researchers studied one type of error; consonants (Binturki 2008), vowels (Saadah, E. 2011), consonant clusters (Al Saidat, E. M. 2010), stress placement (Almbark, R., Bouchhioua, N., & Hellmuth, S. 2014). Studies of intonational aspects of English produced by Arabic speakers are scarce (Al Gethami 2008). Acoustical studies on the intonation of FA and Colloquial varieties of Arabic, using the auto-segmental metrical approach, came to light only in the past ten years.

This study aims to characterize the two types of English pronunciation errors; segmental and stress-related, by a single group of Arabic speakers; Jordanian university students. The segments under study were chosen based on the researcher’s experience of teaching English pronunciation and speech courses to university level Jordanian students for the past three years. There are four research questions:

1. How are the consonants /p - v - ŋ - dʒ - η - l/ realized by the Jordanian informants?
2. How are the tested English consonant clusters realized by the Jordanian informants?
3. How are the tested vowels /ɪ - ɛ - ɑ - ɔ: - oʊ - ə/ realized by the Jordanian informants?
4. How are different English stress patterns realized by the Jordanian informants?

Informants

Six male students at the University of Jordan were chosen for the study. The average age range is 23 (20 – 26). The informants come from a fairly homogenous group. All informants are originally from the same city of Madaba (30 Kilometers south-west of the capital city of Amman). The variety of Colloquial Arabic under study thus, represents the Bedouin Jordanian Colloquial dialect, referred to here as JA (Jordanian Arabic). This dialect is considered a North Najdi variety of Arabic, an early version of the Najdi dialect used today in Saudi Arabia (Ingham, B. 1994, 9). None of the informants has hearing or speech problems. None has lived outside Jordan for over six months. All have both parents from the same city of Madaba. All have gone to similar schooling in Madaba. The Informants are students at the Faculty of Arts (only HS is from the Faculty of Tourism) where the language of instruction is Arabic. Informants
were chosen to have a ‘fair’ proficiency of spoken English (verified by the researcher) were the tested sounds would likely manifest in their English speech.

**Methodology**

Informants read 158 words twice (words for: consonants =54, vowel =50, consonant clusters = 36, stress = 18, see appendix). In total, the produced tokens were (158x2) x 6 informants = 1896 (70 tokens were discarded for mispronunciation); therefore, the total analyzed tokens were 1826.

The words chosen to represent the consonants and vowels were also checked for their frequency in English using the website [http://www.wordfrequency.info/free.asp](http://www.wordfrequency.info/free.asp) to make sure informants did not find the test words unfamiliar and to produce them at their ease.

Each word was placed in the carrier sentence ‘say _ _ _ _ again.’ and was presented on a Powerpoint slide. The list of words was randomized twice and read from a computer screen. Each informant clicked for the next sentence at their own pace. The recordings took place at the University of Jordan’s Radio station (49.9FM) recording studio. The recording software was Sony Sound Forge (Pro. 11.0) 2013 - recording frequency: 44 KHz, computer: HP Elie7500: Windows 10 – core i 7 – 64bits. The informant’s mouth was approximately 5 cm away from a RODE Procaster (Broadcast Quality Dynamic Microphone).

Acoustic analysis of the data was carried out using Praat (version 6.0.15).

**Results**

The present study investigates problems in English pronunciation by Jordanian speakers in four aspects: consonants, consonant clusters, vowels and word stress. The chosen consonants and vowels include the main challenging English speech sounds Arabic speakers have. The results of the data analysis are presented below in four sections, accordingly.

**Consonants:**

The tested consonants are /p - v - f - dʒ - ð - j - l/. As can be seen in the Appendix, consonants were tested in various contexts, mainly: in the onset, in the coda, and between vowels. The affricate /f/, usually spelt as ‘ch’, was also tested in its two other spelling ‘ture’; *picture* and *nature* and ‘tch’; *watch* and *catch*. These words were added to see if spelling had an influence on the way the sound is pronounced. The velar nasal /ŋ/ did not have a (V-V) context as it only occurs in the coda in English. The /l/ had four extra words in onset consonant clusters; *try* and *great* as well as in the coda; *start* and *word*. Dark /l/; [l] had extra words for its rendition in coda consonant clusters; *old* and *help*, after long vowels; *feel* and *school*, spelt as ‘ll’, ‘le’, and ‘al’ in coda position; *will-all*, *table*, and *animal*, respectively.

Table 3 shows the correct pronunciation percentages of consonants in all contexts averaged for all informants. It can be seen that the two affricates /f/ and /dʒ/ which are not present in the inventory of Formal Arabic were realized correctly most of the time. This suggests that Jordanian speakers do not have a problem producing the English affricates, as will be discussed later in the Discussion. However, only one speaker (HH) had [ʒ] renditions for /dʒ/ in the words *Jordan*, *just* and *major*. Similarly, the fricative /v/ was always realized correctly and voiced by all speakers and in all contexts; the word *visa* was read as [fi:zə] in one repetition by two speakers only.
Table 3 Correct pronunciation percentages of consonants in all contexts averaged for all informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Rendition % of correct sound</th>
<th>How it was realized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>36.1%</td>
<td>Almost always produced as [b] specially word initially and between vowels; <em>put &amp; happy</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>97.2%</td>
<td>[f] only twice in <em>visa</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ñf</td>
<td>98.3%</td>
<td>Unanimously an affricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ðψ</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>Only one informant used [ʃ] in <em>Jordan, just and major</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>η</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Unanimously followed by a /g/:[ŋ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɾ</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Unanimously a tap [ɾ] in all contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɫ</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>Unanimously a light [lʲ] in all contexts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The speech sounds that were clearly problematic for the informants were /p - η - ɾ - ɫ/. The voiced bilabial stop /p/ was correctly voiceless only 36.1% of the time, in all other renditions it was realized as a voiced [b]. Table (4) shows the individual renditions of /p/ by all informants. The correct [p] renditions are shaded for clarity. Sometimes, /p/ was realized correctly in coda position by four informants. This can suggest that it is easier for Arabic speakers to produce a voiceless bilabial stop word finally than word initially; as in *up* and *keep*. Interestingly, one informant (MA) did not have a problem realizing a [p] in most of his renditions. The correct pronunciation percentage would be 26.6% when the renditions of MA are excluded.

Table 4 Individual renditions of /p/ by all informants; correct [p] renditions are shaded for clarity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/p/ contexts</th>
<th>tokens</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HH</td>
<td>HS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># -</td>
<td>put</td>
<td>b - b</td>
<td>b - p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Ç -</td>
<td>place</td>
<td>b - b</td>
<td>b - b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V - V</td>
<td>apple</td>
<td>b - b</td>
<td>b - b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V - V</td>
<td>happy</td>
<td>b - b</td>
<td>b - b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- #</td>
<td>up</td>
<td>b - b</td>
<td>p - p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- #</td>
<td>keep</td>
<td>p - p</td>
<td>p - p</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three other consonants / η - ɾ - ɫ/ were all realized as /ŋ - ɾ - ɫ/ respectively. The velar nasal /ŋ/ does not exist in Arabic as a phoneme, but as an allophone of /n/ and is always produced in the context /nk/ or /nɡ/. None of the informants produced /ŋ/ without a following voiced velar stop /ɡ/. Figure (2) is a screenshot showing the waveform and wideband spectrogram of say ‘king’ again and says ‘morning’ again by speaker MW. The pauses in the sound signal are very clear for the stops; /k/ in king and the /ɡ/ at the end of king and morning and in the word again. The /ɡ/ in morning has been highlighted for clarity.
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Figure 2 A screenshot showing the waveform and wideband spectrogram of say ‘king’ again and say ‘morning’ again by speaker MW; /g/ in morning has been highlighted for clarity.

The /ɹ/ is one of the most challenging English sounds for speakers of Arabic. The English approximant /ɹ/ was unanimously produced as a voiced tap [ɾ], the Arabic sound, in all contexts. An English /ɹ/ was produced once by speaker HS in run. Figure (3) shows the waveform and wideband spectrogram of [ɹ] and [ɾ] in the renditions of run by speakers HS and MB respectively. The abrupt [ɾ] highlighted in the signal is clear compared to the continuous [ɹ].

Figure 3 Waveform and wideband spectrogram of [ɹ] and [ɾ] in the renditions of run by speakers HS and MB respectively; [ɾ] is highlighted for clarity.

Dark [l] was not produced by any of the informants in its expected context in English; in coda position. All informants realized /l/ as a light [l] in all contexts. There was no difference in the /l/ realization whether in coda consonant clusters; old and help and after long vowels; feel and school. Similarly, spelling did not trigger any difference in pronunciation; all renditions of‘ll’, ‘le’, and ‘al’ in will-all, table, and animal, respectively, were realized as a light [l].
**Consonant Clusters**

Consonant cluster production was tested in two contexts; within words and across words. The tested words ‘within words’ were three types; in onset position as in *screen-street*, in coda position as in *desks-clothes* and across syllables within the same word as in *include-explain*. Tested words for clusters ‘across words’ were also three types; four-consonant clusters as in *best friend – must try*, three-consonant clusters as in *best food* and threesame consonants clusters as in *bad dream*, and two-same consonant clusters as in *big girl*.

Table 5 shows the percentages of the correct pronunciation of the tested consonant clusters ‘within words’ as the total correct renditions out of all informants’ renditions.

### Table 5 Percentages of correct pronunciation of the tested consonant clusters ‘within words’ counted as the total correct renditions out of all informants’ renditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant Clusters within Words</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Onset (CCC)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>screen-scream</td>
<td>sk = 40.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>square-squeeze</td>
<td>skw = 73.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>splash-spray</td>
<td>spl/sp = 60.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong-street</td>
<td>st = 78.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Across syllables (C.CC / C.CCC / C.C)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>include-increase</td>
<td>m.kl/m.ki = 66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instead-instance</td>
<td>m.st = 29.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explain-express-exclude</td>
<td>ek.spl/i = 38.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physically</td>
<td>k.li = 44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coda (CCC / CC)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desks</td>
<td>sks = 45.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clothes</td>
<td>δz = 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banks</td>
<td>nks = 83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE</td>
<td><strong>63.58%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AVERAGE</strong></td>
<td>44.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AVERAGE</strong></td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest correct percentages are the onset clusters renditions at 64% with the /sk/ cluster being the most challenging for informants (only 41% correct). The coda clusters proved to be very challenging specially for the word *clothes* which was unanimously produced as [klo:δaz]. Coda clusters that include nasals were not as difficult for informants; only one speaker (HS) produced *banks* as [bænkaz]. In the clusters across-syllable of the same word, the most challenging was /m.st/ in *instead* and *instance* at 29.1% correctness which was often produced with epenthetic /s/ or /l/ as [inst]. Another challenging across-syllable cluster was /ek.spl/i/ at 39% correctness; the epenthesis always included the vowel after the /s/ as [ek.spl/i].

In general, it seems that informants found coda clusters to be more challenging regardless of the number of consonants in the cluster. For example, the three-consonant cluster in onsets such as /stɾ/ had a 79% correctness rate compared to 45% for the three-consonant cluster in the coda of the word *desks*.

Table 6 shows the percentages of the correct pronunciation of the tested consonant clusters ‘across words’ counted as the total correct renditions out of all informants’ renditions.

### Table 6 Percentages of the correct pronunciation of the tested consonant clusters ‘across words’ counted as the total correct renditions out of all informants’ renditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant Clusters across Words</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Four Consonants</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC-CC</td>
<td>Three Consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>best friend</td>
<td>st-tr = 33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don’t stop</td>
<td>st-bj = 33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be seen that contrary to clusters 'within words', the realization of clusters 'across words' by the informants is influenced by the number of consonants in the cluster. Four-consonant clusters have the least rate of correctness at 40% compared to the 72.47% of three-consonant cluster (combined) and two-consonant clusters at 83%. Indeed some of the most challenging clusters are the four-consonant clusters in just great /st-gɾ/ , best friend /st-tr/ and don't stop /st-bj/ at 17%, 33.3% and 33.3%, respectively. The epenthetic /ɪ/ or /ə/ in these clusters would always be placed between the two words boundary as in [bestfiend]. In some cases, there was no epenthesis; the informant would produce a short pause between the two words (approximately 10 ms) giving a staccato reading of English.

Three-consonant clusters of the same consonant were somehow challenging for most informants particularly in big group /ɡ-ɡɾ/ which was often rendered as [bɪɡɪɡɹu:p]. Two-consonant clusters of the same consonant had the highest rate of correctness at 83%. The /z-s/ boundary in his side was unanimously produced correctly.

**Vowels**

The tested vowels were /ɪ - ɛ - α - ɔ: - oʊ - ə / . Using the KIT and DRESS vowels interchangeably is common among Arab speakers since the DRESS vowel is considered as a variant of the ‘kasra’ in Arabic, particularly in Colloquial dialects of Arabic. Most speakers of Arabic confuse British English pronunciation (RP) with General American (GA), particularly when it comes to vowels. The realization of the LOT vowel is a common error and is usually rendered as the RP rounded [ɒ]. Many, if not most, Arab speakers adopt a GA accent (contrary to the assumption that RP is the most used variety of English in the Arab World cf. Kharma, N. & Hajjaj, A. (1997, 11)) and should therefore realize the LOT vowel as an unrounded [ɑ]. Another challenging vowel for Arabic speakers is the long monophthong THOUGHT vowel [ɔ:] as in bought and caught as opposed to the GOAT vowel in boat and coat, which is a diphthong [oʊ]. Finally, the realization of the schwa or CommA vowel, according to JC Wells (1982), is investigated in different contexts; word initially and word finally, as well as in different spellings; ‘en’, ‘ent’, ‘on’, ‘om’, ‘er’, ‘or’, ‘al’, ‘el’ as in open, student, lemon, freedom, computer, doctor, final, little, and camel, respectively.

**KIT & DRESS vowels /i/ & /ɛ/**

Figure (4) shows the acoustic chart of the KIT and DRESS vowel realizations averaged across all informants; F1 (y-axis) and F2 the (x-axis). It is clear that all renditions of the KIT and DRESS words occupy the same area in the chart, suggesting that the produced vowel is more or less the same. The F1 values in particular indicate that the vowels have relatively the same vowel height, which is a major indicator for the difference between /i/ and /ɛ/.
Figure 4 Acoustic chart of the KIT and DRESS vowel realizations averaged across all informants; F1 (y-axis) and F2 the (x-axis)

Figure (5) further shows the acoustic charts of the realizations of vowels in the pairs; bit-bet, hid-head, miss-mess, and sit-set, averaged across all informants. It is apparent that the realization of the vowels in these words is the same.

Figure 5 The acoustic charts of the realizations of the vowels in the pairs; bit-bet, hid-head, miss-mess, and sit-set, averaged across all informants

The LOT vowel /a/ (in GA)

Figure 6 shows the acoustic chart of the realization of the LOT vowel averaged across all informants in the words; Tom, hot and lot. It can be seen that the vowel is realized as a relatively mid central-back vowel.
Figure 6 Acoustic chart of the realization of the LOT vowels averaged across all informants in the words; Tom, hot and lot

Table (7) compares the formant values of the LOT vowel averaged across all informants with those in RP (Deterding 1997) and GA (Hillenbrand et al 1995). The informants’ F1 values for the LOT vowel are relatively lower than those in RP and GA, indicating that the vowel is relatively higher than that in RP and GA. The FA vowel is also produced with rounding of the lips unlike the GA unrounded [ɑ]. Since the RP LOT vowel is realized as [ɒ], the closest IPA symbol for the realization of this vowel by the informants would be the mid-high rounded central-back short vowel [ɜ].

Table 7 Formant values of the LOT vowel averaged across all informants compared with those in RP (Deterding 1997) and GA (Hillenbrand et al 1995).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>558</td>
<td>768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>1047</td>
<td>1333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td>2604</td>
<td>2481</td>
<td>2522</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The THOUGHT vowel /ɔ:/

Figure 7 shows the acoustic chart of vowel renditions of the THOUGHT and GOAT vowels averaged across all informants. It can be discerned that the vowels occupy the same area in the chart, suggesting that they are realized with very similar qualities. Indeed the pairs: bought-boat, caught-coat, hall-hole, mall-mole, law-low, and raw-row, sound the same as produced by the informants.
Figure 7 Acoustic chart of the renditions of the THOUGHT and GOAT vowels averaged across all informants

Figure 8 shows the acoustic charts of the individual realizations of vowels in the pairs: bought-boat, caught-coat, hall-hole, mall-mole, law-low, and raw-row averaged across all informants. The charts show that bought-boat and caught-coat are very close in their F1-F2 values. Similarly, hall-hole and mall-mole have very similar realizations. The vowel realizations in law-low, and raw-row are quiet indistinguishable.

Figure 8 Acoustic charts of the individual realizations of the vowels in the pairs: bought-boat, caught-coat, hall-hole, mall-mole, law-low, and raw-row averaged across all informants
Figure 9 shows the vowels durations in the pairs; bought-boat, caught-coat, hall-hole, mall-mole, law-low, and raw-row averaged across all informants in (ms). Figure (9) indicates that the THOUGHT-GOAT pairs are not even different in vowel duration.

Figure 9 Vowels durations in the pairs; bought-boat, caught-coat, hall-hole, mall-mole, law-low, and raw-row averaged across all informants in (ms)

The CommA vowel /ə/

The words chosen for investigating the realization of the schwa /ə/ include the initial position; ago-about the final position; sofa-America and in different spellings to see if the realization of the vowel is influenced by its spelling. Therefore, the vowel is tested in ‘en’; broken, open, happen, student, present, in ‘on’; lemon-second, in ‘om’; freedom-bottom, in ‘er’; after-computer, in ‘or’; doctor-factor, in ‘le’; apple-little, in ‘el’; came-level, and in ‘al’; final-hospital.

Figure (10) shows the acoustic chart of the CommA vowel in the test words; ago, about, broken, open, happen, student, present, lemon, second, freedom, bottom, sofa, America, computer, after, doctor, factor, final, hospital, little, apple, camel and level averaged across all informants.
Two observations can be made from Figure (10). First, the vowels spread across the chart from the front area as in broken and happen to the back area as in lemon and sofa. This clearly shows that the vowels do not have the same realizations. Second, it can be noted that the vowels representing the different spelling are realized in relatively the same area, as can be seen for apple-little (+), after-computer (∆) and final-hospital (□) with the exception of lemon-second and America-sofa. This suggests that the realization of /ə/ by the informants is indeed influenced by its spelling. In particular, the vowels in freedom, bottom, lemon, factor, and doctor were all realized in the area of the back LOT vowel.

The only vowels to sound like /ə/ for most informants, are those in the words apple, little, camel, level and open. The vowels in these words also closely fit the central-mid position of /ə/ in the vowel space and are enclosed in the dotted circle as shown in the Figure (10).

Figure (11) shows the durations of the vowels in the words representing the /ə/ averaged for all informants in (ms). Most vowels have similar durations except for the pairs America-sofa, bottom-freedom, and second-lemon which are longer than in the other words.
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Figure 11 Durations of the vowels in the words representing the /ə/ averaged for all informants in (ms)

Figure 12 (A) averaged F1-F2 values for all test words per vowel averaged across all informants for the investigated vowels; KIT, DRESS, LOT, THOUGHT, GOAT, and CommA. Figure (12, B) plots the averaged vowel durations for all test words per vowel averaged across all informants in (ms). The F1-F2 values and durations of the vowels in the pairs America-sofa, bottom-freedom, and second-lemon were excluded in representing the CommA vowel.

Word Stress

The words chosen to investigate word stress placement by the informants are based on the researcher’s observation of the production of such words by Arab learners of English. Table (8) shows the correctness rate of stress placement for bisyllabic, three-syllable and more than three-syllable words averaged for all informants.
Table 8 Correctness rate of stress placement for bisyllabic, three-syllable and more than three-syllable words averaged for all informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress Tokens % of Correct Renditions</th>
<th>Bisyllabic Words</th>
<th>Three-syllable Words</th>
<th>More than three syllable- Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Informants</td>
<td>English Informants</td>
<td>English Informants</td>
<td>English Informants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'isn’t =33.3%</td>
<td>'isn’t</td>
<td>'Saturday=50%</td>
<td>unfortun'ately=11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'didn’t =33.3%</td>
<td>'didn’t</td>
<td>'o’ficial = 0%</td>
<td>a’pparently = 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'mustn’t =33.3%</td>
<td>mu’stn’t</td>
<td>'religion =40%</td>
<td>i’mmediately =36.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'shouldn’t=45.4%</td>
<td>shouf’dn’t</td>
<td>'develop (75%)</td>
<td>o’casionally = 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'couldn’t =50%</td>
<td>cou’dn’t</td>
<td>'develop (25%)</td>
<td>‘certainly = 22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'wouldn’t =44.4%</td>
<td>wou’dn’t</td>
<td>'suddenly = 25%</td>
<td>su’ddenly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘midnight =25%</td>
<td>mid’night</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.81%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>25.76%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE = 28.69%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bisyllabic words include the short forms of auxiliary verbs isn’t and didn’t and the modal verbs mustn’t, shouldn’t, couldn’t and wouldn’t, as well as the compound word midnight. All such words are stressed on the penultimate syllable in English. The correctness rate of 38% indicates that the informants often wrongly place the stress on the final syllable. This tendency is probably a carryover from Arabic where stress is usually placed on heavy syllables.

Three-syllable words were also wrongly stressed in 22.5% of the time on the first or antepenultimate syllable as in official, religion and develop, but on -day in Saturday. In official and develop, the stress was unanimously placed on the first syllable; develop was also sometimes stressed on -lop. In Saturday, the stress was placed on the heaviest syllable [deɪ].

More than three-syllable words had also a low correctness rate of 26%. In such long words, informants seem to be influenced by the stress rules of Arabic where stress falls on the heavy penultimate syllable in polysyllabic words (Halpern 2009). The penultimate syllable is produced as [neɪt] in unfortunately, [ænt] in apparently, [dʒæt] in immediately, [dʒæn] in occasionally, [ten] in certainly and [den] in suddenly.

In general, it can be deduced from Table (8) that informants wrongly stressed the words in over 70% of the time. This could be attributed to a carryover effect from the stress rules of Arabic where stress is usually placed on the heavy syllable of the word (Ibid.), a rule not always adhered to in English.

Discussion
In this section the, the results will be commented on in the order of the research questions:
1. How are the consonants /p - v - f - θ - ð - η - ʃ - l/ realized by the Jordanian informants?
2. How are the tested English consonant clusters realized by the Jordanian informants?
3. How are the tested vowels /i - e - ə - ɔ: - o - ʌ / realized by the Jordanian informants?
4. How are different English stress patterns realized by the Jordanian informants?
To answer question 1, it was found that speakers of JA, have realization issues with /p-ŋ-ɹ-ƚ/. The voiceless bilabial stop /p/ is not a surprising result since almost all relevant studies have proven that this sound is indeed problematic to the wide majority of Arabic speakers of English (Mitchell, T, F. & Hassan, S. 1989, Kharma, N. & Hajjaj, A. 1997, El Zarka 2013, Binturki 2008, Hassan, E.M. 2014, Hago, O. & Khan, W. 2015).

The nasal velar in Arabic is an allophone of /n/ which occurs whenever /n/ is followed by /k/ or /ɡ/ as in /baŋk/ ‘bank’. Unlike English, Arabic has an almost one-to-one relation between orthography and pronunciation. Therefore, king would very likely be realized as [kɪŋ] by an Arab speaker since [ŋ] does not function contrastively in Arabic and its English spelling encourages such a realization.

The /ɾ/ is also an expected difficulty for Arab speakers. The Arabic phoneme /ɾ/ is a voiced tap that is often erroneously referred to as a trill by many (e.g. Kharma, N. & Hajjaj, A. 1997, Binturki 2008, Hago, O. & Khan, W. 2015). The trill /ɾ/ is found in many languages sometimes in an allophonic relation with the alveolar voiced tap [r]; however, in other languages such as Spanish they are distinct; pero [ɾ] ‘but’ and perro [r] ‘dog’. The Arabic voiced alveolar tap /ɾ/ is a quick stop sound produced by a rapid single tap on the alveolar ridge. A repetition of the tap results in several consecutive taps or a trill [r] and is considered an ‘error’ realization of the Arabic /ɾ/. This error is often referred to by Arabic language phoneticians as tar‘eed. When producing the English alveolar approximant /ɹ/, the airflow is not obstructed; a challenging aspect for the Arabic speaker in respect to their own native /ɾ/.

The lateral phoneme /l/ is not problematic for the informants in onset positions, since it is realized as a clear [l] in that position in English. It is the dark [谑] that was not realized properly by all informants. In Arabic, /l/ is almost always clear except in the vicinity of emphatic and velarized phonemes; [nas็ดl] ‘tip of an arrow’ (cf. [nasл] ‘progeny’) as well as in the word Allaah [ʔallә:h]. Clear and dark /l/ in Arabic are commonly referred to as tarqeeq and tafkheem, respectively.

Informants were not expected to produce the English affricates /ʧ/ and /ʤ/ properly, since these phonemes are absent in FA. However, JA has these affricates in most of its colloquial varieties. The impression of the researcher came from teaching English pronunciation and speech to a mixture of urban JA speakers who do not usually use affricates in their Arabic speech, a phenomenon previously reported (Mitchell, T, F. & Hassan, S. 1989, 98).

Question 2, is related to the production of consonant clusters. Clusters were investigated ‘within words’ and ‘across words’. It was found that clusters in onset position had the highest rate of correctness at 64% compared to 42% for coda positions. This finding can be quite surprising since FA has only two-consonant clusters and only in coda positions. However, one can find an explanation in the familiarity and frequency of three-consonant onset clusters in English as in street and square. Moreover, in JA two-consonants coda clusters are often produced with epenthetic vowel between the last two consonants; [nisәɾ] ‘eagle’ in FA, is often realized as [nisәɾ] in JA. None the less, it should be noted that the coda cluster in clothes was unanimously incorrectly produced as [klo:ðәz]. Similar commentary on JA has been previously mentioned by Mitchell, T, F. & Hassan, S. (1989, 120).
In clusters ‘across-words’, the number of consonants in the cluster was influential in correctness rate; the larger the number of consonants the less the correctness rate. The most challenging clusters were in *just great* (17%) and *big group* (42%).

Question 3 investigates the realization of the two front vowel /ɪ - ɛ/, the back vowels /ɑ - ɔ:/ and the /ʊ/. The findings show that the KIT and DRESS vowels are realized as one vowel the closest IPA symbol of which is [e]. This aspect of Arabic pronunciation of English has been reported previously (e.g. Hago, O. & Khan, W. 2015, Kharma, N. & Hajjaj, A. 1997, Mitchell, T, F. & Hassan, S. 1989). The KIT-DRESS confusion can be related to the fact that in JA /ɪ - ɛ/ are variants of kasra /l/.

The problem with the LOT vowel is that JA speakers, who wish to adopt an American accent by pronouncing the /ʌ/ word finally, often ignore important vocalic differences between GA and RP. Specifically, in GA the LOT vowel is a mid-low back unrounded vowel [ɑ], compared to the slightly higher and rounded RP [ɒ]. The findings indicate that informants produced the LOT vowel as a mid-high rounded back-central short [ɔ] which is closer to RP than GA.

Ali (2007) suggests that because /u:/, /o:/ and /o/ are allophones in Arabic, Arab learners of English confuse words such as *boot, boat* and *bought* and this also results in the different spellings of words such as *Muslim* and *Moslem*. The THOUGHT-GOAT English vowel distinction is indeed problematic for the informants. The slight roundness of /ɔ:/ is not attained nor is the GOAT vowel realized as a diphthong /oʊ/. Instead, the two vowels are merged into a single long monophthong [o:], and all /ɔ - ʊ/ pairs were produced as homophones; *bought-boat* [boːt].

Finally, the realization of the most common vowel in English /ə/ was investigated word initially, word finally and in different spellings. The findings indicate that informants depend heavily on the orthography of the vowel to guess its pronunciation. The *CommA* vowel was correctly produced as a weak central-mid vowel in renditions of the words spelt as ‘el’ and ‘le’; *apple-little* and *camel-level*. The vowels in the ultimate syllable of words such as *bottom* and *lemon* were produced with a LOT vowel quality and vowels in the first syllables of words such as *about* and *ago* as [a / ə].

Question 4 investigates the word stress placement by the informants. Words with different numbers of syllables were wrongly stressed in 70% of the time. Word such as *isn’t* and *didn’t* were stressed on the ultimate syllable. Longer words such as *unfortunately* and *certainly* were stressed on the penultimate syllable. This trend of misplacing English word stress seem to originate from the Arabic stress rules which usually place the stress on heavy syllables and on the penultimate heavy syllable in polysyllabic words. In an interesting study, Almbark, R., Bouchhioua, N., & Hellmuth, S. (2014) found that Jordanian and Egyptian speakers of Arabic employ F0, duration and intensity to indicate word stress, whereas native speakers of English only employ F0 and duration. This implies that Arabic learners of English mark the stress of English words with ‘too much’ dependence on F0 and ‘not enough’ vowel reduction.
Conclusion

The present study investigates the realization of English consonants and vowels by native speakers of JA. The findings suggest that speakers of JA have problems with the following consonants /p - ƞ - ɹ - ƚ/ which are almost always produced as /b - ɡ - r - l/ in all contexts. Findings also suggest that the English affricates /ʧ/ and /ʤ/ are not problematic for JA speakers. However, words with the voiced palato-alveolar fricative /ʒ/ should be included in future work to verify its realization, since /ðʒ/ was not found problematic. Informants were also prone to insert an epenthetic vowel between consonant clusters particularly in coda position as in clothes [kloːðəz] and across words as in just great.

The present study also indicates that, as usually reported in the literature for other CA varieties, the KIT-DRESS and the THOUGHT-GOAT vowel distinctions are lost in the English speech of JA speakers, and a single vowel is merged to represent both distinctions as [e] and [o:], respectively. Such a merge necessarily creates confusion for the English speaker, who would probably misunderstand the intended word in the pairs sit-set or caught-coat, for example.

Finally, it has been shown that JA informants misplaced primary word stress in English words of different syllable numbers. This suggests that native speakers of JA, are somehow, influenced by the Arabic stress rules. English word stress can be very confusing for non-native speakers of English, since it can be very unpredictable not to mention the many exceptions to the default English stress rules. However, more detailed work has to be done in order to understand the underlying strategies JA speakers employ when placing English word stress.

All the findings in this study have important implications for teachers of English to Arabic speakers. Indeed, highlighting the problematic issues in English pronunciation and understanding the origins of such errors can be very conducive to learners and teachers of English alike. It is hoped that there would be more studies on English pronunciation errors by other CA speakers. Also, errors in the intonational aspects of English speech represent one of the most challenging problems for learners. Little has been done in that regard. The fine-grained acoustic cues in tonal patterns of English speech by Arabic speakers should be studied. Such cues would likely define the causes for the staccato beat and abruptness which Arabic speakers of English are commonly associated with.

About the Author:
Raya Kalaldeh is a lecturer of English Phonetics and Phonology at the University of Jordan. She has lived in Ireland for six years and has finished her Ph.D dissertation on the intonation of Irish English from the University of Trinity College Dublin in 2011. She publishes articles on various aspects of intonation in the field's leading journals.

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English Pronunciation Errors by Jordanian University Students

Kalaldeh


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# Appendix A

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stress tokens

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| 'didn’t'|
| 'mustn’t'|
| 'shouldn’t'|
| 'couldn’t'|
| 'wouldn’t'|
| 'Saturday'|
| un'fortunately|
| a'pparently |
| i'mmediately |
| o'casionally |
| 'certainly' |
| 'suddenly' |
| o'fficial |
| 'television'|
| re'ligion |
| 'midnight' |
| develop |
The Critical Period Hypothesis Revisited: An Investigation of Taiwanese University EFL Learners’ Production of Two English Consonants

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Abstract
This study mainly investigates the relationship between onset age of exposure to formal English instruction and Taiwanese university EFL learners’ accuracy in pronouncing two English consonants (i.e., /s/ and /θ/). A total of 50 English majors who studied at a single university in northern Taiwan were recruited to participate in the current research. All of the participants were asked to fill in a language background questionnaire, followed by receiving a pronunciation test that required them to read into a tape recorder 16 English words with either a /s/ sound or a /θ/ sound. The recordings of the participants were rated by three native speakers of English, who either held a PhD in the TESOL- or linguistics-related field or had taught English at university for at least 10 years. The learners’ productive performances were then analyzed along with their ages of starting learning English (retrieved from the data of the questionnaires) via Pearson Product-Moment Correlations. The statistical results show that there were no significant correlations of onset age to the participants’ production of the consonants. As a result, the findings of the study suggested that onset age did not appear to play a critical role in foreign language acquisition of producing consonants.

Keywords: critical period hypothesis (CPH), onset age, production, consonants
Introduction
As internationalization and globalization have become the trends in the world of the twenty-first century, English has become one of the most important languages on the planet. In Taiwan, there is a huge market for English education amid a flood of advertisements and commercials for cram schools, private tutoring, and supplementary reading materials. Many such programs are aimed at teaching children to speak English at as young an age as possible. Moreover, a substantial number of parents in the country expect their kids to learn English at such a young age because there is a commonly-held conception that it is better and more effective to learn English as early as possible. This “earlier is better” concept primarily comes from the critical period hypothesis (CPH) proposed by Eric Lenneberg in 1967.

In fact, the CPH was first introduced by Penfield and Roberts (1959), and then expanded and given a new interpretation by Lenneberg. Lenneberg (1967) examines how well language can be acquired during the critical period. He claims that a critical period is a sort of like a window of opportunity in a child’s linguistic developmental process during which his or her ability to learn a language is at its peak. If the child is exposed to a language within this window, the process of acquisition is easy, complete, and can reach the level of proficiency consistent with that of native speakers. But, if a learner is too old, beyond the stage of the critical period, it becomes harder to acquire a language and the learner may not reach the level of native-like proficiency.

The CPH was first applied to the study of first language (L1) acquisition, and the findings were nearly positive. One of the most famous studies is the case of Genie. Genie was an abused girl found in 1970, who was 13 when at the time of her discovery. Genie did not react to hot or cold temperatures and had a primitive look. She could not stand still or straighten her limbs. She was only able to walk with much difficulty and could not run. She was incontinent of feces and urine and did not even know how to chew. Genie was a victim of her father’s abuse and was strapped to a potty chair, wearing diapers when she was found. Her father had judged her retarded at birth and had subjected her to confinement in the bedroom, presumably with little to no social contact for most of her life. She appeared to have never acquired language ability over the course of her entire life. In the following years, doctors attempted rehabilitation, during which she did slowly improve her language ability. But even so, though she improved, her phonology and syntax still did not function like that of native speakers (Curtiss, 1977; Hung, 2012b, 2016).

Later on, the notion of a critical period was also extended to the contexts of second and foreign language (L2/FL) acquisition; however, mixed results were found. Take for example the aspect of phonological acquisition. Tsukada, Birdsong, Bialystok, Mack, Sung, & Flege (2005) investigated the discrimination of four English vowel contrasts by 36 native Korean children and 36 native Korean adults who had migrated to North America. They found that the native Korean children consistently discriminated the vowel contrasts more accurately than the native Korean adults. Furthermore, Hung (2012a) researched the relationship between onset age of exposure to formal English instruction and 104 Taiwanese university EFL learners’ perception of four English vowels. The findings suggested that “a critical period exists for foreign language acquisition of perception of vowels” (p. 89).
In contrast, Bongaerts, Mennen, and Slik (2000) tested 30 advanced late adult Dutch learners of different L1s in producing 10 Dutch sentences. The results showed that at least two adult participants were found to pronounce like native speakers. This finding was interpreted as evidence against the CPH. In addition, Nikolov (2000) examined how many successful adult L2/FL learners would be mistaken for native speakers via a structured interview. The outcome of two experiments revealed that L2/FL acquisition of phonology was still possible after the critical period had been reached.

The review of past literature above suggests that the position age assumes in L2/FL phonological acquisition is still not clear and more research studies are required to clarify its importance. Hence, the current study aimed to shed light on the importance by focusing on the correlation of age of first exposure to formal English instruction and Taiwanese university EFL learners’ pronunciation of two consonants (i.e., /s/ and /θ/). The following are the questions this project sought to address.

1. Does onset age of learning English significantly correlate with Taiwanese university EFL learners’ proficiency in pronouncing the two consonants (/s/ and /θ/)?
2. What is the relative productive difficulty of the two English consonants (/s/ and /θ/) for the students?

**Method**

**Participants**

Originally, there were a total of 124 students who all majored in applied English. Due to the fact that this study was meant to investigate the relationship between native Taiwanese EFL learners’ onset age of learning English and their accuracy in pronouncing the English consonants /s/ and /θ/, this research only included students who had been learning English in Taiwan. Those who had received English instruction in other countries or who were born and had been raised in an environment where English is consistently spoken needed to be excluded from this study. Based on the data collected from the initial questionnaire, nine out of the 124 students mentioned that they had learned English in other countries. After these learners were removed from the study, 50 of the remaining 115 learners were randomly selected as the finalized participants. These participants also reported no impediments in their speaking and hearing abilities.

These finalized participants consisted of 22 males and 28 females, and they were either sophomores or juniors at the university where this study was conducted. Their ages ranged from 19 to 21 at the time of the study (mean: 19.54), and the onset ages of their English learning ranged from 5 to 13 (mean: 8.76). In addition to these 50 participants, three native speakers of English took part in this research. They functioned as raters of the pronunciation test, and their main task was to listen to the word recordings produced by the participants and identify the words they heard on an answer sheet. The three English native speakers either held a PhD in TESOL or linguistics-related fields, or had been teaching English at a university for years.

In order to guarantee the reliability and consistency of this panel’s assessment of the participants’ pronunciation, a mock-up test was administered to them before the experiment. The researchers selected three students not among the officially selected participants and administered the same production task to be used later in the experiment. The native listeners were then asked to judge the performance of these mock subjects. The results of this test
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displayed a consistent consensus among the judges’ assessments for all test responses given by the students. The inter-rater reliability was 1, shown in Table 1.

Table 1  *Inter-Rater Reliability among the Three Raters*  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intraclass Correlation</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>F Test with True Value 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single measures</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average measures</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instruments**

Two instruments were used in this experiment to collect data: a questionnaire and a pronunciation test. The questionnaire was used to retrieve every finalized participant’s English learning background, and the pronunciation test was used to test the participants’ accuracy in pronouncing the two English consonants (/s/ and /θ/).

**Questionnaire.**

The questionnaire was designed based on the one from Hung (2012a) to gather information about the 50 participants’ language learning background. It was administered before the participants took the pronunciation test. It gathered personal information such as the learners’ initial age of exposure to formal English instruction, their current age, gender, university major, name, the environment in which they had learned the target language, their hearing and speaking conditions, and so forth. Some of the questions required the participants to check the most appropriate answer while others required them to fill in the blanks (see Appendix B). The questionnaire administered to the participants was written in Mandarin Chinese (see Appendix A) and had been proofread by a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese who majored in Chinese.

**Pronunciation**

One of the main goals of this study was to measure Taiwanese university EFL students’ productive accuracy of two English consonants (i.e., /s/ and /θ/). Therefore, a pronunciation test of these two consonants was designed. The tested consonants were selected as two that pose great difficulty for Mandarin Chinese speakers to distinguish, since consonants like the English /θ/ are not phonemically comparable to any consonants in Mandarin Chinese (Zhang & Yin, 2009). The pronunciation test consisted of 16 stimuli which were selected from among the 7,000 frequently occurring words announced by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan, which then elicited 16 minimal pairs (see Appendix C). Each minimal pair has two monosyllabic words, and each was different from the other only in either the initial consonant (such as sick and thick) or the final consonant (such as pass and path). The two tested consonants were equally distributed both word-initially and word-finally among both the test stimuli (see Appendix D) and among the test options on the answer sheet (see Appendix E) that were designed for the three native speakers to identify what they heard from the participants’ recordings.

**Scoring.**

After the production test was completed, the students’ recordings were evaluated by three native speakers of American English, who all listened to the same recordings and then identified words they heard. The same response made by at least two of the native listeners for each test item was
taken as the student’s actual productive performance for the tested consonant. If the response represented the correct answer, a point was earned by the participant. In the pronunciation test, a correct answer was worth one point. The maximum score was 16/16, and the minimum was 0/16. The higher the score a participant received, the more proficiently he or she showed an ability to pronounce the two English consonants. In terms of the questionnaire, the collected data was only used for analyzing the relationship between the onset age variable and the test scores.

Procedure

All the participants were first chosen via a questionnaire that was performed on a class basis. After the students who did not meet the requirements of the study (such as having studied abroad or having grown up in a place where English is constantly spoken) were eliminated from the experiment, 50 of the rest of the students were randomly selected to take the pronunciation test. The task was conducted in a noise-free room at the university where the participants studied. It asked the learners to read aloud 16 English words into a tape recorder.

Prior to the actual implementation of the test, all the examinees were informed of the purpose of the study and instructed on how to complete the task. Then, each was given three minutes to scan all the tested words on the test form, followed by reading them twice into a high-quality recorder with a head-mounted microphone. All the participants’ recordings were later evaluated by three native speakers, who were required to mark or select words they heard in each recording on an answer sheet. A response was needed for each test item, and the native judges were told to guess if uncertain. After all the relevant data was gathered, the participants’ ages of first exposure to formal English instruction and their scores on the pronunciation test were calculated and organized in Excel for further statistical analysis.

Results

To address the questions of this study, Pearson Product-Moment Correlations and an independent-samples t test were utilized to analyze the collected data. Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4 summarize the statistical results obtained.

Research Question 1

Table 2 illustrates the correlations between the participants’ onset age of exposure to formal English instruction and their test scores for the two English consonants. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation results show that no significant correlations are found between the onset age factor and the students’ pronunciation of the consonants. These results suggest that the EFL learners’ accuracy in producing the consonants did not increase as their onset age of learning English decreased. Therefore, it appears that onset age does not play a role in the phonological acquisition of English as a foreign language (particularly the acquisition of skill in pronouncing these consonants).

Table 2 Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Results for the Taiwanese University EFL Learners’ Onset Age of Learning English and Their Scores for the Two English Consonants (N=50)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>/s/</th>
<th>/θ/</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Onset age</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Research Question 2
Table 3 displays the mean age at which the Taiwanese university EFL students started receiving formal English instruction and the mean scores they received in pronouncing the two English consonants and their overall performance on the pronunciation test. The statistical data indicate that the mean score (7.30) received in producing the English consonant /s/ is higher than the score (6.96) for the English consonant /θ/. Based on these mean scores, it seems that the English consonant /s/ was easier for the learners to pronounce than the English consonant /θ/.

Table 3 *Mean and Standard Deviation for the Onset Age Variable and the Tested Consonants (N=50)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Onset age</td>
<td>8.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>7.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/θ/</td>
<td>6.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>14.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Independent-Samples t Test Results for the Mean Difference between the Scores for the Two English Consonants (N=50)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal Variances</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal Variances</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion and Conclusion**

As described in the Introduction section, many studies have been conducted to investigate whether or not age plays an important role second/foreign language acquisition of phonology. Some studies have found that younger learners ultimately perform better than older learners in learning a L2/FL (Hung, 2012a; Tsukada, Birdsong, Bialystok, Mack, Sung, & Flege, 2005);
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however, there have also been some L2/FL research studies with results that contradicted the critical period hypothesis (Bongaerts, Mennen, & Slik, 2000; Nikolov, 2000). Due to the mixed results, the current study was performed to determine the role of the age factor in an EFL context like Taiwan.

The results of this study showed that the participants’ scores on the pronunciation test did not increase as their onset age of learning English decreased. The finding resonated with the ones of those L2/FL studies that contradicted the CPH (Bongaerts et al., 2000; Nikolov, 2000). Hence, it appears that a critical period does not exist for FL phonological acquisition (particularly of consonants).

With respect to the limitations and delimitations of this research, the 50 participants were recruited only from a single university. Consequently, the outcome of this study might not be generalizable to students from other universities. For those who plan to study the same issue in the future, it is suggested that learners from different schools as well as from different parts of the country be included. Moreover, language acquisition is not only limited to the production of the sound system of the target language. Other skills such as listening, reading, and writing also need to be taken into account. Therefore, it is also recommended that prospective researchers should examine these areas of learners’ language acquisition.

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Hui-Ya Lin is an assistant professor at Ming Chuan University in Taiwan. Her fields are Comparative Literature and TESL. She got her PhD in Fu-Jen university. She has taught English at junior high schools for 11 years, and has been teaching in English department in the universities for 14 years in Taiwan. She worked on this paper with her colleague and a graduate student in MingChuan University.

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Hesien-Jung Wang got his master's degree in Applied English from Ming Chuan University.

References

Appendix A

各位同學好:
我們想要了解您學習英文的經驗，麻煩您幫忙回答以下的問題。您提供的資料可以幫助我們研究、分析大家學習英文的方法與成就關係，也可以進一步幫忙您自己和我們的下一代更有效地學習英文。問卷大約5到10分鐘可以填完。請盡量不要漏填。謝謝您的合作!

1. 姓名: ______________
2. 性別: □男 □女
3. 年紀: ________歲
4. 科系/年級: ________系/______級
5. 有無任何聽力/口語、學習或其他語言障礙? □有 □無
6. 是否住過英語系國家或是在其他國家學過英文?
   □是，哪一個國家: __________ □否
7. 你是否在持續說英文的環境中長大? □是 □否
8. 你是從幾歲開始接受正式的英文教學? _______歲
9. 請問你於國小畢業以前是否學過英語?(請勾選一答案)
   □是 □否(若選擇「否」，請跳至第15題)
10. 請問你所就讀的國小為 公立或私立小學? □公立 □私立
11. 請問你在國小時平均每週上幾節英文課?
12. 在國小時(在學校)是否有被外籍老師教導過？
   □是，共上了________年________月 □否

13. 在國小時你是否參加校外英文補習或請人個別家教你英文？
   □是，共上了________年________月；每星期約____小時 □否

14. 課後是否有自己加強英文口語能力(如:到教會、語言學習中心等找外籍人士交談來練習英文)？
   □有，平均每週_______小時 □無

15. 請問你所就讀的國中為公立或私立中學?
   □公立 □私立

16. 請問你在國中時平均每週上幾節英文課？
   □2節(包含以下) □3節 □4節 □5節 □6節 □7節(包含以上)

17. 在國中時(在學校)是否有被外籍老師教導過？
   □是，共上了________年________月 □否

18. 在國中時你是否參加校外英文補習或請人個別家教你英文？
   □是，共上了________年________月；每星期約____小時 □否

19. 課後是否有自己加強英文口語能力(如:到教會、語言學習中心等找外籍人士交談來練習英文)？
   □有，平均每週_______小時 □無

20. 請問你所就讀的高中/職為公立或私立高中/職？
   □公立 □私立

21. 請問你在高中/職時平均每週上幾節英文課？
   □2節(包含以下) □3節 □4節 □5節 □6節 □7節(包含以上)

22. 在高中/職時(在學校)是否有被外籍老師教導過？
   □是，共上了________年________月 □否

23. 在高中/職時你是否參加校外英文補習或請人個別家教你英文？
   □是，共上了________年________月；每星期約____小時 □否

24. 課後是否有自己加強英文口語能力(如:到教會、語言學習中心等找外籍人士交談來練習英文)？
   □有，平均每週_______小時 □無
Appendix B

Dear Participant,

We would like to understand your English learning experience. Please do us a favor by answering the following questions. All of the information that you provide can help us in our research and analysis of Taiwanese English proficiency. The results from this research may provide the next generation of your peers to learn English more effectively. The questionnaire will take 10-15 minutes for you to finish. Please try to be specific when you answer questions. Please leave your phone number and email address, in case your questionnaire is invalid and we need to get in touch with you for more information. Thanks for your help.

1. Name                         2. Gender: male/female
3. Age:                          4. Major/grade:
5. Do you have any hearing or speaking impairments? □Yes □No
6. Have you ever studied or lived in an English-speaking country? □Yes, which country:
□No
7. Did you grow up in an environment where English was constantly spoken?
   □Yes
   □No
8. When did you first accept formal English instruction? Started when ________years old.
9. Did you learn English before elementary school? (Please select one as an answer) □Yes □No
   (If select No, please jump to Q15).
10. What kind of school did you study in for elementary school: public school or private school?
    □Public □Private
11. How many hours did you learn English in elementary school per week?
    □one or two □three □four □five □six □seven or more
12. Were you taught by English native speakers in elementary school?
    □Yes, ________ years and _______ months □No
13. Did you attend cram school or tutoring for your English after school in elementary school?
    □Yes, ________ years and _______ months; ______ hours per week □No
14. Did you strengthen your oral skills after school? (Ex: in church, in language centers, or by having conversations with foreigners)?
    □Yes, ________ hours per week □No
15. What kind of school did you study in during junior high school: public school or private school? □Public □Private
16. How many hours did you learn English in junior high school per week? □one or two □three □four □five □six □seven or more.
17. Were you taught by English native speakers in junior high school? □Yes, ________years and _______months □No
18. Did you attend cram school or tutoring for your English after school in junior high school? □Yes, ________years and _______months; ______hours per week □No
19. Did you strengthen your oral skills after school? (Ex: in church, in language center, by having conversations with foreigners)? □Yes, _______hours per week □No
20. What kind of school did you study in senior high school, public school or private school? □Public □Private
21. How many hours did you learn English in senior high school per week? □one or two □three □four □five □six □seven or more.
22. Were you taught by English native speakers in senior high school? □Yes, ________years and _______months □No
23. Did you attend cram school or tutoring for your English after school in senior high school? □Yes, ________years and _______months; ______hours per week □No
24. Did you strengthen your oral skills after school? (Ex: in church, in language center, or by having conversations with foreigners)? □Yes, _______hours per week □No
25. Please leave your contact information:
   Cell phone: ____________________
   E-mail: ____________________________________________________

Thank you again for your patience and cooperation!!!

Appendix C
Minimal Pairs List
A. Minimal pairs of initial /s/ and /θ/
1. surd – third
2. sink – think
3. sank – thank
4. sin – thin
5. sick – thick
6. seem – theme
7. sought – thought
8. sigh – thigh

B. Minimal pairs of final /s/ and /θ/
1. truce – truth
2. mouse – mouth
3. tense – tenth
4. Norse – north
5. worse – worth
6. pass – path
7. mass – math
8. kiss – kith
Pronunciation Test
(Stimuli for Participants to Read)

1. mouse
2. third
3. truth
4. sink
5. tenth
6. worse
7. thank
8. north
9. sin
10. sick
11. path
12. mass
13. theme
14. thought
15. kiss
16. sigh

Appendix E

Marking Sheet
(For Native Judges Use)

1. mouse / mouth
2. third / surd
3. truth / truce
4. sink / think
5. tenth / tense
6. worse / worth
7. thank / sank
8. north / Norse
9. sin / thin
10. sick / thick
11. path / pass
12. mass / math
13. theme / seem
14. thought / sought
15. kiss / kith
16. sigh / thigh
Exposure to Two Languages Never Impedes L2 Acquisition

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Abstract  
The present study investigates that similar amount of exposure to two languages at early age does not impede child’s L2 acquisition. L2 acquisition endures tenaciously encompassing early learners. They not only speak new language with concern but also acquire it inextricably. They are never diffident like adults enterprising new language. They replicate their age-mates and teachers without malevolence and successively develop linguistic contrivance themselves. It reveals that exposure is undoubtedly efficacious in L2 acquisition but not subservient to L2-exposure. The study elucidates that English language is a contagious language. Children learn it without any justification and special assistance. Besides, the study entails the details of L2 acquisition at early age and acquaints with techniques which collaborate in L2 acquisition. Three kindergarten classes were randomly selected at a community public school and were observed thrice a term for data collection. Likewise, a questionnaire was distributed amongst 10 teachers and 100 parents whose children were studying at school. Interviews of three parents are also part of this study.

Key Words: Acquisition, early learners, exposure to two languages, individual differences, learning, teaching techniques
1. Introduction

It is misconceived that early learners acquire language slowly. Language acquisition is an outcome of recurrent and interlaced learning process. At early age, children learn faster and their brain is more receptive in the first five to six years. Bulldozing language on children by alders may intricate the learning process for them. Language learners might systematically misperceive crucial input for learning (Philips C & Ehrenhofer L, 2014). Adults make children learn language at early stage through mother’s initial interaction with the child in her lap and grandparents telling tales and reciting poems at bedtime, neighbours’ greetings in the corridor and teachers’ instructions in class. Thus, the informal exposure to the language helps children develop their vocabulary according to their needs.

Children acquire new languages conveniently unlike most adults who find foreign languages hard to learn. On the contrary, adults endeavour to make headway in the process of acquisition of a new language. However, children seem to acquire it instinctively and without any great effort. They are genetically born to speak but they are not born to speak any particular language (Wells, 1986). Language is inherently acquired but not learnt by children. Human beings are endowed to make variety of sounds. They make it possible through connection between sounds and objects. Such connections result in creativity of new language. Sounded are decoded for the sake of meaningful comprehension (Rowland, 2014). During the first twelve months of their early age, children listen, speak, and acquire language. The amusing sounds of young babies using language are the rise and fall of voice which they observe in their elders. The greatest gift given to the children is a language. Yet, verbal communication with early learners is usually treated in an informal way.

The present study aimed to answer the following main questions:

1. Do early learners learn English as L2 more quickly than Urdu as their L1 in class?
2. How do monolingual children learn L2?

The author observed during his stay in school with KG students that they learn L2 faster. These students are studying L2 (English) and L1 (Urdu) availing same amount of time. They were monolingual prior to starting school but it was observed that they were very motivated to acquire L2 after they started their schooling. Based on his observation, the author decided to carry out research why children enjoy more while learning L2.

2. Review of Literature

This section outlines the important aspects of the study under discussion, reporting on previous research, which gives the specific account of the existing literature available on the different aspects of language acquisition at early age. It has been apportioned into different sub sections. Firstly, it gives the general view of existing literature. Secondly, the mechanism of language acquisition is explained. Thirdly, the term bilingual child and L1 and L2 in L2 acquisition process are elaborated. Further, the impact of L1 on L2 phonology and grammar is explained. The individual differences in L2 acquisition process are also part of this section.

2.1. An Overview of the Existing Literature

Bongaerts (2005) propounds that children at early age are more capable of speaking L2 like native speakers as compared to those who start learning a foreign language late. A commonly theory related to language acquisition is that children are blessed with magical ability...
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to acquire L2. It vanishes gradually and finally ends when the adults start learning L2. The reason behind this is that, it is circumscribed to the early age of a child only. It seems appealing as it expresses the miracle of children’ acquisition of L2 at early age unlike adults. Secondly, adults acknowledge their weakness of acquisition of L2 this way. Baker (1988) puts forwards that bilingual children appear to learn conversational skills in the majority language at school during first few years. Children are more flexible and have more ability to acquire L2 accent as they are inflexible in comprehending new learning tasks (Ausubel, 1964).

Children do not learn language consciously. They usually are attracted to the things of their interest and which are easy for them to understand. They enjoy active participation in interesting learning activities and this helps them to learn a new language. It should not be perplexed with the situation where the activities related to language learning are merely the learning games which are simply fun and should not be made an issue (Ur, 1996).

2.2. Mechanism of Language Acquisition
To reckon the mechanism underlying language acquisition, the scholars and researchers are employing different methodologies. Months before infants utter their first word; their early language-learning mechanisms can be examined by recording subtle responses to new combinations of sounds. Once children begin to link words together, experiments using real-time measures of language processing can reveal the ways linguistic and nonlinguistic information are integrated during listening. Natural experiments in which children face minimal language exposure can reveal the extent of inborn language-learning capacities and their effect on language creation and change. As these techniques and others probing the child's mind are developed and their findings integrated, they will reveal the child's solution to the puzzle of learning a language.

The parsing process is an important segment of the language comprehension device. It permits children to gather strings of components to calculate significant and new relations between various elements of a sentence. Snedeker & Trueswell (2004) express that children are able to access the alternative modifier parse under some circumstances, but they are less able than adults to integrate multiple cues (Engelhardt, 2014; Hurewitz et al., 2000; Weighall et al., 2008).

Trueswell et al. (1999) have explored the development of this rapid parsing system. For the language learners, ascertaining the words of a language and their meanings is their primary concern. They must ferret out grammatical endings of the verb forms, prepositions and the distributions of the syntactical components of a sentence or utterance. This is how they absolutely learn to induce (who/did/what/to/whom) in sentences of their language.

2.3. The term “Child Bilingual” Explained
Genesee et. al. (1980) are of the view that the two terms child L2 learner and child bilingual are synonymous but they don’t represent the same population. Simultaneous bilingual children learn L1 and L2 in the pre-school times while L2 children have developed one language before they begin learning the other, and typically speak the first language at home and the second language at school. The bilinguals enjoy general cognitive benefits due to the demands
Exposure to Two Languages Never Impedes L2

on cognitive control of managing two grammars and two lexicons (Costa et al., 2009; Kroll & Bialystok, 2013).

2.4. **Use of L1 and L2 in L2 Acquisition Process**

This section deals mainly with the development of L1 majority L2 learners. Urdu L1 children who acquire English as an L2 in school at early age are L1 majority L2 learners. On the contrary, children speaking a minority language at home and attend school in the majority language are L1 minority L2 learners. Primarily, learners use their L1 in the L2 environment at school, but it happens only for a while as they feel that using their L1 will not assist them in interacting in the second language learning environment. On the contrary, Tabors (1997) says that the subsequent non-verbal period lasts a few weeks or is extended over many months, and younger children appear to stay longer than older ones during this period. In this period, children articulate few or no utterances in the second language. They usually communicate through gestures and may remain silent for long than one on one situation. Many common formulas used perpetually by the L2 children have been listed by Wong Fillmore (1979) which she witnessed during the early period (for example lookit, wait a minute, lemme see, or whaddya wanna do?).

2.5. **Impact of L1 on L2 Phonology and Grammar**

Many studies show that comprehenders make effective use of their syntactic and semantic knowledge (Frazier, 1999; Kazanina et al., 2007; Phillips, 2006; Traxler & Pickering, 1996). In electrophysiological studies, rapid sensitivity to grammatical errors is so commonplace that it is news only when speakers fail to quickly notice a violation of a linguistic constraint (Wang et al., 2012; Xiang et al., 2009). However, at the same time it is apprehended that children may introduce errors as their attention is diverged in systematic ways from output. The phenomenon has been discussed in detail by Jeff Lidz and Akira Omaki. (Omaki, 2010; Omaki & Lidz, 2014).

Impact of L1 can readily be seen on L2 phonology and grammar. The onset for L2 speech development is the L1 phonetic categories according to Flege’s Speech Learning Model (Flege, 1999). For example, children aged four to seven years were found to be more accurate in articulating vowels and consonants which are shared between the two languages than of the minimal segments of sounds that exist in the L2 English as pointed out by Goldstein (2004). Exposure to English is not influenced inimically despite the fact that vocabulary accumulation is a slow process. The second language young learners amass vocabulary according to their needs.

As a matter of fact, language learners’ progress either in L1 or L2 is evaluated with the help of monolingual standards of lexical size which is insufficient for the consideration of context based formational dissimilarities among the monolingual and bilingual vocabulary for L2 and substitute ways of recording tests and comprehending vocabulary development for bilingual language learners have been suggested. (Patterson & Pearson, 2004; Peña & Kester, 2004).

2.6. **Individual Differences in L2 Acquisition Process**

According to Kovelman, Baker, & Petitto (2006), there are many cognitive benefits for young children who are simultaneously exposed to more than one language which could be associated with long term positive outcome for the early learners. In pace of learners’ L2 acquisition, there are remarkable differences even for those who have same amount of
classroom exposure to the L2 and same instructional programme (Paradis, 2005; Wong Fillmore, 1983). Focusing on L2 is more important than on first language acquisition research owing to the strong capability of individual differences in the acquisition process of early learners. Early L2 learners are more flexible and have more variation in L2 input as compared to L1 learners. Their input is distributed between two languages. They remain in contact with L2 at different stages and when they start L2 learning, they have another developing language. What happens children at school at early age, switch from L1 to L2 (Genesee et al., 2004).

3. Research Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used including classroom observations, questionnaires and semi structured interviews. Three different sections of the same level were selected randomly and observed three times during academic session. Each section had approximately 30 students in it.

Two separate questionnaires were prepared for the teachers and the parents of children. Three parents were interviewed and were also given a questionnaire to investigate children’s interest of learning L2 at home. Appointments with parents were made about two weeks prior to their interviews. Medium of instruction for interviews was Urdu for interviewees’ convenience and as a result, some minor adjustments were made. Interviews were conducted at the same school.

3.1 Participants

The participants of this research were ninety children from 4-6 years studying in Kindergarten (KG) of an English medium school in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and hundred parents whose children were studying in school. Majority of children had no exposure to L2 (English) before starting school. Most of them were monolingual. It will not be wrong to say that they were not fully proficient even in their L1 yet. Siblings (2-3 years old) of these children who are accompanying them at home, are also part of the present study. Moreover, interviews of three parents have been included.

Sixteen teachers who participated in this study, were all staff members of the same school. All the teachers were females. Eight teachers had a Masters’ degree in English or Education and two teachers had a Bachelors’ degree. Their teaching experience ranged from 1 to 15 years.

4. Analysis and Discussions

4.1. Data Analysis

In order to study the effect of L2 teaching, the data were collected in three time periods (i.e. start, mid & end-term) from three group of students randomly (Group A, B & C).
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Since the subjects (students) remain the same but are tested at three different stages or times therefore, the appropriate statistical procedure to test the effect of L2 learning is the Repeated Measures ANOVA.

Table 1. Repeated Measures ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>32.099</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.049</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td>.794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>5411.407</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>69.377</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5443.506</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results as given in Table. 3, provide sufficient evidence that the means scores for the three terms differ significantly as F(2, 52)= 172.051 p>.001.

Table 2. Term-wise Statistics.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start-term</td>
<td>8.07</td>
<td>5.377</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term</td>
<td>16.63</td>
<td>4.360</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-term</td>
<td>25.30</td>
<td>3.074</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last column of the Table. 3 shows that the value of partial eta squared (which tests the effect size) = 0.869 shown below which is a very large effect size as recommended by Cohen (2002).
Table 3 Tests of Within-Subjects Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure: performance</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Sphericity Assumed</td>
<td>4004.222</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2002.11</td>
<td>172.051</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error(term)</td>
<td>Sphericity Assumed</td>
<td>605.111</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>11.637</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It means that the impact of our treatment or intervention has a large effect on L2 learning. The overall mean jumps from 8.07 in the Start-term to 25.30 (as shown in Table 2 above) in the End-term which is graphically shown in Figure. 2

![Figure 2 Mean of Class Observation in Group](image)

It means there is a marked improvement due to the intervention.

Now the data is analyzed with reference to the groups. Three groups are homogenous and they do not differ as far as their comprehension of L2 is concerned. In order to test the homogeneity between three groups(A,B &C) ANOVA technique was applied. On the combined data the results provide sufficient evidence that the three groups are homogenous as: F (2, 78) = 0.231 and P > 0.0

The complete analysis is as shown Figure.3
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4.2. Discussion

In the beginning, children persist in using their mother tongue but when they realized that they are not responded and appreciated by their teachers, they enter a silent period. After this period they imitate teacher’s words and short sentences like “Yes”, “No” and “May I come?”, “May I go?” etc. It was observed that they did not bother about rules which explained how sentences were made and pronounced. Intuitively they identified salient features of the meanings of a word and use the word almost correctly. As results show children’ performance in L2 was excellent by the end of the year. According to modern techniques of teaching, learning has become a fun for the children so they feel very comfortable in learning L2. Children coming from monolingual background after being exposed to L2 at school through different learning based activities learned L2 very quickly. Research reveals the fact that after 6 months, children began to notice differences between languages and also began to prefer the language they heard at school. In spite of the fact that amount of exposure to both languages L1 and L2 was same i.e.
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L2 at school and L1 at home, they were picking vocabulary of L2 according to their communication demand which was against the concept that parents should provide equal amount of exposure to L1 and L2. Otherwise, learners may start dropping words of less exposed language (Espinosa, 2008; Kuhl, 2004; Tabors, 2008). Children having L1 at home appeared to be proficient in both languages at the same time.

4.3. Discussion on Class Observation

The teacher used English only technique to give instructions. Students followed instructions clearly that shows they learnt L2 effectively. In all the sections, most of the students were responding in L2. Majority students followed the teacher’s instructions. Most of them responded the teacher in L2. Teacher showed a banana to the learners of one class who were at the beginning of one word formation stage, all their utterances contained one word only, and she asked the children another question: What is this? Some of them responded by saying ‘bana’, others said ‘mana’, and the rest still said ‘bana’. Child’ words like these exemplified learners’ making generalizations: children modified words, replaced, added and removed parts of words to make them comply to a common style that they found easier to control. However, students told the names in English; when there was rhyme time, it was observed that almost all the students were enjoying rhymes in English. While doing colouring, students told the colours’ names in English. These children were observed in play area too. Again, students were speaking L2 there. In playing activities, students conversed in L2. Then there was a writing period. Students showed accuracy in writing English alphabet whereas in L1 (Urdu) writing period, students were taking less interest and they were not showing accuracy in writing Urdu alphabet. It was observed that students were more motivated in exchanging their ideas in L2. L2 language as form of input should take place throughout the day around them. It is between learners-learners-teachers. Therefore, it is important to let them make mistakes in speaking rather than giving them shut up call. Continuous interruption regarding correction can be threatening towards children language learning process. To respect your children means learning to understand them. It was found that children developed their own mechanism of language learning. They appeared to be adroit. They were imitating their elders. After one word formation stage, they started forming more words themselves. It is exactly like as they try to walk the moment they are able to stand at their own. They stumble, walk, and fall. Similarly, they try to say many words together. They may stutter in the beginning but gradually become proficient after practice.

4.4. Teachers’ responses

Table. 4 shows the results of the questionnaire for teachers about children’s performance in L1 and L2. The study reveals that students at the age of 4-6 learn L2 more quickly than L1. But it does not happen all of a sudden.
Table 4. Teachers Questionnaire’s responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results of Teacher’s Questionnaire</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think children learn L2 faster than L1?</td>
<td>Yes 90%, NO 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you use “English only” in your class?</td>
<td>Yes 98%, NO 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think L1 interference bothered you in teaching L2?</td>
<td>Yes 30%, NO 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think social interaction has important role in learning L2?</td>
<td>Yes 90%, NO 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think similar amount of exposure of L2 and L1 affects L2 acquisition?</td>
<td>Yes 40%, NO 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think children can be proficient of both (L1 &amp; L2) at the same time?</td>
<td>Yes 80%, NO 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think all children learn a second language in the same way?</td>
<td>Yes 25%, NO 75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think imitation helps children learn L2?</td>
<td>Yes 50%, NO 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think children have any right or wrong concept while developing L2 structures?</td>
<td>Yes 2%, NO 98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5. Parents’ Responses

Another questionnaire was given to hundred parents. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5. Parents’ Questionnaire’s responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents’ Responses towards L2 Acquisition of their Children</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Which language do you speak at home?</td>
<td>L1 90%, L2 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which language do your children prefer for doing home work?</td>
<td>L1 5%, L2 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which language do your children use to speak at home before going to school?</td>
<td>L1 99%, L2 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which language children speak at home now (after starting school)?</td>
<td>L1 25%, L2 75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of questionnaire filled by the parents show that children prefer doing work of L2. They found homework of L2 easier than L1. This preference for L2 shows that they have owned L2 and this attachment leads to effective learning of L2. The present study shows that students not only learn L2 more quickly rather they make their younger ones learn L2 even they are not school going. Perhaps they also started enjoying L2. Therefore, this interesting phenomenon confirms that exposure to two languages does not impede L2 acquisition. During classroom observation, it was noticed that children were uttering L2 words more easily and quickly but on the other hand, they were hesitated in pronouncing words of L1. This phenomenon is carried out with them up to higher classes as L1 (Urdu) remains compulsory subject with them but they carry it as an unwanted thing. Children at the age of 4-6 usually do not have much vocabulary. This was time to develop their L2 vocabulary; they listened to words from others, observed things, and were exposed to L2.

4.6. Parents’ Interviews

Three parents were interviewed on early learners’ progress in L2. Almost all of them were satisfied with their children’ progress in L2, rather two parents were surprised to see their children’ performance in L2. So, it is obvious that speaking mother tongue at home does not hamper child learning of L2. Parents revealed that their younger babies (3 to 5 years old) not going to school also started speaking L2 by listening to their siblings who were school going, even they were not having as much exposure as the other children had at school. Children at home start learning English from their siblings, as babies are attracted towards new things, they learn unconsciously regardless of hesitation to commit mistakes.
Now, parents’ answers are summarized below:

4.6.1. Parent 1
We have three babies whose L1 was Urdu before leaving for England for immigration purpose. They were too young to start school at that stage. In England, they started speaking English when they began school. After a short while, the two eldest children stopped speaking their L1. They would listen in L1 but answer in L2. Their youngest sister also acquired L2 from her siblings gradually. With the passage of time, all three children gave up using their L1. We were worried when we were due to travel to our native country because our children socially and academically were in need of their L1 i.e. Urdu. For that matter, we decided to send our children to neighbors’ house to refresh L1. Surprisingly, neighbors’ children started speaking English under the influence of our children instead our children would use and improve their L1. Consequently, our children took a longer time to acquire their L1 than L2.

4.6.2. Parent 2
We both are educated and proficient in Urdu and English but we speak Urdu at home. We started speaking English when our child started school. Our child started English thoroughly owing to our deliberate effort to make him proficient in a shorter time. Now, he speaks only English at home. Whenever we travel to our native town, the child understands the countrymen but responds back in English. His younger sister acquired L2 in English speaking environment at home, as we used to speak English with our son. Therefore, our children started speaking English very quickly and gradually stopped speaking their L1.

4.6.3. Parent 3
We were unable to speak English but we wanted our only child to speak English to excel socially. So, we put our child to English medium school. He used to speak some phrases and sentences e.g. “get aside”, “come here”, “go there” since the beginning of school. Comparatively, he wrote his homework with keen interest, he spoke English with his classmates. Since we did not know, much English so he spoke L1 at home but he answered in English happily if somebody would speak English with him at home. We are happy now that he is equally proficient in L1 and L2.

4.7. Discussion on Parents’ Interviews
In the light of the information gathered from parents interviews, it is proved that exposure to L2 is helpful but no longer need of learners at early stage. Children with the full support by their parents acquired L2 but it is worth mentioned that children without parents’ support acquired L2 as well. The child who could not avail English speaking environment at home, also started speaking L2 i.e. English. It is very interesting to note that neighbours’ children acquired L2 unconsciously under the influence of English speaking children. Learning a language requires a lot of time and effort like other skills daily.

This research shows that children acquire what they see around them. Children are exposed to L2 through variety of techniques. When they enter school, the target language becomes their need and they start losing their mother tongue very early and start acquiring L2.

Now a days in schools, language is taught to the early learners through variety of techniques e.g. through greater variety of colours and interesting learning activities so that...
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children would feel happier and more confident in learning L2. The study shows that almost all children learn L2 by using it over a period with no formal instructions.

5. Classroom implications

5.1. Exposure of L2

When we talk about early learners we always prefer “English only” approach, teacher should not use the L1 to elicit English responses, and teacher should use objects and actions instead. It enhances the target language exposure. However, children’s mother language should not be refused. If the teacher is professional, s/he can make students learning as fast as possible. The exposure comes to the students in a very natural way that they do not find it artificial and learning takes place without any hindrance. It must be confirmed that the surrounding in which you introduce language to learners is nurturing whether it is a school, early childhood programme or home (Tabors, 2008).

5.2. Modern teaching techniques

In many schools which are considered best schools in country like Pakistan, modern teaching techniques have been adopted which are very useful and it has made teaching learning a fun. In modern teaching techniques, English is not imposed on the learners rather it is taught while playing an activity. For example, colour days are observed to make children learn the names of colours in L2, field trips are arranged to fulfill children’s need to investigate nature through which they learn L2, regular music periods help them learning L2 rhymes and songs without any trouble.

5.3. Role of a Teacher

In effective learning, role of a teacher is to be a facilitator. Traditional monster teacher who used to be the authority in classroom is no more acceptable. Now the teacher’s role is friendlier, more helpful. Trusting relationship between the learner and the teacher is key to success.

5.4. Teacher’s Personality

The teacher should be pleasant and sweet natured, s/he should be able to understand the children and should have the ability to communicate at the level of children. S/he should be very friendly, so children should feel free to discuss and communicate. S/he should not be a terror!

5.5. Seating Arrangement

Seating arrangement is another important factor learning English as a second language. Children are always interested in group activities. Teacher should make them sit in a way that they can easily converse with each other and perform a task as a group. They learn lots of vocabulary from each other in groups. Group seating arrangement is very helpful as students of all kinds are divided into small groups, the atmosphere appears to be homelike for children which is less threatening for them.

5.6. Use of Authentic Material and Teaching Aids

Although young learners learn L2 effortlessly but some kinds of authentic material, appears to be very effective. As we all know, children are attracted by colourful cartoons on newspaper, music and television. These are used in schools to motivate children towards learning
English rhymes and storytelling etc. other teaching aids like soft toys, flash cards, play dough etc. can be used to teach stories and colours’ names.

5.7. Number of Students

Number of students should not exceed from twenty five especially there is no assistant to help the subject teacher. Number of students is directly related to the performance. Teacher will only be able to facilitate the language learning/teaching environment if there is an ideal number of students are placed in classes. Every child needs perfect attention that seems impossible in the presence of so many students.

5.8. Continuous Teachers Training Courses

Short training courses play very important role in refreshing English teaching learning process, during these courses teachers get chance to exchange their experiences, which can be useful for others also.

5.9. Pretend Situations

As we know, children learn language in all the environments. Children have a natural curiosity to investigate what is happening around them, for example when we go to a market, they see the signboards and start reading them. They read the sign boards with great interest. The teacher can create the same inside the classroom for reading and conversation purposes. Children enjoy pretended situation a lot. That is why, they learn a lot by participating in them.

5.10. Fluency-focused Atmosphere

In classroom, encourage children to communicate with whatever language they feel at ease, focus should be on fluency, not correctness but give them a wide range of English vocabulary in a non-threatening way. Teacher should keep the corrections to the minimum as children like adults, have some problems in mastering integrated skills but children should be encouraged to repeat an utterance to acquire a standard and understandable pronunciation.

5.11. Lesson Planning

Lesson planning is very important. The teacher should keep in mind the contents to be taught. If the textbook lessons are not activity based, teacher should be able to convert the lessons into an interactive class. Everything should be mentioned in the lesson plan. An activity-based lesson plan focuses on the activity to teach the language. Lesson plan should contain the answers of questions like, “How is a task performed in a group?”, “What is the estimated time for the activity?”, “Which words and sentences will be introduced?” etc. Lesson plan should appear to be a complete guide for the teacher. A very important thing about the lesson plan is that management should evaluate lesson plans of all the teachers and the best one should be followed for all the sections of a class.

It is hoped that these findings will help make more people acknowledge the facts about early learners L2 learning and stimulate further study in this field.

6. Conclusion

Throughout the research, it was considered that language acquisition was not a competitive sport either. Learners were competing only with themselves on their own terms. The research
validates that with little effort we can make children learn L2 very quickly. Children at the age 4-6 are less rigid towards learning new language. With modern teaching techniques, children enjoy learning L1 and L2. They get more exposure of L2 as they enter school so they enjoy learning L2 than L1. So policy makers and educationists in countries where English is not taught at grass root level should start it at early age and consider following recommendations to improve L2 teaching/learning process.

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The State of Scientific Research and Research Training in Moroccan Universities:
Doctoral Students’ Perceptions

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Abstract
The present paper intends to focus on research training in Moroccan universities through investigating doctoral students’ perceptions of this training and drawing conclusions and suggestions for the improvement of higher education research practices. This study used a mixed research method with an explanatory survey design. First, a survey was conducted with 144 Moroccan doctoral students to answer research questions on the integration of research courses in undergraduate curriculum, the quality of this research training and the difficulties facing students while conducting research. Then, interviews were carried out with 40 subjects to seek further explanations and triangulate data obtained through the questionnaire. The findings of this study indicate that doctoral students receive little practical training in research prior to starting doctoral studies. Thus, they undergo a myriad of challenges while writing their doctoral theses as they lack autonomy when it comes to carrying out their investigations. Most often these challenges are linked to narrowing the scope of their research, using appropriate methodology, and publishing their research findings. Besides, the students reported difficulties linked with the quality of supervision they get and the lack of financial support to conduct their research in optimal conditions. Based on these findings, some practical implications and recommendations have been drawn.

Key words: academic research, higher education, research in the Arab world, research skills, scientific research, training for research
Introduction
In a global, high competitive world, Knowledge has certainly become a key precursor to all kinds of sustainable development and continuous progress. Acquiring this knowledge and contributing to its building and enrichment are only possible through Inquiry and investigation. More importantly, the results attained from this process of inquiry and investigations are crucial for processing that knowledge, translating it into new products and services and transferring it to future generations. In this line, the appearance of Global Rankings in 2003 and its focus on measuring the performance of higher education institutions as an indicator of a country’s economic strengths and weaknesses has pushed world nations to compete through investing in higher education. Since then, research capacity has emerged as a vector for global competition (Marginson, 2006). Building on this, governments in developed and developing nations started giving more importance to investment in research and development (R&D) so as to attract capital, businesses and skills. In this light, most reports about higher education in the Arab world state that the region is lagging behind in terms of research productivity and knowledge building. Reports about research practices in the Arab world, in general, and the MENA region in particular emphasize the need for more efforts in reinforcing the scope of academic research in the universities of the region. For instance, the 2014 Arab knowledge report jointly produced by the Mohammed Bin Rachid Al Maktoum foundation and the United Nations Development Program claims that “the first challenge to the process of transfer and localization of knowledge lies in the weakness of education, training and scientific research institutions…”(p.15). Besides, Reuters (2011) in his Global Research Report underlined the importance of involving students, in general, and youth, in particular, in the transfer and localization of knowledge processes as well as the integration of scientific research activities in the programs of development in the Arab world. More importantly, average government expenditure on research in the Arab States is around 1.5 per cent, compared with 2.5 per cent in OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) Member countries (Ramirez, 2008: 7; El Kaffass, 2007: 7).

In this vein, one of the major gaps and challenges facing countries in the Arab region relates to human skills and competencies. More importantly, developing students’ research skills has become a corner stone of higher education and a springboard to produce high quality research. Therefore, Arab universities are required to continuously appraise their practices in this field and engineer strategies to face up to global challenges.

Equipping students with research skills and training them in the basics of scientific inquiry has been less emphasized compared to aspects like state policies and institutional challenges. While much has been written on governments policies and budgets devoted to R&D, little has been investigated in terms of the quality of research training and pedagogies in the Arab region. This paper sheds more light on the pedagogy issue of higher education research by studying the case of Moroccan doctoral students. The main aim is to investigate the integration of research skills in university curricula and to assess the quality of these programs through doctoral students’ perceptions. Furthermore, the study attempted to scrutinize the main difficulties facing doctoral students in their research practices so as to draw practical suggestions to address these issues. Today’s doctoral students are tomorrow’s researchers and university professors, therefore, studying their perceptions of the quality of their research training and the difficulties they face in carrying out their research can help improve the quality of this training and future
The State of Scientific Research and Research Training in Moroccan Academic Research

academic research in Morocco. Besides, such a study may help faculty and researchers to develop ways and strategies to cater for students’ needs in research training.

In the end, on the basis of the results and discussions, a model of research skills development in higher education will be suggested. Before getting into the details of this study and its results, a review of the literature on the integration of research in higher education is deemed appropriate and essential.

1. Review of Literature:

It has become almost axiomatic that one of the major roles of higher education is to conduct research and communicate the results through publications, conferences and meetings. However, the question of who is supposed to do this research is still controversial. While it has become a global requirement for faculty members to do research for reasons of global rankings, promotion and academic exchange, a number of universities around the world, especially in developing and under-developed countries, still emphasize academic teaching over academic research and other higher education institutions give very little attention to research training and scientific inquiry.

Nevertheless, integrating research training and practice in the early stages of undergraduate education has been reported to have considerable benefits for both students and faculty members. For example, the American Council for Undergraduate Research underscores the importance of undergraduate research activities and their contribution to the intellectual development of students. In the same vein, there is substantial empirical evidence that participation in undergraduate research positively correlates with students’ academic achievement and retention (Cole & Espinoza 2008) helps foster students analytic and critical thinking (Bauer & Bennett 2003, Kuh et al. 2007) and facilitates pupils’ integration in graduate studies and choice of major (Wasserman, 2000; Hunter et al. 2006). In another study, Hathaway et al. found that students who engage in undergraduate research are more likely to pursue graduate education and conduct future research. More importantly, high quality education has been linked to practices that actively engage undergraduate and graduate students in exploring and discovering new knowledge (Association of American colleges and Universities, 2002, 2007; Council on Undergraduate Research, 2003).

Research has also emphasized the benefits of involving students in research activities for faculty members. In two studies conducted by Zydney et al. (2002) and Abdekun et al. (2010) faculty members mentoring undergraduates in research reported how they benefited from the experience and how it positively impacted their life and their work. Likewise, Newby and Heide (2008) suggested that mentoring and supervising undergraduate students can be beneficial for both the supervised and the supervisee. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) report that undergraduate research programs contribute to creating meaningful interaction with faculty members, strengthening, therefore, the relationship between professors and their students.

The most important gains students make from engaging in undergraduate research activities relate to the research skills they pick up during these experiences. Kardash (2000) shows that research activities teach students how to formulate hypotheses, carry out analysis and communicate their results. Similarly, Bucy et al. (2008) points out to the nature of the activities...
students engage in and how they may or may not contribute to their skill and intellectual development. In this context, students who are involved in practical activities such as reviewing the literature, formulating research questions and hypotheses, thinking of methods, designs and data analysis and communicating the results of their research are more likely to improve their skills and make authentic benefits. All this stresses the need for a shift from traditional training that focuses on lecturing on research and describing classical types of research methods (such as quantitative and qualitative methods) to more practical, hand-on-task pedagogies. In accordance with this, Nerad (2012) believes that the way doctoral students are taught need to be reviewed in order to ‘prepare an effective generation of researchers’ (Nerad, 2012: 58). Harman (2008) points out to the challenges facing societies in today’s globalized world and claims that countries need to challenge the traditional research training culture in order to face up to the demands of the present and the future knowledge society. New modes which stress the need of providing authentic research experiences for students have been incorporated in a number of universities around the world. In this line, Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) drew from social constructivism and developed a model of learning based on “communities of practice” where novel students are involved in authentic research experiences and socialized into the practice, guided and supported by trained practitioners (Hunter, Laursen & Seymour, 2006). Obviously, such practices and training modes aim at developing students’ autonomy and giving them an opportunity to work independently on different levels of the research process. In USA, this training method has been labeled ‘the apprenticeship model’ and it is an opportunity for students to interact with supervisors, mentors and more experienced peers to learn the intricacies of scientific research (Flores & Nerad 2012).

Engaging first year students in critical inquiry experiences through research activities with faculty members and other group students as well as the involvement of undergraduate students in systematic investigation has been considered examples of high impact practices (Kuh, 2008) Successful research programs tend to concentrate on providing students with key concepts of systematic investigation and research. Kuh 2008 reports that high quality education tends to involve students through empirical observation, technological breakthrough and delightful inquiry experiences.

The main aim of these experiences is to provide students with authentic learning and to help them build autonomy. What’s more, students involved in practical research activities will be able to connect theory and practice and make gains on different levels of their academic and professional development. Early engagement with the intricacies of scientific research makes students more productive and active as graduates and as professionals. A key objective of the study reported in this paper was to investigate doctoral students’ perceptions of the level of their autonomy and independence as researchers. This allowed for an evaluation of the research training Moroccan students receive before they enroll in doctoral programs. The following sections provide more details about the objectives, methodology and results of this study.

2. Methodology:

2.1 Research questions

This study set off to investigate Moroccan doctoral students’ perceptions of the quality of research training they receive as undergraduate and graduate students and explore the difficulties
they face as researchers. Two main research questions were formulated for the objective of this research:

1- Do Moroccan students receive research training during the first years of their university studies? And how effective is this research training?

2- What are the problems and difficulties that face doctoral students in their research practices?

2.2 Design

This study used a mixed research method with an explanatory survey design. In research, mixed methods procedure entails the integration of quantitative methods and qualitative procedures at the stages of data gathering and the interpretation of the results (Creswell, 2003). In the present study, priority was typically given to quantitative data, but some of the results obtained by the questionnaire needed further explanation which was sought by conducting interviews with a smaller sample of the participants who filled in the questionnaire.

2.3 Participants

144 Moroccan doctoral students took part in this study. These participants were doing their Ph.D. research in various disciplines such as Economics, Education, Technology, Humanities and Engineering. 55.8% of the subjects were males while 44.2% were females.

2.4 Procedure

A questionnaire and an interview were used to collect data for this study. Primary data was collected by a five-item likert scale questionnaire designed for doctoral students’ perceptions of their research training and supervising. This questionnaire contained questions about undergraduate research training, students’ judgment of the quality of research programs and supervision, and students’ productivity. To validate the results of the questionnaire and seek explanations for some of the results it provided, 40 participants took part in semi-structured interviews. In order to investigate the effectiveness and quality of the research training that Moroccan students receive prior to their subscription in doctoral programs, the participants were asked to judge their autonomy as researchers and to state the number of researches they have conducted as well as the number of research papers they have published. At the same time, the students were given open-ended questions in the questionnaire and the interviews to express their perceptions about the state and the quality of research in Morocco.

3. Results

The first part of the questionnaire inquired about the students’ research experience during their first three years at university. The results obtained indicate that 68.7% of students had courses in research methodology as undergraduates. Besides, 67.5% reported that they practiced research during the first three years of university. On the other hand, only 33.8% claimed that they participated in workshops on how to conduct research prior to their master and doctoral studies. At the same time, more than 40% of the subjects stated that they were not supervised by a practicing researcher and that they didn’t participate in groups of research before they started their doctoral theses. In their judgments of their autonomy to conduct research, 75.3% of the participants believed that Moroccan doctoral students have not developed autonomy in conducting research. Furthermore, more than 80% of subjects rated the quality of their research...
training as average or below average, while only 7% thought that they were well oriented and
guided by their supervisors. In the same line, only 2.8% believed that doctoral researchers are
well-equipped by their universities. 20% said that they are not equipped at all and more than
60% rated their equipment at below average.

The participants were also asked to report on the number of researches they had
conducted before they started their doctoral research and the number of research papers they had
published up to the day of the survey. In this context, more than 70% of the subjects stated that
they conducted less than 3 unpublished researches while 72.7% said they did not publish any
research paper.

In the open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire, most of the participants drew
a grim picture of the state of scientific research in Morocco. A large group of subjects stated that
Morocco’s performance in scientific research is very poor and imputed this to lack of genuine
interest in research from governments and lack of appropriate and sincere policies of R&D. In
the interviews, the participants were asked about the type of research training they received as
undergraduates. Most of the participants explained that they received lectures on introduction to
research where professors described what quantitative and qualitative research is. Moreover,
most of them stated that the research they carried out was a project report they had to write on a
topic as a requirement for a BA degree at the end of the first cycle of their studies (the first three
years of university).

The objective of the second research question was to explore the difficulties that
face doctoral students in their thesis research at Moroccan universities. To address this question, the
subjects were first asked about the assistance and facilities provided to them by their universities.
The results are displayed in table 1:

Table1: Types of assistance provided by universities to doctoral students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of assistance</th>
<th>Percentages of students who benefit from assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops &amp; seminars</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography resources</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of articles</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication fees offered</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second part of the questionnaire that tends to explore the difficulties faced by
doctoral students in their research experiences asked them to rate 6 difficulties. The findings on
this question are reported in table 2 below:
Table 2: Difficulties faced by doctoral students in doing their research:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulties</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of funding</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of collaboration from participants and laboratory teams</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective supervision</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of skills of research methodology</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of references</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other difficulties</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No difficulties at all</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Discussion:

The results reported above show that although Moroccan students take courses in research as undergraduates, they are not actively and effectively involved in doing research. The content of the courses is restricted to a mere introduction to the two broad types of inquiry: qualitative and quantitative methods. Most of times, these courses fail to bridge theory and practice as they don’t engage undergraduate students in practical research tasks like studying the components of research through analyzing published research papers. Besides, the teaching methods apparently fail to disseminate high quality research training that focuses on teaching transferable skills via involving undergraduate students in active learning processes.

In the same vein, the American Council of Undergraduate Research “CUR”, defines undergraduate research as ‘an inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline”. (CUR, 2015, p1). This definition underlines the importance of engaging students with hands-on task activities and empowering them with practical skills so as to enable them to produce research at early stages of their academic career. Similarly, Kuh (2008) highlights the skills and competencies that undergraduate research programs need to focus on. He believed that students involved in undergraduate research are expected to develop inquiry and critical thinking through facing challenging questions and engaging with the processes of data collection and analysis, literature reviewing, results interpretation and communication. It is only through this kind of programs that students can hone high quality research prowess and develop autonomy for research in the future. The fact that more than 70% of participants claimed that they don’t consider themselves autonomous is an indicator that the research programs that they have been involved in before subscribing in their doctoral programs, if any, are ineffective and lacking in quality. Therefore, reform is needed to integrate better quality undergraduate research in Moroccan universities. A review of the pedagogies and models that nurture these programs is necessary. This should be marked by an institutionalized shift from traditional lecturing into a learning-by-doing approach that actively engages in practical research projects and investigations aligned to their future academic and professional needs.

Another indicator to the poor quality or ineffectiveness of the training students get prior to their enrollment in research programs is the number of publications the participants said they have made. The findings indicate that a great number of subjects didn’t publish any research paper. The reasons given by students in the open-ended question and during interviews are linked to lack of funds as the journals require a publication fee, lack of research methodology skills and lack of linguistic skills (inability to write in English as most journals publish English
The State of Scientific Research and Research Training in Moroccan

papers). The late two reasons are strong indicators that Moroccan universities are compelled to make greater efforts in training students in research prior to their doctoral studies and teaching them English in all disciplines so as to acquire the linguistic skills necessary for the acquisition and transfer of knowledge.

The second objective of this study was to investigate the difficulties faced by doctoral students in their research endeavors. The results showed that the major difficulties Moroccan doctoral students face relate to lack of finances, publication issues, resources and access to data collection. The fact that only a few students have scholarships may discourage those who don’t have these scholarships to persist and produce research papers as they have to fund themselves, which is not possible for all doctoral students. Generalizing scholarships to all doctoral researchers, especially those who do not have a job is key to promoting graduate research. In addition, given these students access to bibliographical references is an urgent need in today’s society. Sometimes the references and resources are there but they are either not communicated or the students haven’t been provided by the skills to mine knowledge and information in appropriate ways. Therefore, the role of supervisors and mentors is not only to edit papers or sections of the doctoral students but also to teach them how and where to look for information. Universities are also required to do their best to provide researchers with rich databases and give them access to subjects and bibliographical resources needed to complete their research. High quality research cannot be achieved with Equipments necessary for research labs to give graduate researchers in Science and technology experience with the latest tools of inquiry.

An important number of students complained about the quality of their supervision and their lack of skills in research methods and methodology. On one hand, this indicates that some of these researchers have not developed autonomy and highly depend on their supervisors to complete their theses; but on the other hand, this is also a sign that supervision programs know some pitfalls that need to be investigated and addressed. As Thein and Beach (2010: p. 117) stated, “Preparing doctoral students to publish in top-tier journals involves more than simply providing them with advice on rhetorical strategies or genre conventions for writing research”. During the interviews, a number of students stated that they are left alone to strive with their theses and that their supervisors provide them with little help and guidance that can facilitate their task. As a university professor, I often hear colleagues complaining about doctoral students’ lack of research skills or how teaching and lecturing workload leaves them with little or no time for supervision. While research is needed to shed more light on the intricacies of research supervision and the relationship between supervisors and supervisees in Moroccan universities, it is crystal clear that the policies of higher education in this matter need to be revamped. There is also some knowledge management failure at this level as assistant professors are not legally allowed to supervise doctoral students and team work that involves new doctoral students and experienced ones in interdisciplinary areas is inexistent. Implementing mentoring programs that involve experienced doctoral researchers and newly graduate doctors guiding new doctoral students through the path of research may ease the load on supervisors and provide novel students with success stories that they can draw from to persist and complete their research.

Doctoral students’ reports that they lack autonomy are a strong indicator for reform of research training programs at Moroccan universities. This reform should focus on providing undergraduate students with the basics of scientific inquiry and involve them in active research
experiences that will teach them the skills of navigating safely and independently through research once they reach higher levels. This paper suggests a model for an undergraduate research program based on latest research in undergraduate research (Wiik, Dunn, Kirsch, Holman, Meeroff & Peluso 2014; Tang & Jackson, 2015):

**First year initiation:** students at this level are introduced to components of research and research designs and methods. Focus at this level should be on describing and modeling research questions, hypotheses, types of inquiry (exploratory/ experimental) etc.

**Second year reinforcement:** to reinforce what students learnt in the first year, students at this level are asked to analyze the components in published research papers close to their field of study. They are required to summarize those papers and present them in class. At a second phase, the students are asked to formulate basic research questions based on their observations of phenomena related to their discipline. They work in teams to outline methods to investigate their research questions.

**Third year apprenticeship:** an in-depth analysis of scientific research papers is carried out with students critiquing the components and results of published research papers. Students are also introduced to technical requirements of publication and ethical practices in research. Then, students are asked to work on research projects that investigate more profound research questions. Students carry out their investigations in teams. Graduate students give these undergraduate pupils scaffolding and guidance. Students finish their projects and present them in conferences at the local and national level. Universities help these learners publish their work in local and national journals.

This model focuses on providing students with training that bridges the gap between theory and practice. This way, students will gain more confidence, ‘deepen their understanding of the research project, and improve their communication skills’ (Lopatto 2010: p. 28).

**Conclusion**

Promoting research in Morocco, and elsewhere in the Arab region, requires first and foremost a firm belief in the huge importance of preparing university students at early stages for this endeavor. While the importance of scientific research for human development and economic growth has become evident, most Arab countries are still incapable of producing high quality research at a scale that can allow them to compete internationally. Morocco has achieved some progress in the last few years as research became a requirement for doctoral students to graduate and for faculty to get promoted. However, this progress is still insufficient due to the financial and pedagogic gaps that need to be bridged in order to produce high quality research. This paper focused on the pedagogic side of preparing academic science researchers in Morocco. This issue has been given little concern in research and in reports about the state of research in the Arab world and the MENA region. The results indicate that the courses on research that postgraduate students attend are purely theoretical and limited to rudimentary knowledge of basic concepts in quantitative and qualitative research. These courses fail to provide students with practical research skills necessary for scientific inquiry. Therefore, when these students enroll in doctoral programs they lack autonomy and they face a myriad of difficulties at different levels of scientific investigation, such as formulating hypotheses and research questions, finding
appropriate literature or resources, collecting and analyzing data and writing and communicating (or publishing) their research. These deficiencies add up to the lack of financial support most students suffer from and the very low budget devoted to research in Morocco. Hence, some doctoral researchers end up quitting their studies altogether, whereas a large part of those who persist may write low quality Ph.D. theses and produce mediocre research papers.

Thus, reform is needed to revamp the quality of training given to students who will be future researchers and to provide them with skills, tools and funds necessary for the production of high quality research papers. This is only possible through an institutionalized high impact practice that involves university students at early stages of their studies in real life research experiences and a policy that makes of scientific inquiry a priority for the country. Such a vision needs to be based on a firm belief in the strong link between research and development and a genuine intention to encourage all stakeholders to engage in high quality research production and help future generations learn the required skills and know-how of scientific inquiry.

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Teaching Critical Thinking in Moroccan Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities

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Abstract
To respond to the challenges of the 21st century, most universities had to make radical modifications in their systems. In Morocco, the recent modifications made at the level of modules brought some promises as teachers were also involved in decision-making. However, Moroccan students’ voices went largely ignored during this process. Therefore, the main aim of this study was to understand students’ opinions about one of the most important courses they studied after the last reform: “Critical Thinking”. Three research questions were used: What are university students’ perceptions and attitudes toward the critical thinking course in Morocco? To what extent are Moroccan students satisfied with the course contents and the teacher’s pedagogy? What are the views of Moroccan university students about the critical thinking exam they took at the end of the semester? Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data from 10 respondents. Qualitative content analysis was used through coding and classifying emerging patterns and themes. The results showed that although the students were generally satisfied with the course contents, they bitterly complained about different issues such as the theory-practice gap. The results, also, revealed that implementing any change in higher education without taking into consideration students’ needs and interests might be detrimental to the teaching-learning operation. Ultimately, this study offers university teachers of critical thinking a toolkit of skills and competencies for effective teaching.

Keywords: critical thinking, effective teaching, logic, student-centeredness
Introduction

The twenty-first century is marked by quick change, pitiless economic competition, and unprecedented amounts of information. To respond to such challenges, people today are supposed to be more knowledgeable, well-informed, and good autonomous thinkers. The international job market requires degree-holders who are quick decision-makers, risk-takers, problem-solvers, and competent critical thinkers. Court (1991), for instance, reasons that:

For tomorrow’s world, which is just around the corner, we need creative, questioning individuals, well informed and literate, who can work together to devise solutions to many problems that face us. These individuals should not be schooled in value-free reasoning but should be taught basic values of respect for persons and for the earth and all its creatures (1991, p. 119).

Thus, to cater for the demands of the twenty-first century, educational organizations in different countries of the world are now trying to offer quality education to their students (Bell, Stevenson, & Neary, 2009). This quality can be seen at different levels of these organizations but more precisely at the level of the courses they offer. A quick examination of university courses, mainly in the West, shows that the critical thinking course is one of “the primary” items in the “educational agenda” of these institutions (Court, 1991).

Statement of the Problem

The recent modifications made at the level of modules and their contents in Moroccan education seem to have brought some promises and solutions as teachers were given more freedom to decide what courses to teach and what content to include. However, if teachers have been involved in the new reform in Moroccan higher education, it seems students – who are the main concern of the teaching-learning operation – are still largely ignored. So far, Moroccan students have no say in what they learn or study, and their voices usually go unheard.

The absence of Moroccan students in decision-making in Moroccan higher education can but lead to (1) lack of understanding of the learning objectives, (2) decrease in student motivation in the classroom, (3) resistance, and (4) harsh criticism of the education they receive.

Thus, this study is a remedy to the above situation. More precisely, the main aim here is to give the floor, though at a small scale, to the Moroccan students to voice their opinions about one of the most important courses – that is, the critical thinking course.

Objectives of the Study

This study has different objectives. First, it aims at understanding Moroccan students’ perceptions, attitudes, and opinions about the critical thinking course within Moroccan university. The second objective is to spot the main challenges and obstacles that teachers of the critical thinking course face today at the university level in Morocco. The third objective is to suggest a set of teaching skills, competencies and insights that may make pedagogical practices more effective in the Moroccan educational context in general and at university in particular.

Research Questions

In this study the following questions were investigated:
RQ 1: What are university students’ perceptions and attitudes toward the critical thinking course in Morocco?

RQ 2: To what extent are Moroccan students satisfied with the course contents and the teacher’s pedagogy?

RQ 3: What are the views of Moroccan university students about the critical thinking exam they took at the end of the semester?

Literature Review
A Historical Overview of Critical Thinking

Scholars generally agree that critical thinking is not a new discipline as it can be traced back to the Greek era (about 2,500 years ago). Greek philosophers, such as Socrates and Plato, discovered its importance long time ago and made use of it in their long and complex debates and dialogues. In skepticism and formal logic, for example, critical thinking skills were the main tools when arguers wanted to make a point or questioned social, philosophical and political issues (Inch & Warnick, 2011).

During the Renaissance, critical thinking came to the fore. Then in the 17th century, scholars – such as Francis Bacon – used critical thinking in their scientific endeavor and made it the main tenet of scientific research (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). However, it was in the nineteenth century that critical thinking was given its due right as a discipline in several Western countries such as England and the United States.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, critical thinking received full attention in the field of education. Scholars such as Dewey (1933) started writing about the importance of using critical thinking skills in education by both teachers and students. The importance of critical thinking in education increased in the second half of the twentieth century with Bloom’s (1956) book Taxonomy of Educational Objectives.

In the 1980s, informal logic gained much interest both in the field of research and education. Critical thinking, hence, became part and parcel of the curriculum in developed countries in Europe and North America (Sternberg, 1985).

At the outset of the twenty-first century, the role of critical thinking in education became pivotal. Thus, most countries of the world (including developing countries) started implementing critical thinking in their curricula and at different levels of education (Inch & Warnick, 2011).

Critical Thinking in Morocco

In Morocco, critical thinking is a new concern in the field of education. In 2003, when the Ministry of Higher Education launched a large educational reform, the hallmark of that reform was the adoption of the modular system. Although many voices at that time expressed the need for implementing critical thinking in Moroccan universities, no module included critical thinking as an independent course. Now, after a decade or so, the Ministry of Higher Education introduced a second reform in the Fall Semester of 2014 to remedy to some of the ills that infested university education. This time, some universities seized the opportunity and implemented critical thinking in the curriculum. A good example here is that of the Faculty of
Arts and Humanities in Meknes (University of Moulay Ismail) where critical thinking is now taught as an independent course in the Department of English Studies. The intended learning outcomes of this critical thinking course at this faculty are as follows:

- Understand the importance of critical thinking in their academic and professional life.
- Identify the difference between an argument, a pseudo-argument, and a non-argument.
- Recognize underlying assumptions and implicit arguments.
- Understand the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning.
- Identify logical fallacies in an argument.
- Find and evaluate sources of evidence.
- Understand features of critical, analytical writing.
- Use MLA/APA styles for in-text citations.
- Use MLA/APA style to format reference lists.
- Identify a topic worthy of academic research.
- Find, evaluate, and make notes from a variety of academic sources.
- Write a critical, analytical research paper.
- Deliver an oral presentation based on library research. (Ministère de l’Enseignement Supérieur, 2014, p. 124)

Related Literature

The literature on teaching critical thinking is so huge and varied. However, it can be broadly divided into three main categories.

First, extant literature on critical thinking shows that the concept has been extensively studied and defined by different scholars from various disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, and education (Dunn, Halonen, & Smith, 2008).

Second, there is a substantial body of studies on how to teach and test critical thinking in different educational areas (Dunn, Halonen, & Smith, 2008). Court (1991) upholds that there are at least five approaches to teaching critical thinking: (1) the process or skills approach, (2) the problem-solving approach, (3) the logic approach, (4) the information-processing approach, and (5) the multi-aspect approach (p. 115). Paul (1989), on the other hand, thinks that there are two approaches to academic instruction: a traditional and dominant approach based on a “didactic theory of knowledge, learning, and literacy”; and a new approach based on “emerging critical theory of knowledge, and learning and literacy” (p. 200). In a study by Bensley, Crowe, Bernhardt, Buckner, and Allman (2010), the findings show that there is a significant difference between students who learnt “explicit critical thinking skills” and those who “received no explicit critical thinking instruction” (p. 91).

The third category focuses on the obstacles and failures in teaching critical thinking in various parts of the world (Ennis, 1993; Sternberg, 1985, 1987). Paul (1989) argues that the heavy reliance on the “outmoded didactic lecture-and-drill-based, model of instruction” (p. 225) has led to poor critical thinking skills and little learning in the United States and Europe. Sternberg (1985) explains that “what school programs are doing to develop critical thinking have little relation to one another” (p. 194). Similarly, Kaplan (1991) directs a bitter attack on the critical thinking movement in America and concludes that it was a failure. Kaplan (1991)
Teaching Critical Thinking in Moroccan Higher Education

concludes that “the critical thinking course tends to teach political conformity rather than political autonomy” (p. 4).

Unfortunately, in spite of the big importance of critical thinking in preparing students for their future life, reviewing the literature on critical thinking shows that there is a serious paucity of studies and research in developing countries like Morocco.

Methods
Sampling Procedure

Ten students from the Department of English Studies at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (University of Moulay Ismail, Meknes) took part in this study. The participants came from two groups in semester five (S 5). It should also be noted here that all the participants in the sample had the same teacher and took the same exam. The sample was composed of 5 boys and 5 girls who got different grades in the final exam.

As far as the sampling procedure is concerned, “purposeful sampling” was adopted in the selection of the sample. Creswell (2003) argues that “purposeful sampling” can be used if the individuals selected in the sample have already experienced the central phenomenon under study. Accordingly, all the participants in this study experienced critical thinking for a whole semester as students in semester five at Moulay Ismail University.

The Instrument

The semi-structured interview questionnaire was used in this study to collect qualitative data from the participants. As a “conductive methods”, the semi-structured interview is considered an effective method to get as much information as possible from the informants (Paton, 2002). Gillham (2005) argues that this type of instrument has several qualities such as “flexibility”, “quality of data”, “clarity of stages”, and “superiority”. He summarizes these advantages in the following:

The semi-structured interview is the most important way of conducting a research interview because of its flexibility balanced by structure, and the quality of the data obtained. The costs are high largely due to the amount of preparation involved and the level of analysis, interpretation and the presentation of the interview material required. The stages are clear but, essentially, there are no short-cuts. (Gillham, 2005, p. 70)

The interview was divided into two major parts. The first part was a warm-up and was meant to make the participants more relaxed through demographic questions. The second part was about the main concern of the interview and included several questions such as: “What were your expectations of the critical thinking course before you started the lessons?”, “What are some of the activities the teacher used?”, “Did the teacher use a textbook?”, “Did the teacher give assignments?”, (6) “What do you think of the end of the term exam?”, etc. The interviews took place in the period between March 18 and March 21, 2015. Each interview was recorded and lasted around forty-five minutes.
Data Analysis
After recording the interviews, they were transcribed for data analysis. Qualitative content analysis was used through coding and classifying emerging patterns and themes. The patterns and themes were, then, developed and grouped based on the interviewees’ responses (Patton, 2002).

Findings
This section presents the results obtained through the interviews conducted with 10 university students. The results presented here are related to the three research questions raised at the beginning of this study.

R.Q 1: What are university students’ perceptions and attitudes toward the critical thinking course?

The majority of the interviewees in this study admitted that before taking the critical thinking course, they had either no expectations or just a very vague idea about it. Expressions such as “I was confused”, “I had no idea”, or “it is a new subject to me” were widely used by most of the respondents. The absence of clear and precise expectations is explicitly expressed by one of the interviewees when she said: “The only question that I had in mind was why in S 5, and not in S 4 or S 2. I said to myself it might be an amazing subject, we did not have any, any idea about it” (Interview 5).

Yet, when asked about their attitudes toward the course, the 10 respondents unanimously expressed their positive attitudes. All the respondents expressed their satisfaction with the course in general as they used positive adjectives like “useful”, “helpful”, “fruitful”, “important”, and “beneficial”. Most importantly, 50 % of the respondents admitted that the critical thinking caused a change in them as it made them see things differently. According to one of the respondents, “Critical thinking makes us change in how to see things. In real life, it is a means to deal with problems inside and outside the faculty” (interview 10). This view is similarly shared by another respondent when she said, “Critical thinking helps you see things from different sides and to think of things and how they are going” (interview 8).

RQ 2: To what extent are students satisfied with the course contents and the teacher’s pedagogy?

Students’ responses throughout the interviews show that there is a positive satisfaction with the contents of the course. More precisely, all the respondents said they were totally satisfied with the theoretical side of the course since the teacher relied on chapters from a book on critical thinking and communication. For one of the interviewees,

The teacher used just one book. This book has everything: texts, activities, exercises, stories … many things. I have no idea about the title of the book, the teacher gave us chapters, and not the book. In each chapter we had concrete examples. (Interview 1)

Still, the majority of the respondents (8 students) expressed their dissatisfaction with (1) the practical side of the course, and (2) the lack of compatibility between the contents of the course and those of the course description accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education in Morocco. Indeed, the dissatisfaction was not with all the practical side of the course, but more precisely with the types of exercises the teacher gave after presenting the theoretical
part. The absence of real life situations made the students feel unable to put into practice what they had learnt theoretically in the classroom.

Generally, all the respondents are satisfied with the pedagogy the teacher used in the classroom. The responses of the interviews showed that the teacher adopted specific roles and relied on the following procedures and activities during the lectures (Table 1):

### Table 1. Pedagogy Used in Teaching Critical Thinking in Morocco

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures and activities</th>
<th>Teacher roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Lecturing</td>
<td>- Frontal teaching based on lectures: teacher here is the center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reading: Chapter from the same textbook and comprehension questions (oral).</td>
<td>- Controller: mainly during the lectures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Written exercises (based on recognition).</td>
<td>- Organizer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Videos from YouTube (+ oral Discussion and analysis and evaluation of the arguments).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Short texts to read in the classroom followed by questions and discussion.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reading assignments at home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All 10 interviewees recognized that what their teacher did was “great” and “informative”, but they expressed their desire for more involvement and active participation in the lesson.

Yet, some respondents suggested that the lessons would have been more beneficial if other activities had been used by the teacher. One of the respondents suggested the following:

Why not using a debate by students in the classroom? It is amazing. If the students are good in applying what an arguer and what a receiver can do in an arguments, that’s good; it is better than just going through the sheets without applying anything. How can a teacher tell what we mastered and what we did not in the classroom? (Interview 4)

**RQ 3: What are students’ opinions about the critical thinking exam they took at the end of the semester?**

The 10 respondents explicitly said that they liked the exam they sat for at the end of the semester. This favorable attitude is due to the fact that the exam was both appropriate and similar to what they expected and were trained for. The students explained that the exam was made up of four questions. The exam questions were as follows:

1. In one paragraph, provide a definition of critical thinking. Your answer should be personal. Plagiarized answers will be sanctioned.
2. Write an argumentation according to the narrative pattern to explain how traditional schooling is boring.
Teaching Critical Thinking in Moroccan Higher Education  
Chouari

(3) Read this letter and write a short analysis of its claim, evidence, reasoning, and sphere.

(4) Read the information provided in this ad and explain the main goal of the arguer. Then explain if this argument would be effective in the Moroccan context.

However, all the 10 respondents said that question 4 was problematic to all the students because they found it hard to understand. According to all the interviewees, the difficulty was at three levels: the language used in the advertisement, the lack of clarity of the picture, and the cultural aspect of the advertisement. The difficulty of question 4 was highly emphasized by one of the interviewees when she said:

At the beginning, I did not understand the question, but I asked professor X about the car. So, he told me that it does not exist in Morocco. From there I got the idea that it is another culture. I did not know about the brand of the car. (Interview 5)

Discussion

In this study, qualitative data were collected on the basis of 3 research questions. The results, thus, fall into three categories:

- Students’ attitudes toward their critical thinking course and its contents in general.
- Students’ satisfaction with the activities and the teacher’s pedagogies.
- Students’ opinion about the end of the term exam on critical thinking.

As far as the first category is concerned, the findings show that students started the course with different but vague expectations. In other words, it seems there is a clear absence at the level of communication between the three components of the university: teachers, administration, and students – let alone the ministry of education. Most of the students reasoned that if the course had been introduced in S 2 or S 4, they could have become more familiar with the concepts used in critical thinking. Also, although the findings show that students have a positive attitude toward the contents of the course, mainly the theoretical side, it is obvious that the students’ views were not taken into consideration. Indeed, the Moroccan Ministry of Education did not conduct any students’ needs analysis before implementing the new reform. What is worse, due to the amount of information and the time allotted to prepare the new contents of the courses, each course description was conducted by only one teacher before the accreditation process. In other words, the contents and objectives of each course were prepared by only one teacher, without opening the floor for more voices and more evaluation.

As regard the issue of the teacher and the pedagogies used in teaching critical thinking, there seems to be a general agreement among the interviewees that the course was successful and the teacher was effective and competent. The findings show that the teacher used a variety of activities that targeted “lower” and “higher” order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom, 1956).

Yet, the interviewees thought that their teacher relied heavily on lectures and deductive teaching. Some of the remarks made by the students clearly show that using a student-centered approach can yield better results and help students become “autonomous learners” and better “intellectual thinkers” (Kaplan, 1991). Also, the scarcity of real life situations in the classroom reduced the chance for the students to develop “citizenship competence” (Ten
Dam & Volman, 2004). Above all, it seems that teaching critical thinking is not an easy task as it requires extra skills and competencies in comparison to other courses. For example, one of the interviewees remarked: “You know, teachers do not really apply critical thinking. They should really have some kind of training for this course, and then teach it” (Interview 4).

Conclusion
This study aimed to address the challenges and promises of teaching critical thinking in Moroccan universities. The results revealed some major findings related to teaching critical thinking in Morocco. Firstly, although the students were satisfied with the theoretical side of the course, they felt that it had little impact on their daily life. Secondly, the students had positive attitudes toward that test they took at the end of the module. Yet, the findings showed that in designing critical thinking tests, teachers should take their students’ cultural background into consideration. Finally, the findings indicated that any attempt to implement any change or any course without taking into consideration students’ needs and interests might lead to serious threats to the promises of whatever reform in higher education.

General Implications
This study has several implications for the existing body of knowledge on teaching critical thinking in higher education. First, teachers should have some training on teaching critical thinking to develop the required skills and competencies. Second, teaching should focus more on using the student-centered approach. Activities such as problem-solving, real life situations, scenarios, and debates can yield better results as they develop students’ intellectual autonomy. Focus should also be on the “co-orientational model” of critical thinking and on inductive teaching since Moroccan culture tends to be more of a “high-context” culture (Hall, 1956; Hall, 1976). Moreover, explicit critical thinking skills instruction can also be beneficial in different contexts (Bensley, et al., 2010). Finally, tests are better when they cover different aspects of critical thinking; otherwise, teachers should consider using performance tests with “real life situations” (Ennis, 1993).

Limitations of the Study
As with any study, this research paper has some limitations. The first limitation is that the sample was relatively small which did not allow for generalizing the results. The second limitation is that the data were gathered from a sample of students taught by the same teacher – that is, the voices of other students from other teachers were not included. The third limitation is related to the research method used in this study. Undoubtedly, using more than one method can yield more insights about the issues of this study.

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References


Teaching Critical Thinking in Moroccan Higher Education

English-Kurdish Code Switching of Teachers in Iraqi Primary Schools

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Abstract  
Code switching (CS) as a phenomenon of switching between two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation is a widely observed topic in bilingual contexts and English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms that is employed by both students and teachers. However, there are conflicting opinions about the application of CS and its advantages and disadvantages in teaching and learning. This study, therefore, examines teachers’ perceptions about the use of CS and its functions in the context of primary schools in the Kurdish region of Iraq where English is the medium of instruction and Kurdish is L1. In order to obtain a genuine reflection of teachers’ CS in the classroom, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was employed, involving a questionnaire and interviews with the teachers. The findings of the study reveal that teachers generally have positive attitudes about the use of CS and consider it as an influential factor in facilitating teaching. Therefore, they employ all three main functional categories of CS: curriculum access, building interpersonal relationship and managing their classrooms. However, they believe that teachers should not over rely on the CS strategy as it affects the learning process and has drawbacks for the learners.  
Keywords: Affective state, functional uses, Kurdish, learning success, teacher’s code-switching to L1, teaching strategy
Introduction

Code switching (CS) is an unavoidable and common phenomenon among bilinguals or multilinguals. This issue gained prominence in linguistics during 1980s and since then, several definitions have been offered to define CS. According to one definition, code switching is the alteration between two or more languages in the same discourse (Myers-Scotton, 2006; Grosjean, 1982). Another definition for CS is Gumperz’s (1982) definition that refers to code switching as “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems” (p.59). However, more recently, Cook (2013, 174) defines code switching as the process of shifting “from one language to the other in mid-speech” while all of the speakers involved in the conversation know both languages. Generally, it can be argued that a requirement of CS is a juxtaposition of elements from two codes (Winford, 2003: 103).

Code switching is a prevalent issue in EFL classes as it happens frequently in teacher-learner interactions in the classroom and is used by both teachers and learners (Borlongan, 2009). Due to the frequent occurrences of CS in EFL classrooms, numerous researches have addressed the issue to find out whether CS is a positive or negative phenomenon. Several researchers have highlighted the importance of CS technique in facilitating second/foreign language teaching and learning procedure (Burden, 2001; Greggio & Gil, 2007). Tien & Liu (2006) believe that CS assists the successful transfer of information from the teachers to the students particularly for less proficient students. CS extensively helps weaker students comprehend the subject. Through CS, the teacher can make “a bridge from the known (native language) to the unknown (new foreign language content)” (Sert, 2005; 3) so the information can be easily delivered to the students.

On the other hand, some researchers have negative attitudes regarding classroom code switching and consider it as a sign of linguistic deficit and incompetence (Boztepe, 2005; Probyn, 2009; Wei & Martin, 2009). Numerous educationists and ELT practitioners believe that CS is inappropriate and unacceptable in classroom context thus L1 (native language) and L2 (target language) “should be kept strictly separated” (Cummins, 2005; 588). Opponents of using CS in classrooms argue that switching to L1 undermines the process of learning so teachers have to teach entirely using L2 in order to allow the students to experience unpredictability, and develop their own in-built language system.

Encountering two opposing viewpoints regarding CS in classroom, this study intends to provide empirical evidences in favor of teachers’ CS in classroom. In fact, this study emphasizes on the necessity of teachers’ CS in EFL/ESL (English as a foreign language / English as a second language) classrooms as total exclusion of first language (L1) cause problems for the students. Teachers should be encouraged to use CS as a skill when it is too challenging or time-consuming for the learners to process and comprehend foreign language (L2) (Jingxia, 2010). This study presents empirical evidences about the positive influences of CS in four selected primary schools that are located in the Kurdish region of Iraq. In all of the selected schools for the study, English (L2) is used as a medium of instruction and Kurdish is the first language of students and teachers (L1).

Code Switching in Language Learning

Modupeola (2013) regards CS as a helpful teaching strategy that provides students with
opportunities to interact and improve their understanding. In addition, it assists the flow of instruction in class as teachers can save time and keep the students motivated by switching to L1 for explaining difficult contents. In fact, learners’ L1 knowledge and experiences can be exploited by the teachers through CS in order to facilitate teaching and clarify probable confusions.

Qian et al (2009) in the study of CS behavior of teachers in primary school conducted a case study to observe two EFL teachers and their CS behavior in classroom for six years. The findings of their study proved that teachers frequently employed CS to translate the new vocabularies, clarify confusing sections, highlight the important sections, communicate with students, establish solidarity or power, inspire or praise students and criticize the learners’ weak performances or negative behaviors.

Ahmad & Jusoff (2009) identify the level of proficiency among learners as the determining factor in teachers’ practice of CS. After investigating 257 less competent learners, the researchers found out that less proficient learners considered CS as a positive approach and supported the use of CS in classroom for teachers’ communication and teaching. The findings of the study further highlighted that there is a significant relationship between teachers’ CS and students’ effective support as well as their learning accomplishments. The study verified that teachers’ CS is an efficient and advantageous teaching approach when dealing with low proficient students.

Johansson (2014) in her study observes both students and teachers’ opinion about CS phenomenon. Majority of the participated teachers and students argued that CS is an important strategy and expressed positive attitudes towards its application. Although most of the teachers in the study initially claimed that CS is not allowed in their classrooms, later they declared that they use CS as a tool of teaching grammar and in one-to-one situations. Regarding the participated students, they argued that CS is necessary in the classroom, particularly when the topic is difficult or for grammar instruction. On the other hand, students expected their teachers to make them use the target language to improve their L2 proficiency.

Although numerous teachers consider CS as a weakness and due to lack of proficiency in the target language, they consciously or unconsciously use it as a teaching strategy to optimize comprehension and uptake of the learners (Levine, 2003). Despite the fact that teachers are commonly expected to use merely target language (L2) in classrooms, they habitually and regularly switch to first language (L1) to confront and overcome several classroom issues (Makulloluwa, 2013). Considering the fact that teachers use CS mostly: (i) for pedagogical purposes; (ii) to maintain social interaction with the students; (iii) to manage the classroom; (iv) to show solidarity or empathy, to aid comprehension; (v) to offer a translation of a word or phrase; (vi) for grammar instruction, and (vii) to save time and to cover their lack of proficiency in L2 (Makulloluwa, 2013; 584).

This study attempts to scrutinize teachers CS behavior and pattern in the selected primary schools in Kurdish region of Iraq where English is the target language and a medium of instruction while Kurdish is the first language (L1).
Functions of Teachers’ Code Switching

According to previous scholarly researches, teachers in EFL classes have tendency to use L1 in various situations and for different purposes including but not limited to clarifying meaning and new vocabulary, directing learners’ interpretation, conveying the lesson content, explaining grammatical structures, organizing classrooms as well as inspiring and motivating learners (El Mamoun & Mugaddam, 2013). Chowdhury (2013) in her paper considers CS as a useful strategy that is employed by teachers to maintain their discipline, particularly in populated classrooms, to communicate with learners more efficiently, to clarify and translate unknown terms and vocabularies, to build interpersonal relationship with students, and to explain grammar rules. Bashir & Naveed (2015) give more examples in L1 for further clarifications and creating humor as other functions of teachers’ CS in classroom contexts.

As explained earlier in the study, EFL/ESL teachers generally have both positive and negative views about the CS strategy and they practice CS either willingly and intentionally, or unconsciously and habitually for diverse reasons. Accordingly, this study intends to shed lights on teachers’ CS behavior and its functions and effects on the teaching/learning process in the selected primary schools in Iraq.

Research Objectives
This study is carried out to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the functions, purposes and influences of code switching on learning and teaching.
2. To examine the attitudes and beliefs of teachers regarding the use of code switching in classroom.
3. To determine benefits and drawbacks of code switching predicted by teachers.

Research Questions
Based on the above objectives, the following questions are formulated:

1. What are the functions, purposes and influences of code switching on learning and teaching?
2. What are the attitudes and beliefs of teachers regarding the use of code switching in classroom?
3. What benefits and drawbacks of code switching practiced by teachers?

Methodology
Research Participants
This study attempts to investigate and scrutinize the practice of code switching among teachers in primary level schools in Iraq. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, four primary schools were selected as the context of the study in which English is used as a medium of instruction for all subjects. 20 teachers (n=20) with at least 5 years of teaching experience who teach English language subject were recruited for this research. All of the selected teachers for the survey are bilingual speakers of Kurdish as L1 and English as L2.

Research Instruments
In order to obtain a genuine reflection of teachers’ CS in the classroom, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was employed, involving a questionnaire and interviews with the teachers. The researchers administered a closed question questionnaire for the participants in order to elicit the respondents’ attitudes and perceptions regarding the role, benefits and functions of CS in classroom. In obtaining the qualitative data, a semi-structured interview was employed. Out of 20 respondent teachers, four of them (n=4) were interviewed individually for 20-30 minutes.

**Questionnaire**

The questionnaire with the standardized Likert scale was adapted from Selamat’s (2014) doctoral dissertation in which numerical values were assigned to each code. The employed questionnaire consists of two sets of questions with the total number of 20 questions about the functions of teachers’ CS, and their opinion about the use of the CS strategy in teaching. The questionnaire was prepared in English language with general statements to elicit respondents’ opinion about functions and purposes of CS. Questions 1-11 address the functions of CS in teaching and respondent teachers are required to tick the correct answer for each question based on the following scale; 1= Never, 2= Hardly Ever, 3= Often, 4= Most of the Time and 5= Every Time. The second set of questions, 12-20, enquire about the respondents’ attitudes and perceptions of CS where the teachers have to respond by selecting one of the following options; 1= Totally Agree, 2= Partly Agree, 3= Neither Agree or Disagree, 4= Partly Disagree and 5= Totally Disagree.

**Interview**

Interviews are considered as one of the most regular methods of data collection by which qualitative data can be obtained in order to elicit the respondents’ opinions and viewpoints (Saldaña, 2011). In this study, out of 20 respondent teachers for questionnaire, one teacher from every school was invited for the interview. Consequently, 4 teachers were selected randomly to be interviewed. Semi-structured interview was implemented for this study containing five questions regarding the functions of CS and teachers’ perceptions regarding the application of this strategy. The respondent teachers were provided by the interview questions two days before the interview and all of the four interviews were conducted individually in the teachers’ room of the schools. Interviews started with a brief introduction about the purpose of this study and lasted for 20-30 minutes.

**Research Findings**

The collected data from the survey questionnaire demonstrated qualitative and quantitative results regarding teachers’ perceptions about CS as well as its functions in facilitating instruction and improving teaching outcomes. Based on the presented data in the Table 1, it can be argued that all of the teachers used CS spontaneously or consciously in various situations and for several functions.

As shown in Table 1, all of the respondent teachers (n=20) used the CS strategy to explain new vocabularies and clarify meanings of sentences. The majority of the teachers (65%) used this technique to explain the meaning of words and sentences regularly or always while 35% use it often. Data collected from the second question of the questionnaire reveals that all of the teachers employed CS to elaborate complicated concepts. In fact, 85% of the teachers
constantly used this method to clarify difficult subjects. For question number 3, which inquires about the use of CS for teaching grammar, the collected data demonstrated that only one teacher (5%) who did not apply CS in teaching grammar while 75% used CS for this function. The same number of teachers (75%) used CS to check on the students’ comprehension of the subject matter.

In terms of using CS for organizing classroom activities and assignments, as indicated in Table 1, 25% of the teachers did not consider CS as a useful method for this function while 90% of the teachers rely heavily on CS to clarify the difference between native language (Kurdish) and second language (English). In contrast, 45% of the teachers used CS to draw students’ attention to the correct pronunciations of sounds in English because of the differences in the sound systems of L1 and L2. However, out this number, 55% (11) of them referred to the Kurdish pronunciation and used it as a guide to facilitate the teaching of the correct pronunciation of sounds and words in English.

Additionally, code switching to Kurdish is a common method of maintaining discipline and organizing the progression of teaching in class among the teachers as 70% of them rely on it. In terms of providing praise and remarks about students’ performance in the classroom, half of the teachers (50%) utilized CS on a regular basis because they believed that praising students in their L1 had a greater influence on them and they were better motivated to learn the target language as the feedback in L1 would encourage them to learn about their weaknesses and consequently spur them to improve on their L2 acquisition process. In line with this strategy, 95% of the teachers used CS to create and improve their interpersonal relationships with students since a strong bond with students could help them to reduce their stress in learning the L2 in class.

In summary, teachers employ the CS technique for three main functional categories as proposed by Ferguson (2003, 2009). They are as follows:
1. CS for curriculum access (to assist students comprehend the subject matter of the lessons).
2. CS for classroom management discourse (to encourage and discipline students).
3. CS for interpersonal relationships (to create friendly and less threatening classrooms)

Table 1. Functions of CS practised by teachers in the classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In class, I switch from English (L2) to Kurdish language (L1):</th>
<th>1=Never</th>
<th>2=Hardly ever</th>
<th>3=Often</th>
<th>4=Most of the time</th>
<th>5=Every time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To explain the meaning of words and sentences</td>
<td>n=0(0%)</td>
<td>n=0 (0%)</td>
<td>n=7(35%)</td>
<td>n=5 (25%)</td>
<td>n=8 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To explain difficult concepts</td>
<td>n=0(0%)</td>
<td>n=3 (15%)</td>
<td>n=2 (10%)</td>
<td>n=3 (15%)</td>
<td>n=12 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To explain grammar</td>
<td>n=1 (5%)</td>
<td>n=4 (20%)</td>
<td>n=5 (25%)</td>
<td>n=8 (40%)</td>
<td>n=2 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To check for comprehension</td>
<td>n=5 (25%)</td>
<td>n=3 (15%)</td>
<td>n=7 (35%)</td>
<td>n=3 (15%)</td>
<td>n=2 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2. Functional categories of CS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function 1: Code switching for curriculum access</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To explain the meaning of words and sentences</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To explain difficult concepts</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To explain grammar</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To check for comprehension</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To explain the differences between the students’ L1 (Kurdish) and English (L2)</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the second set of questions (12-20), all the participants believed that CS would facilitate the teaching and learning process and that it was beneficial for both learners and teachers (refer to Table 3). However, 85% of them argued that CS made the students more dependent on the teachers ultimately causing a lack of confidence in themselves. Despite accepting that CS will facilitate teaching, 15% of the teachers expressed their disagreement for including CS as an integral part of the lesson plan. Furthermore, the majority of the participants did not support the idea of total exclusion of L1 and a strict separation of L1 (Kurdish) and L2 (English). As for question 16, 75% of the teachers believed that CS should be teachers’ last option. Therefore, teachers have to avoid it for as long as possible.

In terms of efficiency of the CS strategy, 90% of the teachers considered it as a timesaving and effective method of teaching while 10% were neutral regarding the statement. 45% of the teachers supported the statement that L2 can be best learned when L1 is totally excluded.

**Table 3. Teachers’ perceptions and beliefs about code switching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I believe that:</th>
<th>1=totally agree</th>
<th>2=partly agree</th>
<th>3=neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>4=prtly disagree</th>
<th>5=totally disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Code switching will facilitate the language learning process</td>
<td>n=16 (80%)</td>
<td>n=4 (20%)</td>
<td>n=0 (0%)</td>
<td>n=0 (0%)</td>
<td>n=0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The practice of code switching</td>
<td>n=5</td>
<td>n=12</td>
<td>n=3</td>
<td>n=0 (0%)</td>
<td>n=0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The findings of the study regarding teachers’ attitudes and viewpoints of CS presented in Table 3 can be categorized into two categories of positive opinions regarding the influence of CS on L2 learning process, and negative opinions regarding the influence of CS on L2 learning process. The sum of percentages from respondent teachers’ answers for each statement who selected option 1=totally agree, and option 2=partly agree is used to identify whether teachers have positive or negative opinion about a particular statement. The percentages for participants who selected options 3=neither agree or disagree, option 4=partly disagree and option 5=totally disagree are not considered in the Table 4. As shown in the following table 4., teachers mostly expressed positive opinions about CS application with 78.33% positive opinions. Nevertheless, teachers’ negative perceptions about CS reveal that they have certain reservations of negative influences of CS on learning outcome.

### Table 4. Positive and negative opinions of teachers regarding the use of CS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) positive opinions regarding the influence of CS on L2 learning process</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code switching will facilitate the language learning process</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code switching should be included as an integral part of the ESL lesson</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code switching is an efficient, time-saving technique</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>78.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Negative opinions regarding the influence of CS on L2 learning process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The practice of code switching will increase the students’ reliance and dependency on the teacher</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There should be a strict separation of the mother tongue and English in the EFL classroom</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code switching should only be used as a last resort when all other options have been exhausted.</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English is best taught in English-only classrooms</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of other languages in the EFL classroom will result in a decline in the standards of English</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The more English that is used, the better the results for the learners</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
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The findings of the interview revealed that all four teachers considered CS to be an invaluable and helpful teaching strategy that could be utilized by teachers to convey knowledge and to assist EFL learners comprehend the subject matter. Despite highlighting the positive influence of CS on learning outcomes, teacher A mentioned that teachers should avoid over-reliance on CS and try to use this technique only if it is necessary. Furthermore, teacher B highlighted the importance of having a plan for CS application. She stated that if there are no plans for using CS in the classroom, students would rely heavily on their L1 which could affect their L2 acquisition. Like Teacher A, Teacher C argued that CS should be used only when it was required to save time and clarify difficult content. She further explained that since students were at the primary level, they needed more CS to fully comprehend the subject matter. Lastly, Teacher D claimed that although she used CS spontaneously and regularly for various functions, it was better for students to listen to more English from their teachers.

Discussion

This study was conducted to investigate teachers’ attitudes and beliefs in terms of using CS in the classroom and its functions, benefits and drawbacks for the students. The findings of the study are consistent with the findings of Selamat (2014), Ariffin & Rafik-Galea (2009) and Then & Ting’s (2011) studies, which investigate the teachers’ perceptions and viewpoints about CS and its functions, advantages and disadvantages for the students’ learning in the context of Malaysia. As evidently highlighted in the findings of the questionnaire, all of the participating teachers believed that CS assisted instruction and facilitated the acquisition process of the target language. In addition, the findings of the interview also support the idea that CS was an invaluable strategy for curriculum access. As discussed earlier in the study, teachers believe that the practice of CS was essential for teaching as it has quite positive pedagogical values. However, over-reliance on this strategy is not desirable as it might result in the decline in students’ L2 proficiency and in their confidence level. The majority of the teachers present an overall positive attitude regarding the use of CS in the classroom. Although some of the teachers express their reservations about using CS by considering it to be an inappropriate practice, they agreed that it was an essential part of their teaching.
Since 78.33% of the teachers express their positive opinion for CS application in class, it is pertinent for policy makers and educators in Iraq to provide a planned and organized system for using CS in the English classrooms. This would ensure better confidence in teachers using CS to facilitate their teaching and at the same time improve learners’ acquisition without further doubts and concerns of using this strategy. As argue by Selamat (2014), application of code switching in the English classroom is unavoidable since it is not achievable to entirely exclude the use of L1 during lessons, particularly by second and foreign language learners. Consequently, by the systematic use of CS, teachers would be well advised to have systematic plans for effectively managing code switching in the English classroom to avoid over reliance on it as well as its negative implications on the L2 acquisition process.

Conclusion

All the teachers agree on the benefits and merits of the CS strategy in their teaching as a majority of the teachers presented their positive attitude regarding the CS application. In fact, it can be claimed that CS is used by all of the teachers in their classroom for all three main functional categories of CS: curriculum access, classroom management discourse, and interpersonal relationships. However, the main function of CS practise extensively by the teachers is to convey information and instruct students. Moreover, it is revealed that teachers also employ the CS strategy to build interpersonal relationship with students and motivate them, and to a lesser extent to manage their classrooms. In conclusion, it can be said that the teachers are aware of their CS and despite expressing contradictory views about the negative aspects of using this strategy in the classroom, they all agree that it was an unavoidable and essential practice to overcome the challenges of teaching a foreign language particularly at primary school level in Iraq.

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Abstract
Many Saudis studying English suffer because of their inability to write well in English. There are few studies that examine the impact of first language and culture on the ability of Saudis to write in a second language. This study revisits Kaplan’s (1966) claims about Arab students’ writing that are based on the theory of contrastive rhetoric. It begins with an overview of the development of contrastive rhetoric. It also examines the impact of genre and culture as it is used to analyze the work of Arabic ESL learners. The study then analyzes Saudi participants’ (n=4) English language writing through the lens of contrastive rhetoric theory. The author uses ethnographical research methods to analyze samples of English writing and to interview his participants about their experiences as ESL learners. The paper findings indicate there are major grammatical and content problems in Saudi students’ English writing. He concludes that thinking in Arabic while writing in English leads Saudi ESL writers to misuse word repetition, parallel construction, and to overuse specific grammatical structures. The paper concludes with suggestions about how to correct flaws in current ESL teaching techniques used with Arabic speaking students including tactics for addressing their lack of English reading and dictionary skills.

Keywords: English as a second language, contrastive rhetoric theory, ethnographic research, Arabic-speaking students
Introduction
This paper investigates Saudi students’ writing using the theory of contrastive rhetoric. Contrastive rhetoric is a theory of second-language acquisition that explains problems in composition that are encountered by second-language learners. Several linguistic scholars (n= ) apply contrastive rhetoric theory to writers from a specific cultural context. The goal of this paper is to apply contrastive rhetoric theory to samples of Saudi English writing in order to identify the linguistic and culturally-based challenges of writing in English for Arabic speakers. It investigates Kaplan’s (1966) claims about Arabic language speakers specifically it challenges the claim that all Arabic speakers share the same challenges because of their language background regardless to their cultural or linguistic differences. The aim of the paper is to show how Arabic language speakers’ writing problems can be different from what Kaplan’s claims. Since L1 writing has a significant impact on L2, the author also investigates Saudi students’ Arabic writing samples. The discussion section explains Saudi students’ common writing problems in English for ESL instructors. It concludes with suggestions for helping Arabic ESL learners overcome their most common grammatical and linguistic difficulties.

Contrastive Rhetoric Analysis
There are many definitions of contrastive rhetoric. Panetta (2000) presented one of the most direct definitions of contrastive rhetoric as follows, “The term used to describe the argument that the linguistical, organizational, and presentational choice that English as a second language (ESL) students-writers make substantively differ from the choices that native language writers make” (p.3).

Almost fifty years ago, the American linguist Kaplan (1966) initiated contrastive rhetoric analysis by positing that every language and culture has a unique system of rhetoric. In the field of second language acquisition, contrastive rhetoric is elaborated into the assumption that the differences between the discourse-level features of learner’s first and second language cause difficulties for learners who are attempting to learn a foreign language. Researchers such as Casanave (2004) examined whether there is an inherently negative transfer process that occurs when learners transfer their L1 thoughts into their second language.

In recent decades, there have been an increasing number of studies on contrastive rhetoric. Cornor (1996) mentioned some possible reasons for the increasing interest in contrastive rhetoric, such as the increased understanding of second-language learners’ needs to read and write in the target language; the enhanced interdisciplinary approach to studying second language acquisition through educational, rhetorical, and anthropological methods; and new trends in linguistics (p.5). Those who have contributed to contrastive analysis theory consider themselves applied linguists. They use a structuralist approach to linguistics, and their purpose is to improve language teaching.

Contrastive rhetoric analysis is promising since it may help scholars understand the source of language misusage for ESL learners. Contrastive rhetoric analysis is used to study the relationship between language and culture, but there are still many problems that have not been analyzed with this approach. This paper will provide an in depth examination of the contrastive rhetoric literature before applying the theory to the specific challenges of Saudi ESL learners.
Contrastive Rhetorical Analysis of Saudi ESL Writing

Alluhaydan

Early History

Even though early ESL researchers did not call their work contrastive rhetoric, it was mainly focused on language transfer. Most of the early studies of contrastive rhetoric focused on the influence of L1 language pedagogy in teaching and learning L2. Discussions of contrastive analysis began in the 1940s and 1950s with the work of American linguists. Lado (1957) was influenced by Fries (1945), the bilingual studies of Haugen (1953), and Weinreich (1953). In his early work, Lado developed principles for understanding learners’ behavior. This work was the basis of the constrictive hypothesis. Lado stated the logic behind contrastive theory in the preface to *Linguistics Across Culture* (1957):

The plan of the book rests on the assumption that we predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language and the culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student. (p.1)

Thanks to Lado’s work, scholars view the goal of contrastive analysis as primarily pedagogical in nature. Their goals include increasing efficiency in teaching and testing foreign languages. Fries’ arguments about language transfer influenced Lado’s research. Specifically, Fries argued in *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language* (1945), “The most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner” (Fries, 1945, p.9).

The language transfer hypothesis relates the learner’s difficulty in learning to the differences between the target language and the native language. These differences were explicitly demonstrated by Lado (1957) in his contrastive hypothesis:

Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture—both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and culture as practiced by natives. (p.1)

As we can see, one of the major issues in second-language acquisition is the role of the mother tongue in acquiring the target language (TL). Various studies concerning this issue have been carried out to discover the influence of L1 in the acquisition of a TL, such as the avoidance of certain TL structures or a delay in restructuring an interlanguage role (Gass & Selinker, 1983; Schechter, 1979; Zobl, 1980).

In addition, Fries, in his forward to Lado’s *Linguistics across Cultures*, wrote:

Learning a second language… constitutes a very different task from learning the first language. The basic problems arise not out of any essential difficulty in the features of language themselves but primarily out of a special set created by first language habits (Lado, 1957) (p. 1).
According to Fries (1945), learning a second language is completely different from learning a first language, due to the influence of habits from the first language. Although in most cases the transfer of habits from the first language will interfere with learning a second language, some contrastive rhetoric studies have acknowledged that transfer in many cases can be facilitative. When both languages, first and second, possess the same structures, language transfer will be positive, and the process of learning a second language will be facilitated and accelerated. Conversely, the transfer of old habits will be negative when the learner’s first and second languages do not possess the same grammatical structures.

According to Lado (1957), it is possible to predict in advance all the areas of difficulty a learner will encounter in learning a second language. This theory, called a strong version of contrastive analysis, says that the grammatical structures that do not exist in the acquired language but that do exist in the learner’s first language will hinder them as they learn the new language. Therefore, teaching materials should be based on a description of the learner’s first language. Then, this description should be carefully compared to the language that a learner will acquire. This comparison should follow a well-established methodology of structural linguistics. For instance, the grammatical system of the target language should be compared to the morphological system of the learners’ native language. Any target language structures that differ from the learner’s native language should be given special attention in preparing pedagogical materials. There is another contrastive analysis hypothesis which some linguists call a weak version. It is not based on comparing a learner’s L1 and a second language in order to focus on differences that would hinder acquisition of a second language. This version is based on the actual and recurring difficulties exhibited in a learner’s performance. Therefore, they start the analysis and comparison process when an actual problem occurs.

Transfer has been examined from different perspectives and it has been observed that first-language influences are not just direct reflexes. Zobel (1980, 1982) sees transfer and developmental influences as two opposing processes. He argues that the effect of the L1 can be manifest (1) in a prolongation or delay in the restructuring of an interlanguage rule or (2) in the number of rules traversed on the path form the acquisition of one form to another.

Another perspective on L1 influence comes from Schachter’s (1974) examination of the use of English relative clauses by Persian, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese students. She found that in a set of 50 compositions from each language group, Chinese and Japanese learners produced far fewer relative clauses than did Persian learners. She hypothesizes that the major syntactic difference between Chinese and Japanese were on the one hand and English on other. Also, this difference does not exist between Persian or Arabic and English in a relative clause. Thus, Japanese and Chinese learners try to avoid this structure according to Schachter.

Recent History of Contrastive Rhetoric

Recent contrastive rhetoric theory is connected to the article “Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education,” which was written by Kaplan (1966). Kaplan examines the connection between language and culture by looking to logic and thought patterns. He and other scholars sought to understand the question of why foreign students who had mastered syntactic structures still demonstrated an inability to compose themes, term papers, and directions. Sapir-Whorf’s hypothesis (1955) inspired Kaplan to investigate further pattern differences among
languages. The Whorfian hypothesis explained that one’s native language can become a barrier for learning a second language. Connor (1996) describes Whorf’s theory: “The Whorfian hypothesis thus asserts that one’s native language influences and controls thought, consequently barring fluent second-language acquisition (p.29).”

Unfortunately, as we see in the above description of previous studies, contrastive rhetoric concentrated on linguistic issues. Most of contrastive studies recognition has been limited on sentence level. There is a relationship between culture and language. Kaplan (1966) has criticized early studies for focusing only on the linguistic level:

Unfortunately, although both the prescriptivists and the descriptivists have recognized the existence of cultural variation as a factor in second-language teaching, the recognition has so far been limited to the level of the sentence – that is, to the level of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. (p.2)

Thus, Kaplan believed that rhetoric varies from one culture to another. Actually, it varies within the culture from time to time. Kaplan’s views on logic also demonstrated why logic differs from one culture to another and how it affects our perception and our thought. Kaplan’s article the discipline of contrastive rhetoric in applied linguistics. This article is considered to be the first one in this specific field, because most early studies did not go beyond the linguistic level. Kaplan (1966) states:

Logic (in the particular, rather than the logician’s sense of the word), which is the basis of rhetoric, is evolved out of a culture; it is not universal. Rhetoric, then, is not universal either, but varies from culture to culture and even from time to time within a given culture (p.2).

Thus, Kaplan was trying to move the direction of the arrow to something else. Kaplan initiated an attention shift among ESL scholars in studying contrastive rhetoric. Kaplan demonstrated that we should go beyond the surface of language when we try to find the elements that affect language production. Also, he was attracting the attention of scholars to the fact that world languages have different language roots. Each language has different patterns and language structures. Kaplan tried to be specific in examining the relationship between language and culture in order to discover more about the cultural differences in logic. Kubota (2004) explained Kaplan’s aims:

Among various aspects of cultural differences, rhetorical patterns of written texts have been investigated for more than 30 years since contrastive rhetorical research was initiated by Kaplan (1966). Sharing assumptions with the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis on the relationship between language and culture, Kaplan’s earlier works explored a link between culturally specific logic or thought patterns and paragraph structures in English essays written by nonnative English-speaking students. (p.8)

Kaplan claimed that foreign students’ papers were out of focus because they applied rhetoric and sequences of thought that native speakers did not expect. He investigated the thought patterns of different cultures to reveal the gaps between cultures in writing and thought.
He started by showing how English paragraph development is different from that of other language. There are two major developmental processes in writing paragraphs in English. The deductive method requires the writer to state the ideas before giving examples. On the other hand, the writer who uses the inductive approach has to present examples first, then derive ideas from them. However, other languages have different systems for writing paragraphs.

Since Kaplan was an ESL teacher in Japan for a couple of years, he chose to compare the Japanese language to English to clarify why students who come from these cultures have these problems. He also did that for other cultures. For example, Kaplan states that the Arabic language has a different paragraph and sentence development system. Paragraph development is based on a complex series of parallel constructions both negative and positive. Interestingly, this parallelism existed in old English, as Kaplan pointed out, referring to the King James Version of the Old Testament. Then, Kaplan (1966) got to the point that he wanted to prove: “While this extensive parallel construction is linguistically possible in Arabic, the English language lacks the necessary flexibility” (p.9).

According to Kaplan, Arabic-speaking ESL learners would have problems with structuring paragraph ideas. Kaplan explains that in oriental writing, paragraph development tends to revolve around the subject. The subject is never looked at directly. Kaplan also compared the paragraph systems of Romance, Russian, and Semitic languages. In short, each language and each culture has a way of expressing and developing ideas in a paragraph. Thus, ESL learners transfer their L1 thought pattern unconsciously when they start writing in a second language. Connor (2002) summarized Kaplan’s study about cultural thought differences:

Kaplan claims that Anglo-European expository essays are developed linearly whereas essays in Semitic languages use parallel coordinate clauses; those in Oriental languages prefer an indirect approach, coming to the point in the end; and those in Romance languages and in Russian include material that, from a linear point of view, is irrelevant. (p.494)

Kaplan’s findings support his claim that ESL teachers should be aware of their students’ culture and language because they play an important role in students’ production. It seems that Kaplan’s vision depends on the theory that in order to be able to resolve a dilemma, you need to describe it precisely and discover its origin. This explains Kaplan’s method of looking at the influence of other cultures and languages on ESL learners.

According to Kaplan, ESL students need to be made aware of rhetorical writing conventions in English as in other languages. Also, he explained how an ESL writing teacher should deal with the contrastive rhetoric issue. Kaplan (1966) suggests:

In the teaching of paragraph structure to foreign students, whether in terms of reading or in terms of composition, the teacher must be himself aware of these differences, and he must make these differences overtly apparent to his students (p.14).
Teachers need to take into consideration the learners’ language background because this would enable teachers to recognize the contradictions between learners’ first language and second language in order to help learners to successfully overcome their obstacles.

Unfortunately, Kaplan’s theory has been taken too literally. Anyone who reads studies by Kaplan article might assume that all cultures use the categorization described by Kaplan. Any researchers who review Kaplan’s claims would know that his perspective is too simple and it can’t be the model for current contrastive rhetoric research.

Finally, a new generation of contrastive rhetoric scholars understood the need to make a significant change in contrastive rhetoric research. The traditional contrastive rhetoric framework would not be able to include all data because always you might face constraints in time, data size and regulations. Also, contrastive rhetoricians felt that earlier criticism forced them to go beyond the sentence level and understand the writing process.

There was some new research in cognitive models of writing and translating ideas into text by Flower and Hays (1981). More recently, the nature of writing has been viewed in its social and interactional role. Writing is seen as an interaction within a specific discipline or community.

Contrastive rhetoric is taking new directions in applied linguistics. Connor (1996) describes these new directions as:

…Contrastive text linguistics (comparison of discourse features across languages); the study of writing as a cultural activity (comparing the process of learning to write in different cultures); contrastive studies of classroom dynamics of L2 writing; contrastive rhetoric studies conducted in a variety of genres in a variety of situations in a variety of purposes (e.g. journal articles, school essays, and business reports); and contrastive rhetoric studies dealing with the inclusion of culturally different intellectual traditions and ideologies. (p.19)

New branches of this emerging discipline are developing, and there are many conferences, publications, and new courses on academic writing. These days, most universities in the U.S. are interested in enrolling as many international students as they can, because educators know that learning is negotiating and exchanging knowledge from all cultures. Thus, many ESL scholars have turned to one of the crucial skills that academic students must have in order to be successful in their study. Scholars have become more specific in their work to find out the best way to help second-language writers.

Proponents of the Kaplan hypothesis:

Since the Kaplan hypothesis first appeared, there have been proponents and opponents of this theory. Defenders of contrastive rhetoric theory such as Leki (1991) pointes to the fact that even though writing instructors who teach ESL students might not have a background in the rhetoric of different cultures, contrastive rhetoric helps them understand stereotypes and realize that writing strategies are culturally formed (p.138). Leki explaines that the ESL teacher needs to know what is relevant and irrelevant, what’s logical or illogical, and what constitutes an
argument in other cultures. Unfortunately, some ESL instructors don’t understand that ESL learners don’t have a mental problem in digesting a new language process, but they have learned to process in different ways. Purves (1988) describes this issue: “When students, taught to write in one culture, enter another and don’t write as do the members of the second culture, they should not be thought stupid or lacking in higher mental process, as some composition teachers have stated” (p.19).

It is true that students simply don’t know about the rhetorical structures of the new culture. Kaplan provided important insight for teaching rhetoric to ESL students. Many researchers and ESL teachers emphasized the crucial point that, without Kaplan’s hypothesis, they would not be able to consider students’ L1 in teaching rhetoric.

Connor (1996-2002) devotes much of her professional life to explaining various aspects of Contrastive Rhetoric (CR). She noticed some of the weaknesses in the early work on CR and tried to correct them. She went further and expanded the field of CR to include different languages, text types, genres, and research methodologies (Casanave, 2004, p.40). She was able to point to linguistic, structural, and topical aspects of different genres because she is interested in text analysis more than philosophical and cognitive issues in CR. Therefore, she did not neglect sociolinguistic, developmental or ideological factors that influence how people write. She stated that the differences in written products by native speakers “result from many factors besides linguistic, rhetorical, and cognitive ones, such as schooling and writing instruction” (Connor, 1997, p.202). This is her understanding of the sociolinguistic aspects of rhetoric, though her work did not look deeply to the issues she indicated. Connor argues that CR is still in its infancy and it has great potential and deserves more attention. Matsuda explained that people tend to understand CR as mainly a negative transfer of L1 rhetorical patterns to L2 writing. He clearly stated: “The insights gained by research have not been effectively translated into the practice of teaching organizational structures” (Matsuda, 1997, p.45).

Supporting CR, Leki (1997) responds to those who criticize Kaplan’s hypothesis that most of scholars have paid a primary attention on the ideological implication of their work so this explains why there is little advance in this field (p.244).

Opponents of Contrastive Rhetoric:

When we speak about opponents, we should mention the first scholar who criticized Kaplan’s hypothesis. Hinds (1982) was the first researcher who pointed out some of the flaws in Kaplan’s theory. Hinds stated that although it was essential to examine the rhetoric of writers’ first languages in order make statements about culturally influenced rhetoric, investigating essays written in English by foreign students cannot guarantee that a specific problem stems from negative transfer. Hinds also pointed to the fact that Kaplan classified his languages in odd ways and that he wrongly over-generalized the term “oriental” to include four different language families (Hinds, 1982, p.186). Kaplan (1966) himself admits that “in the first blush of discovery, he overstated both the differences and his case (p.9).” Hinds also criticized Kaplan for ethnocentrically representing English prose as a straight line. Kaplan resented English as superior colonial language and other languages have less position than English language.
Some scholars have criticized contrastive rhetoric for its reductionist, deterministic, prescriptive, and essentialist orientation (Leki, 1997; Spack, 1997; Zamel, 1997) (Kutbota, 2004, P.10). They have criticize CR because a language within itself it has a complex system and different variables. Zamel (1997) criticize CR for its deterministic and static view of language and culture. Spark (1997) talked about writer identity and proposed viewing students as individuals, not as members of a group. Leki (1997) points out the issue that ignoring similarities leads to making ESL writers’ language and culture look strange and dismisses the agency that writers bring to the act of writing.

McCagg (1996) points to the importance of context and the interaction between L2 writers’ and L1 readers’ knowledge in textual interpretation. The same problem existed with Kaplan’s view of Arabic language and cultures. The Arab world has different cultures and language varieties, and it is inaccurate to judge Arabic language speakers as if they come from the same culture. The monolingual and multilingual people within the Arab world exhibit differences in the written production of English. For instance, Moroccan students who can speak French and/or one of the African languages such as Berber would not be like Saudi students who speak only Arabic. As a result, assuming that Arab students have the same way of thinking and writing is incorrect, and this assumption needs to be revised.

Another criticism was made by Ryuko Kubota, who was a native speaker of Japanese. Kubota (1998) reexamined Kaplan’s claim about Japanese students’ writing. When she reinvestigated Kaplan’s Japanese students’ writing, she found that there was no strong evidence that culturally unique patterns either existed or were transferred to students’ English writing. Kubota (2004) criticized the point of view that emphasized an unequal cultural dichotomy between East and West: “It has also implicitly reinforced an image of superiority of English rhetoric and a deterministic view of second language (particularly English) learners as individuals who inevitably transfer the rhetoric patterns of their L1 in L2 writing” (p.9).

Devaluing and disregarding other languages is one of the criticisms of CR. Moreover, the binary images of rhetoric constructed by CR scholars, such as stating that Arabic is a circular language whereas English is a linear direct language, remind us of the colonial dichotomy between the colonizer and the colonized. Pennycook (1998) explained that the idea of contrastive rhetoric was created by the political or ideological nature of conventional knowledge.

In addition, many critics argue that, with the varieties of English usage, there is no single system or form of English itself. Y. Karchu argued that contrastive rhetoric focuses mainly on the traditional “inner circle” of rhetorical varieties of English as a point of reference and its fails to validate the “outer rhetorical circle” of English (Kutoba, 2004, p.10).

**Arabic and Contrastive Rhetoric**

Knowing the system of L1 writing is significant in teaching L2 writing because the relationship between L1 writing and L2 cannot be ignored. Unfortunately, scholars such Lado (1957), Fries (1945), Haugen (1953), Weinreich (1953), and others have not investigated L1 writing in different cultures to see its impact on L2 writing. As far as we know, Kaplan was the first one who knocked on the door of this field, and who went beyond the surface. He examined rhetoric in different languages to find out more about L1 influence on L2 writing, and one of
these languages is Arabic. Actually, the Arabic language has not been studied by many scholars of linguistics. Kaplan was one of a few scholars who tried to understand the Arabic language in order to explain its impact on the production of L2 writing. Most other studies had been conducted twenty-five years earlier, and Kaplan (1966) claimed that the Arabic language uses a system of parallels in constructing paragraphs and sentences. “In the Arabic language, for example (and this generalization would be more or less true for all Semitic languages), paragraph development is based on a complex series of parallel constructions, both positive and negative” (p.6).

Kaplan was not the only one who came up with this claim about Arabic. Ostler (1987) asserted too that Arabic writing is characterized by a series of parallel constructions. Both of them believed that this parallelism came as result of forms of classical Arabic as found in the Koran which was written in the seventeenth century C.E. In English, however, subordination is used more often, and is taught to students through combining sentences. Connor (1996) explained Kaplan’s example of Arabic structure:

Using Kaplan’s (1972) examples, in English a coordinate sentence, “The boy was here, and he drank the milk,” could be changed to a subordinate sentence through semantic subordination, “Milk was drunk by the boy was here. He drank the milk,” or grammatical subordination, “Milk was drunk by the boy who was here.” In Arabic, the coordinated form is preferred (p.34).”

Kaplan (1972) and Ostler (1987) claimed that Arabic speakers use many coordinated sentences in their writing. The Arabic language has a rich and complex typology of texts, so Arab rhetoricians differ in constructing texts according to the type of context. I will discuss this point in analyzing participants’ papers.

Unfortunately, Kaplan (1972) and Ostler (1987) misunderstand Arabic, at least at the sentence level, because Arabic has a complex sentence structure and at the same time it has a more flexible sentence structure than in English. In a previous research on the difference between Arabic and English sentence structures the researcher states (2013):

The Arabic language has a very sophisticated structure. The difficulty of Arabic does not only come from its structure, but also from its tenses. Tense and structure are interrelated to each other in Arabic because tense changes the order of words in a sentence. This seems awkward to nonnative speakers because most languages have a specific word order in sentences. However, Arabic has a noun sentence and a verbal sentence, and each of them has a specific sentence order. (p.2)

It seems that the Arabic language is not only chunks of coordinating sentences according to this quote and this should definitely lead us to be skeptical toward Kaplan’s (1972) and Ostler’s (1987) claims about Arabic. It appears to any Arabic speaker or specialist in this field that there are some problems regarding the validity and reliability of Kaplan’s (1972) and Ostler’s (1987) studies. Arabic sentence structure depends on the tense used in the sentence. Thus, Arabic is not similar to the English or Latin languages where there are specific orders to sentences. It is unscholarly to generalize the idea of parallelism without going deeper in studying the language’s structure and context. Krzeszowski (1990) pointed to Fisiak statement on how we
should analyze every language: “One of the fundamental tenets of distributionalism was that every language should be analyzed and described in its own categories insofar as every language employs different and unique grammatical means” (p.112).

Supporting Kaplan’s assumptions, Ostler (1987) compare his ten Saudi Arabian student essays with ten English paragraphs selected at random from books. The results showed that the essays written by Saudi students had more coordinated sentences than the English passages. Despite the fact that coordination exists in Arabic, such a superficial comparison does not necessarily mean we should brand Arabic speakers students with this assumption. Language is not limited to systematic or sentence structure. It goes beyond these aspects of the language to include culture, social context, and identity.

In addition, Kaplan (1972) went further in his claim and argued that not only are sentences coordinated in Arabic, but paragraph development has similar coordination principles as he explained in his article “Language and Learning” (1966): “Paragraph development is based on a complex series of parallel constructions, both positive and negative” (p.6). Kaplan assumed that Arabic develops paragraphs through a series of parallel constructions. However, Connor (1996) reported that Sa’adeddin (1989) claims that Arabic has two styles of text development. The first, called the aural style, is characterized by prepetition, a limited and imprecise lexicon, and overuse of generalization. The second is visual, and is characterized by linear development, a varied lexicon, and complex syntax (p.36). Choosing a style in Arabic rhetoric depends on the context of writing, and this was confirmed by Sa’adeddin when he stated that the social function of a text determines the style. This assumption is logical, since paragraph development in many languages depends on the field of writing, as it does in the Arabic language. For example, writing a news article in Arabic would not be like writing an academic paper. From a broader viewpoint, varied types of paragraph development and classification of chapters in books were used many years earlier than in English in Arabic writing systems, though the classification of paragraphs varies according to the context. For instance, there are narration paragraphs, topic paragraphs which are used mostly in science books, and biography paragraphs. However, Arabic-speaking students tend to use parallel construction because Arabic values balance for a good sequence of thoughts. Thompson-Panos (1983) described this reason behind using parallel construction in writing: “This is largely because Arabic sentences emphasize the sequences of events and balance of thought, which favor coordination” (p.620).

This seems to be true, but that does not necessarily mean that this is the only paragraph system in Arabic. In an attempt to explain Arabic discourse, Connor (1996) described how Kaplan introduced two concepts – the discourse bloc and the discourse unit – that are based on text analysis from the theories of rhetoricians Christensen (1963) and Pitkin (1969). Kaplan defined the discourse unit as a language that is understood in a context larger than a sentence. A discourse bloc constitutes those units, which discourse units have, within discourse block which are related to each other by coordination, subordination, or superordination (p.32). Both Kaplan (1972) and Ostler (1987) believed that Arabic-speaking students use more discourse units to support their ideas than do English students. Moreover, Ostler (1987) found that Arabic students begin their writing with a subordinate sentence and end with some formulaic or proverbial statement.
Arabic-speaking students have always been accused of overusing repetition in their writing, and many researchers who studied Arabic-student essays noted this in their studies. Swales and Mustafa (1984) found that Arabic newspaper texts demonstrate that Arabic argumentative texts manifest repetition as an argumentative strategy at all three levels. Ostler (1987) also reported the repetition feature in Arabic-speaking student’s essays. Even though many researchers who examined Arabic-speaking writing noted the feature of repetition in students’ writing, none of the previous researchers investigated the function of repetition in the Arabic language in order to identify the real reason behind this redundancy. This kind of repetition in Arabic-speaking students’ writing seems to be awkward or ambiguous to native speakers of English. To clarify this ambiguity, we need to understand the function of repetition in Arabic. Thompson-Panos (1983) described it: “In both spoken and written Arabic, repetition, increased use of the superlative, and frequent rewording and restatement are devices used to communicate ideas clearly” (p.619).

Arab ESL learners tend to use repetition in their writing because they think this would make their ideas clear. Also, it is common in Arabic to put emphasis on the point you want to make clear and to employ this emphasis, you need to repeat the idea in Arabic but using different terminology. Redundancy is not considered to be a negative aspect in the Arabic writing system, it is in the opposite. It reflects that the person has mastered the language and that he/she can play with the language. Arab learners unconsciously transfer this phenomenon when they write in a second language. We will see how participants write in English and we will investigate the Arabic on writing on second language.

Genre and Contrastive Rhetoric
Knowing genre and its function is crucial in learning and teaching rhetoric. We need to fully understand its importance before we get to its definition. Connor (1996) expressed the importance of genre knowledge for composition teachers: “Composition teaching experts in the United States such as Bizzel (1982a; 1982b; 1982) and Berkenkotter, Huckin, and Ackerman (1988) have shown that students entering academic disciplines need to learn the genres and conventions that members of the disciplinary community employ” (p.77).

Students who don’t share the social context need to acquire the conventions and techniques of arguments as well as conversational techniques. To communicate effectively, international students need to know how to apply a correct form to a specific exchange of knowledge. Hyland (2004) stated the importance of genre in second language writing: “While genre theories have evolved in different circumstances and in response to different problems, they have attracted growing interest because the idea of genre can help us to understand the ways individuals use language to engage in particular communicative situations and to employ this knowledge to help students writers create communicatively effective texts” (p.7).

Tardy (2009) also showed how it’s useful to consider genre in teaching rhetoric: “in attempting to address the needs of students who are often culturally and/or linguistically marginalized from sociorhetorical practices in educational, academic, workplace setting, many practitioners have turned to genre as ‘a way in’ to the power structure of the society” (p.7). Genre knowledge is considered to be a gate or a tool that should be taught to second language writers.
Discussing any type of rhetoric would require talking about the genre of that writing. Since this paper is going to examine Saudi learners’ argumentation essays, it needs to discuss the argumentation genre of Saudi students. In fact, understanding the needs of international students who don’t share educational, cultural, and academic values is necessary to enable them to communicate effectively. Therefore, this paper would start with defining the term “genre” in order to be able to recognize exactly what it is talking about. Many scholars define genre and look to it from different angles. Tardy (2009) gives explicit and direct definition to genre: “When discourses become typified – that is, when the same events are carried out repeatedly through the same practices – they may be referred to as genre” (p.12). This definition of the term represents a gate to or a starting point for understanding the complexity of genre. Many rhetoric researchers have tended to focus on genre research and pedagogy because it concentrates on the analysis of written products that are used to communicate with a specific group that shares purposes, understandings, and ways of using language (Hyland, 2002; John, 2002; Miller, 1984; Swales, 1990; reported by Casanave, p.82). Basically, there are three different types or schools of genre studies. The first one is English for Specific Purposes (ESP) created by Swale (1990). He defined genre as a class of communicative events with a shared set of communicative purposes, as outlined in his book: *Genre Analysis, English for Academic and Academic Settings*. The second type of genre studies was invented by Martin, who was an advocate of the view of systematic functional linguistics. Martin (1984) referred to genre as a stage, goal-oriented, purposeful social activity. These two schools concentrated on the structural elements of the text. The third school, which is considered the most advanced school in genre analysis, focuses on rhetorical actions based on recurrent situations, and it proposes open principles for genre classification based on rhetorical practice rather than based on structure or discourse aim. This is defined by Miller (1994), who focused more on the relations between text and context. Thus, we can say that there are different types of contrastive genre analysis, one focusing on text analysis, another focusing on contextual analysis.

Recently, contrastive analysis researchers have become more interested in genre analysis. Writing conventions help ESL teachers identify the rhetorical choices of ESL students in their culture. Every culture has a specific convention, even if they use the same word. For instance, the convention of “good writing” is culturally defined, so the Chinese convention for good student writing would not be like the American convention. Every field has a certain convention and language that is used to actively communicate. For instance, engineering writing would not be similar to literature writing because the first one focuses more on information and the second focuses on meaning. Tardy (2009) pointed to this fact: “More recent work has studied discourse variation among academic disciplines, finding linguistic differences between disciplines like history and biology (Conrad, 2000) or, more broadly, the soft sciences and hard sciences” (p.11).

Additionally, textual analysis of professional writing at the rhetorical level helps scholars and writing teachers to identify larger structural and cohesive patterns in different genres (Connor, 1996, 2000; Psteguillo, 1999; Swales, 1990; quoted by Casanave, p.82). We should indicate that the convention of writing an essay or paragraph in non-English-speaking cultures would not be similar to the English or western style because they don’t share the same discourse or context. Gee (1999) explained discourse as an “identity kit.” Discourses shape and form our perception of the world and these of course include the way we communicate, interact, and
understand. Thus, we need to reexamine the conventions of writing essays in Saudi Arabia to build a claim about thought patterns.

The Study Participants

Gathering the data for a contrastive project needs to be performed carefully because claims about the Saudi culture problem with writing will be made even though the data base is not large. Since the researcher will test the contrastive writing of Saudi students, he must select participants from different majors, ages, and backgrounds in order to get a clear picture of the Saudi contrastive writing problem.

Table 1 (Participants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Experience writing in English</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Othman</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>High school Undergraduate</td>
<td>Geology</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khaled</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree Graduate</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turki</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>High school Undergraduate</td>
<td>Civil engineering</td>
<td>Eastern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmad</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10 months</td>
<td>Master’s degree Graduate (PhD)</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>Capital city</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Othman graduated from a Saudi high school in a science track. The system of high schools in Saudi Arabia allows students to choose between two tracks: science, and literature. The first one makes students eligible to enroll as science majors in universities and the second one would enable students to enroll only in theoretical majors. Thus, the science track in Saudi high schools has more intensive courses in science and English compared to the literature track. After Othman graduated from high school, he came to the United States to study for a bachelor’s degree. Before he enrolled in the university, he studied in an intensive English program at the University of Arizona. In addition, he took two intensive summer English courses at Armco (a petroleum company) English Institute since his father worked for the Armco Company. Currently, he is a second-year student in the geology department at the University of Arizona.

Khaled grew up in a suburban area. He graduated from a Saudi high school in a science track. He then enrolled in Umm al Qura University in order to study architecture. After he graduated from the university, he came to study at the Center of English as Second Language (CESL) at the University of Arizona. He did not take any summer English courses before he came to the United States. However, he studied in English for his bachelor’s degree.

Turki has a different situation because he is in his thirties and is still studying for a bachelor’s degree. After Turki graduated from a high school in the literature track, he enrolled in AL-Jubeal Industrial College. He obtained his diploma, then worked in an oil company for eight years. When he got married, his wife was interested in pursuing graduate studies in the United States.
States. He came with her and was eventually admitted to the University of Arizona to complete his bachelor’s degree.

Ahmad obtained the highest educational degree among the participants. He graduated from the science track of a Saudi high school. He then enrolled in king Saud University, majoring in special education. When he graduated from the university, he worked for three years in a high school that teaches students with special needs. He was very interested in this field, so he decided to pursue a master’s degree. He worked for one year after he finished his master’s degree in a special center for disabilities education in Riyadh. He then went to work at the University of Shqra. A year later, he came to the University of Arizona to study in the CESL program. Ahmad studied special education in Arabic, and when he worked on his master’s degree he used to ask a translation office to translate the English articles he used in his thesis. Ahmed can communicate with the deaf by using sign language.

Research Method
Every participant provided the researcher with an argumentative essay that they had written for an academic class, whether for a university class or for an English institute class. The researcher then conducted an interview with every participant to ask them questions regarding their knowledge of rhetoric in their first and second languages. The questions included, but were not limited to:

1. How long have you been writing in English (paragraphs)?
2. How did your teacher teach you to write in English? Which teacher and when?
3. For what purposes do you write in English?
   a. Academics  b. Pleasure
   c. Work  d. Other _________
4. When you write in English do you ever think in Arabic? Why?
5. Are you aware of rhetorical differences between Arabic and English? What are they?
6. How do you go about writing a paper in English?
7. How do you construct your ideas in a paragraph or an essay when you write in English?
8. How much do you think about readers when you write?
9. When do you write your ideas directly? Or when do you prefer an indirect way of delivering the meaning?
10. When do you usually proofread when you write? If you do so, do you do it with each sentence or paragraph?
11. Do you start with an example when you describe your ideas? Or vice versa?
12. Each interview is recorded and notes made later in the notebook. The researcher then compared their answers to their written texts to observe significant issues in their writing.

Findings
Different writing issues found in Saudi writing and this paper is going to present issues that might relate to the CR theory. One of the most obvious issues with second-language learners’ writing is grammatical errors. Besides grammatical problems, there are serious syntax and semantic problems, too. This research will highlight these issues with an explanation for the conflict between L1 and L2 in writing. In addition, the thought patterns of Saudi students will be deeply discussed in order to see how participants construct their paragraphs.
Grammatical Major Issues:

Even though many researchers discussed Arab major grammatical issues, a few or none of them described why Saudi students suffered from these grammatical problems even if they get to advanced level. After analyzing to participants’ papers, common grammatical issues found in students with their writing.

Table 2 (Grammatical Errors)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Preposition Errors</th>
<th>Omission of subject or verb</th>
<th>Article Errors</th>
<th>Third Person Singular Errors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Othman</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kahled</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turki</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmad</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Starting with prepositions, several prepositional errors in students’ writing especially with *in* or *at* are found in students’ writing. To clearly demonstrate the problem, we need to take an example from a participant’s paper. Kahled used this sentence where he made an error in using prepositions:

-Kahled shared with his father in the battles and wars of unification.

Kahled’s confusion occurred because there is a language transfer. Cowan (2008) explains the dilemma of prepositions for ESL learners:

Another source of the difficulty that ESL/EFL students have learning prepositions may be L1 transfer. However, it is not always easy to determine the basis for what appears to be a case of L1 transfer when a student produces an English sentence with the wrong prepositions” (p.163).

If we look at the usage of prepositions in L1, we find that Arabic has only one preposition used for talking about both a closed space and a point. Thus, Saudi students will certainly encounter difficulty in learning and applying the difference between the prepositions *in/at*. This case is similar to what Lado (1957) explained as a strong version of CA. He claimed that the grammatical structures that don’t exist in the acquired language but exist in the learner’s first language will cause difficulty in learning. According to the level of proficiency, you can observe the variations in preposition errors among students. Of course, the occurrence of the errors would be higher when the student’s language proficiency is low, as we see in the cases of Khaled and Ahmed.

Most grammar researchers and instructors agree that the usage of articles is one the most tricky and difficult rules to be mastered by ESL/EFL students. Saudi students, like other Arab learners of English have a problem with applying articles. Even though the concept of the article exists in Arabic, Saudi and Arab learners constantly tend to make errors in using articles. This is one of the article errors that frequently occurred in Saudi students’ writing:

-the last cause is forest fires. When the fire get started, you will see widespread smoking. A smoking make pollution.
Another Example:
-People who believe the Muslims stereotypes such as terrorist, criminals, injustices, and bad behaviors, they agreed with seller against the women.

It is clear that the student has not mastered articles in the target language and he repeatedly makes errors. It true that the student’s L1 has articles and they have similar functions, too. However, it deserves to point to a very important fact that many ESL teachers should take into consideration when they teach Saudi students: the Arabic language has the concept of articles, but these articles are added to the nouns; so, they are a part of the word. They come as a prefix to a noun and they are not separated from the noun. Because English articles are separated from a noun, the Saudi students would simply become confused. They might wonder why we add the plural s to nouns when we can’t add articles to them. Cowan (2008) described another difference between languages in implementing articles:

The concepts that these articles express, such as definiteness and indefiniteness, will not be new to students. Nevertheless, the kinds of forms and constructions used for expressing definiteness and indefiniteness vary widely in languages of the world, and this makes learning the English article system challenging and problems with articles persistent. (p.226)

Adding to Cowan’s point that students whose mother language is not derived from Latin languages would face more difficulties in processing English articles.

Another grammatical problem that frequently encountered in students’ papers is adding an (s) for the third personal singular. The author has written a paper in which investigated the differences and similarities between Arabic present tense and English present tense. In that study he stated:

The present tense expresses an action that occurs in the present and in the future. For example, “ydras” meaning “studying” refers to an action that is occurring now and might continue in the future. The Arabic present tense would include all tenses that come under this umbrella, like the simple present, the progressive, the present perfect and so on. (p.3)

This demonstrates how the Arabic simple present differs from English. Not only the form, but also the sentence structure is completely different. For example:

**Verb – Subject - Object**

*Ydras Ahmad Al-ketab.*  
–Study Ahmad the book.

The Arabic language is more flexible than English because to indicate a present tense in Arabic, you can add either a prefix or a suffix to the verb, while in English you only can add a suffix. Thus, a Saudi could become confused with the rules for the simple present in English. Actually, the occurrence of the third personal singular s error is higher with beginning students and this is normal. However, it does not always occur in this way. Turki is considered to be advanced student and he still made this error such this sentence: *this show us that even if some people speak standard English they still in many Americans view not American.*
Most ELL Arab writers struggle to appropriately use copulas. Research participants in this study frequently made this mistake as well. Arab students struggle with auxiliary verbs or the verb “to be,” especially beginners, because Arabic has no auxiliary verbs. Even advanced learners sometimes make such errors “he absent” or “my teacher very angry.” This is an example of omitting copula from one of participants writing: *my country improved when he was the king in the economic.* As a result, teachers must ensure that students recognize the function of auxiliaries and copulae in a sentence.

**Major Content Issues**

Analyzing participants’ papers led me to try to consider all major issues in order to be able to understand Saudi students’ writing struggles. Grammatical or stylistic or structural issues are not the only ones they face. Actually, careful analysis shows that problems go beyond the surface of their writing. The first-language impact cannot be ignored as we analyze students’ writing problems. Culture also plays important role in their writing. Unfortunately, few studies investigate second language writing by concentrating on the influence of the thought patterns of L1 and their impact on second-language writing. In this section we will show some of the obvious writing content problems of Saudi participants.

Many writing teachers encounter a case where they a puzzled about what a student means. How does this happen? Typically, this occurs when students unconsciously transfer from their L1 while they write in a second language. They do not only transfer structure or grammar. They also transfer their way of thinking and conceptualization. Transferring and thinking are tied to each other because students transfer when they think in their L1 and write in L2. Look at this sentence from Ahmad’ papers:

> “*Also, they say that when we want to keep our planet clean, we must stop pollution causes. Significantly, planet earth without pollution is also very important.*”

A native speaker of English reading the underlined sentence will definitely be confused about what the writer wanted to say. This occurs because the writer of this sentence was thinking in Arabic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Transferring</th>
<th>Quantifiers</th>
<th>Thinking in Arabic while writing in English</th>
<th>Repeating ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Othman</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kahled</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turki</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3, shows Ahmad admitted in the interview that he thinks in Arabic when he writes in English. The author also deduced this by analyzing sentence structures in the writing samples which were similar to Arabic sentence structures. The difficulty of Arabic does not only come from its structure, but also from its tenses. Tense and structure are interrelated to each other in Arabic because tense changes the order of words in sentence. This seems awkward to nonnative
speakers because most languages have a specific word order in sentences. However, Arabic has a noun sentence and verbal sentence, and each of them has a specific sentence order. The noun sentence in Arabic starts with nouns. Thus, there is a contrast between the two languages and this confuses teachers when they read Saudi students’ writing. Since the Arabic language comes from a different language family, it has completely different structures and writing systems. According to the research interview with Ahmad, he was thinking in Arabic when he wrote this paragraph. Actually, he told me that he suffered from this problem and his writing teacher always circled some sentences and put exclamation marks above them. He explained: “I know it confuses those who don’t speak my language and I tried to rewrite sentences to make them more understandable.” Thus, Ahmad was writing his Arabic thoughts in English. This is definitely an instance of transferring thought patterns and grammar from the L1 into an L2 writing sample.

Many teachers think that transfer occurs only with beginning students. In fact, even advanced students suffer from the transferring issue. This happens simply because they think in Arabic. Take another look at Table 3, and you will see that all but one of the participants say that they think in Arabic when they write in English. Also, several studies have indicated that even advanced second-language learners still have this problem. Pavlenko (2011) points to this fact:

The enormous literature on transfer or crosslinguistic influence from the L1 indicates that even advanced L2 speakers continue to be influenced by their L1 in a range of domains (for overviews, see Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2008; Kellerman & Sharwood smith, 1986; Odlin, 2003; Ringbom, 2007). A number of studies show that L2 speakers may categorize objects and events differently (e.g. Graham & Belnap, 1986; Malt & Sloman, 2003), and use and comprehend lexical and grammatical categories differently from monolingual native speakers (e.g. Coppieters, 1987; Jarvis, 1998; Kellerman, 1979; Pavlenko & Jarvis, 2002). (p146)

The analysis of participants’ papers proves the fact that even advanced students do transfer. Pavlenko (2011) also talks about how L2 speakers categorize events and objects differently. We see in the example above how Ahmad missed categorizing objects and events and we will see it in upcoming examples of participants’ writing. It is true that the student comprehended lexical and grammatical categories of Arabic language in writing English.

Pavlenko (2011) points to another crucial issue when he talked about selecting different types of information for expression. L2 speakers conceptualize the information in L1 and they write it in L2. Pavlenko (2011) demonstrates this issue:

Further studies suggest that L2 speakers may exhibit different linguistic conceptualization from monolingual native speakers, selecting different types of information for expression (e.g. Carrol et al.200). That is, even though they use ‘correct’ L2 forms, they express information typical of the L1 rather than L2, giving them a ‘discourse accent’. This is reminiscent of Kellerman’s notion of ‘transfer to nowhere’, whereby L2 speakers ‘seek the linguistic tools which will permit them to maintain their L1 perspective’ based on the assumption that ‘the way we talk or write about experience is not something that is subject between language variation’ (1995: 141; italics in the original). (p.146)
Our minds are complicated machines. Bilingual speakers sometimes tend to develop their thoughts in L1 and try to write their thoughts in a good grammatical L2 structure. This can be obviously seen in a paper by Othman, one of advanced participants. He started his essay with this sentence: *Let us think of our education as the means of developing our great abilities. Because in each of us there is a private hope and dream, education can be translated into benefit for everyone and great strength of our nation.*

Othman’s thesis statement indicated the fact that he conceptualized education in Arabic by selecting different types of information. Even though he claimed that he does not think in Arabic when he writes, this thesis statement proves that he did. This way of starting essays is called an open justification to write an essay about this issue in Arabic. Of course, Othman expressed information typical to L1. Another participant did the same thing, but he had a poor sentence structure. Look at Ahmad’s thesis statement: *Nowadays, technology is very significant for our lives. For example, mobile phones consider one of the kind technologies.*

First, Ahmad applied different lexical categories than native speakers by starting with an adverb and giving an example in second sentence of the essay. We can say that Ahmad conceptualized and thought about technology in Arabic when he wrote the thesis statement. Of course, it would not be considered a thesis statement of an essay in English. Because Arabic does not have thesis statements in its writing system, Ahmad simply did not develop a thesis statement beyond the first sentence. He moved directly to the content after one simple topic sentence.

This paper must point out an important fact that Pavlenko indicated when he talked about the way we speak about something: Arabs have a different way of recounting their experiences. This leads me to discuss some common issues that the author noticed in the participants’ papers. First of all, there is noticeable content issue in Arab-speakers’ writing which is redundancy. As the author indicated before, the repetition issue was mentioned by Kaplan (1966) when he noticed that Arab learners tend to repeat their ideas in writing. Ostler (1987) also reported the repetition feature in Arabic-speaking student’s essays. In addition, Thompson-Panos (1983) described the function of repetition in Arabic: “In both spoken and written Arabic, repetition, increased use of the superlative, and frequent rewording and restatement are devices used to communicate ideas clearly” (p.619). Table 3 shows the occurrence of repetition in the writing of the Saudi students in the study. The author also found that the Saudi students make two main types of repetition in their writing: first, they repeat the meaning of the sentence. Let’s take this example from one of the participant’s papers: “*Nick Collins says, ‘Single sex education is that it reduces boys' and girls' opportunities to work together in a supervised, purposeful environment.’ That means mixed gender schools can be a way of preparing boys and girls to work together in supervised, purposeful atmosphere.’*”

Othman repeated the meaning of the sentence to emphasize the importance of the point and to tell the reader to take it into consideration.

The second type of repetition that encountered in participants’ papers is repeating words. This seems to be very awkward to native speakers. Ahmad repeated words that have the same meaning in this sentence: “*Also, it is deadly for animals, trees, and people. For example, one*
year ago in Colorado was big forests fires, and the result was destruction, devastation, and pollution. After that, many birds and animals died and harmed."

Regardless of the grammatical mistakes, we can see how the student unconsciously transferred from Arabic when he repeated words with the same meaning. He used repetition to express the huge impact of a forest fire. This is common in Arabic: to highlight the importance of the topic, you need to exaggerate in order to encourage the reader to continue reading. In both cases, redundancy would have been normal in Arabic, and would have been used as communication strategy in argumentation, as Thompson-Panos (1983) also noted.

In order to understand the role of repetition in Arabic, we need to understand Arabic texts. Arabic texts of course have influenced Saudi students’ writing. In order to understand the impact of Arabic texts on students’ writing, this paper will present some examples of Arabic texts. Hatim (1997) outlines Arabic text types:

Three particular types of context, each with its own typical linguistic realization, were identified:

a) Utterances addressed to ‘one who denies’ (munkir) must be made maximally evaluative (through emphasis, etc). The degree of evaluativeness will depend on the degree of denial displayed.

b) Utterances addressed to ‘one who is uncertain’ (mutaraddid) must somehow be evaluative. Once again, the degree of evaluativness will depend on the degree of uncertainty displayed.

c) Utterances addressed to ‘one who is open-minded’ (Khaali al-dhihn) must be minimally evaluative. (48)

d) Hatim added: “These texts display varying degrees of evaluativeness or ‘managing’. This manifests itself through the use of various forms of emphasis, parallelism, and other linguistic devices of intensification” (p.48).

Understanding Arabic texts explains to us why Saudi students tend to repeat and use parallel construction in writing. Looking to previous and upcoming quotations from participants writing would demonstrate the fact that Saudi students writing can be marked by redundancy. This might explain and clarify the reason behind using parallel construction, especially in the first two types of contexts where denial and uncertainty push the writer to use various forms of emphasis, parallelism, and other linguistic devices of intensification in order to confront the reader.

Kahled, one of the paper participants, admitted that he sometimes repeated ideas and words and he claimed the repetition occurred as a result of the influence of the Muslims Holy Book (Quran) because in order to memorize, you need to repeat. This might be true, since Saudi students are required to read and memorize certain chapters of the Quran at all educational levels. However, we can’t claim that Saudi writing redundancy comes solely from memorizing the Quran, because Arabic poetry has plenty of repetition as do other types of literature. We need to understand that ancient nomadic Arabs used to memorize poems and their family history, especially family kinship. Thus, repetition in Arabic existed before Islam.
Some scholars have claimed that Arab learners of English tend to make extensive use of superlatives. Thompson-Panos (1983) indicated this in a passage cited above, and he claimed that overuse of superlatives is a communication strategy. In participants’ papers analysis, it found that they did not overuse superlatives in their writing, even though an abundance of superlatives occurs in Arabic. However, students used a large number of quantifiers in their writing. An example from Turki’s paper will illustrate:

*Everyone in this world wants to live a peaceful life without problems. All people around the world used to solve any problems that face them in their daily live. One of these problems is racism. There are many types of racism and all for them have the same meaning that a specific group of people has privileges and consider themselves more important than other groups.*

*Muslims and Arab at the US facing many kinds of racism every day because 9/11 and they fight to proof the opposite. Some American feel scare when they see any arab or muslim because they thought them terrorist.*

Even though the writer used superlatives, the number of superlatives is far lower than the number of quantifiers used in this paragraph. Almost every sentence in this paragraph has a quantifier. Saudi overuse of quantifiers needs a further investigation and it could be a subject for a different study.

Generalization and indirectness can also be seen quite clearly in this paragraph. The Arabic language has a rich terminology. Consequently, writers are able to use words that have multiple meanings and these meanings can represent different perspectives. This allows Arabic speakers to favor indirectness when they write. Saudis also belong to the Arab world, and Arab culture is considered to be a collective culture, unlike individualistic Western cultures. As a result, speakers from Arab culture tend to be more cautious, formal, and tactual speakers when they speak or write. Students sometimes can’t express themselves because there are social constraints. They prefer to be indirect in order to avoid disputing or clashing with any social group. Therefore, Saudi students tend to prefer indirectness when they write. Even though all participants insisted that they preferred to write their ideas directly, none of them did so. Turki, for instance, postponed declaring his point until the end of the paragraph. This style of writing is called in Arabic through-argumentation and it comes from L1 writing, as we will see in next paragraph.

Hatim (1997, in his description of Arabic texts, emphasizes the importance of cultural traditions and ways of thinking: “Texts can be seen as carriers of ideological meaning, a factor which makes them particularly vulnerable to changing socio-cultural norms” (p.35). Many rhetoric scholars have tried to understand Arab thought patterns. The author believes the best explanation of Saudi thought patterns comes from Sa’adeddin (1989). Connor (1996) reports that Sa’adeddin (1989) claims that Arabic has two styles of text development. The first, called the aural style, is characterized by prepetition, a limited and imprecise lexicon, and overuse of generalization. Turki’s paragraph is a good illustration of this, especially the generalization issue.

Insofar as methods of argumentation are concerned, four out of five participants used a through argumentation in which they make extensive substantiation of their initial thesis in their
papers when they write in English. Hatim (1997) explained that Arabic has two argumentation forms: 1) Through-argumentative text is characterized by extensive approval of an initial thesis. 2) Counter-argumentative text includes a refutation for a cited thesis followed by substantiation and a conclusion. (p.47)

The most popular argumentative approach, the type of argumentation used extensively by Arabic writers, is through-argumentation. Hatim (1997) stated that “in contrast with English, this particular language variety displays a distinct preference for through-argumentation, a text from which either advocates or condones a given stance, glossing over beliefs entertained by the adversary” (p.47). This suggests that Saudi students transfer their method of argumentation from Arabic to English. This supports the claim that Arab speakers tend to be more indirect in their writing.

Other problems came up in this study and they were unrelated to contrastive rhetoric. However, since writing skill is connected to other language skills, the author found himself in a position where he should explain other major problems encountered by Saudi students. All participants complained about the inappropriate teaching methods used by their high school teachers. Saudi students also have insufficient reading skills and do not understand how to use dictionaries well. We will briefly go through these major problems.

Nowadays, many students tend to accuse their teachers when they fail. As teachers we are skeptical of their accusations because many who do so are not necessarily hard workers. However, sometimes students are right especially when they try to compare the teaching methods of their teachers. All of the participants in this study complained about the teaching methods used by their high-school teachers. Unfortunately, all of their high-school English teachers used the grammar-translation method. Some of them explained to me that they mostly memorized grammar rules, and surprisingly few of them had an opportunity to learn how to write in English in high school. It is shocking to learn that these students had not been able to acquire a second language thoroughly. Almost all were taught a similar method of writing English in their high school. Their teacher would select two stories from their curriculum and students would memorize them. Interestingly, they did not know how to pronounce the words. They had only to write the words from memory, and they got a full mark on the exam. This is an indication of the quality of the education that these students received in high school. ESL teachers should be aware that their Saudi students may have undergone this kind of memorization-based education.

When asked about dictionary use during the interviews, just one of the participants seems to know how to use a dictionary correctly, because the rest of participants stated that they just checked the meaning of words without looking at parts of speech, examples, synonyms, and forms. Most of the time, they use an Arabic-English. As a result, they often use inappropriate words because they do not look at these words used in examples. This might be occurring because they have not been taught how to use English dictionaries.

Reading is to writing as fuel is to an engine. You can not effectively write without having a sufficient input. Scholars of second language acquisition have highlighted the importance of reading in the development of writing. Krashen (1983) described the significance of reading for writing:
The competence/performance theory…. implies that instruction in writing should not focus on teaching directly, but should instead encourage the subconscious acquisition of form through reading and give students procedures that will facilitate the discovery of meaning and an efficient writing process. (p.30)

Students can acquire effective writing knowledge if they have sufficient reading input. From interview with Saudi students, they admitted that they don’t read unless their teachers require them to do so, except for Ahmed who has a master’s degree. Actually, they don’t even read in Arabic. They complain about their poor reading skills because nobody teaches them how to read effectively. This indicates another source of the writing proficiency problem with Saudi students. A writing teacher should understand that Saudi students’ writing problems are connected to their reading struggles.

Last but not least the researcher noticed that participants tend to use “if” conditions and complex sentences in their writing more than parallel sentences. They still use parallel construction of paragraphs, however. The author would assume that they prefer to use “if” conditions and complex sentences because these two structures are two of the most common sentence structures in Saudi conversation. The Saudi social hierarchy system might encourage using these two structures, especially when a father speaks to his son or a manager to his employees. Of course, this last phenomena need to be examined to explore the relationship between language, culture and the system of education.

Conclusion:
Since Kaplan proposed his hypothesis of contrastive rhetoric, launching a new field in second-language writing, many scholars have tried to investigate intercultural rhetoric and cultural thought patterns. This paper examines Kaplan’s theory about Arab students writing. Kaplan (1966) claimed that the Arabic language uses a system of parallels in constructing paragraphs and sentences.

This paper investigates Saudi students’ work using contrastive rhetoric. The participants in this study represent different generations and majors. This has allowed me to have a clear picture of Saudi rhetoric in Arabic and English, even though this study has been made on a small scale to date. This paper pointed to major content and grammatical issues in participants’ writing with concentrating on thought patterns. Interviews with each participant were conducted to analyze their educational and knowledge background. The paper’s findings can be summarized as follows:

1. Repetition and overuse of quantifiers occurred with both advanced and beginning Saudi students as a result of transfer from L1.
2. Saudi students tend to transfer their L1 argumentation style and its indirectness. The types of Arabic persuasive writing cause Saudi students to use repetition when writing in English.
3. Through interviews with participants and analyzing writing samples, the author has concluded that Saudi students suffer from insufficient rhetorical knowledge of L1. This has a negative impact on acquiring L2 writing skills because if a person does not know how to write effectively in L1, he would rarely be able to master writing in L2.
4. Saudi students conceptualize their ideas in Arabic when they write in English. We saw from the examples and the interviews that Saudi students use their L1 way of recounting their experiences. They unconsciously transfer from L1 to L2 when they categorize objects in their L1.

5. Memorization is a common studying strategy among Saudi students. Teaching methods and education policy used in Saudi schools reinforce memorization. Redundancy and memorization have strong ties since students have to repeat in order to memorize and this definitely has a negative influence on the overuse of repetition.

6. Poor reading skills caused poor writing skills. Without sufficient input, there cannot be effective output. Krashen’s (1983) competence/performance theory indicated the connection between reading skills and writing skills.

7. Some problems occurred because there is a conflict between L1 rules and those of L2. Articles and prepositions are the most common of the grammatical errors encountered in students’ writing. The third personal singular is another common error among Saudi students. Saudi students could not easily acquire these rules because they don’t exist in their L1 or they have another form in their L1.

8. From the analysis of participants’ papers, the researcher found that Saudi students tend to overuse specific sentence structures such as “if” conditions and complex sentences. This is contrary to Kaplan’s (1966) claim that Arab students use parallel construction of sentences extensively. According to this study, the author found Saudi students use if conditions and complex sentences more than parallel sentences. Even though they don’t overuse parallel construction of sentences, they still use parallel construction of paragraphs.

**Future directions:**

Through the research, the author of this paper encountered some interesting questions that need further investigation. The following are the most obvious questions that arose: There is a need to examine the causes of the poor reading skills of Saudi students and their relation to writing production.

Teaching methods used to teach English to Saudi students, as well as education policy, have a negative impact on Saudi students’ EL writing. This leads to the question, would Saudi students respond better to a teaching method such as the communicative method? If yes, does this come from the fact that Arabic is considered to be an oral language? Thus, speakers might prefer to learn through oral communication.

Saudi students’ writing suffered from the absence of a voice. Saudi students encounter difficulties in writing their thoughts, feelings, and opinions because they never have learned to express them by writing in L1. One of the participants explained to me that he gets confused and does not know what to write when his teachers ask him to write his opinion. Actually, there is a need to understand the connection between poor writing and absence of voice.

Analysis of L2 writing using the methods of contrastive rhetoric has shown that sociolinguistic and ideological factors in Arabic impact Saudi writing. None of the recent studies has discussed the Saudi social context and their way of telling stories. In fact, each part of previous issues needs a whole research. The Arab world has different contexts and each context
has its own social, ideological, and culture factors. Thus, there is a need to examine the Saudi cultural context.

The use of memorization in Saudis’ learning has a negative impact on second-language writing. This mode of study might cause students to unconsciously plagiarize without having the intention to do so. The skill of memorization enables Saudi students to cut and paste what they read into what they write. Memorization might also disable the creativity of students, especially when they have been used to writing what they memorize. Their minds will be blocked because they have not practiced using their own words.

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