AWEJ Volume.5 Number.1, 2014

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Applying Cognitive Linguistics to Teaching Polysemous Vocabulary

Fawzi Makni
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Abstract
The purpose of this study is to compare the efficiency of two methods for teaching polysemous vocabulary – the *image-schema-based vocabulary instruction method* (ISBM) and the *translation-based vocabulary instruction method* (TBM). While ISBM is inspired by cognitive linguistics, and represents a new trend in teaching polysemous vocabulary, TBM embodies a traditional and well-established way of teaching polysemous vocabulary in EFL contexts. The subjects of this study, 40 pre-university Arab students studying in an intensive English program, were placed in two groups and were taught a range of metaphorical meanings of polysemous words, in accordance with the cognitive linguistics ISBM and the mainstream TBM. In order to assess the pedagogical value of both methods, a polysemous word knowledge test (PWKT) was used as a pre and post-test. The results of the immediate post PWKT suggest that the ISBM is more effective in teaching and learning polysemous vocabulary in this setting than the TBM. In light of these findings, I give a number of recommendations to teachers. As far as the contribution to field of vocabulary acquisition is concerned, this study attempts to shed light on the teaching of polysemous words in an Arab context (a so far unmapped territory). In that, it tries to show how polysemous words have been treated in the English syllabi directed to UAE learners, to equip English teachers with feasible ways to teach polysemous words more efficiently, and thereby to improve the learners’ ability to comprehend the polysemization mechanism more easily.

*Keywords:* cognitive linguistics, polysemous words, image-schema
I Introduction

1 Problem Statement

Polysemous words are ubiquitous in written and spoken English. This is a phenomenon whereby a word has different, but related senses with respect to the contexts in which it is used. Most of these words are of high frequency in English, belonging to the three thousand most frequent words in the language. For this reason, knowledge of these words is a prerequisite for forming a substantial vocabulary base (Nation, 1990, 2001, 2008; Cobb, 2006). Nation (2001, 2008) convincingly argues that profound knowledge of high frequency words can help English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners understand around 80% of most English texts. Nonetheless, polysemous words have been neglected in many EFL contexts. The reasons for this are manifold.

These words are frequently described as a “complete headache for learners” (Thornbury, 2002, p. 8). Likewise, Csábi (2004), who tried to teach polysemous words to Hungarian learners, argues that polysemes are often seen by many teachers and learners of English as problematic and troublesome. These attitudes can reveal underlying problems with the teaching and learning of polysemous words. Equally critical, Tyler and Evans (2004) argue that attempts to teach polysemous words are sometimes doomed to failure as the different meanings of a polyseme (“over,” for instance), are treated as homophones—an “unorganized list of unrelated meanings that are accidentally coded by the same phonological form” (p. 152).

The teaching and learning of polysemous words in the UAE, the EFL context for the current study, is not significantly different from other EFL contexts. English language learners in the UAE only seem to have a superficial knowledge of the senses of polysemous words as an interrelated set of meanings.

In an attempt to help EFL learners become aware of the mechanism underlying the meaning extensions of polysemous words, and to acquire the different senses of these words as an interrelated set, researchers and teachers have attempted, since 2004, to apply insights from cognitive linguistics. Some of these attempts, however, didn’t seem to reach conclusive evidence as to the primacy of the CL approach.

The present research aims to apply insights from cognitive linguistics in learning polysemous words. In particular, to my best knowledge, this study is the first to use the insights of cognitive linguistics in an Arab EFL context. In order to help the experimental participants understand the underlying mechanism underlying the extension of polysemous words’ meanings, the instructional treatment will heavily rely on image schemas and to a lesser extent on conceptual metaphors. I will also address some of the pitfalls of previous studies such as their small-scale nature and the ignorance of some of the learner characteristics.

In the study, I teach polysemous words strategically over a period of two months, taking into account the participants’ cognitive approach to carrying out different mental tasks, as well as their vocabulary learning strategies. This will, I hope, be an improvement to the previous studies and make my findings applicable to teaching polysemous words both in Arab, as well as general, EFL contexts.

2 Significance of the study

By researching the applicability and the effectiveness of the insights of cognitive linguistics in teaching polysemous words, and by verifying the hypothesis of this study, this paper will try to help teachers and Arab EFL learners (and learners in comparable situations)
better deal with polysemous words, and thereby improve the learners’ overall language proficiency.

First, it will provide teachers with pedagogical methods that can be used in the instruction of a set of high frequency lexical items, ones that were previously assumed too complicated to teach. Second, it is an attempt to show that polysemous words, previously considered too difficult to understand, can in fact be easy to comprehend and retain. Also, the intended treatment attempts to engage learners in deciphering and retaining a wide array of meanings related to polysemous word prototypes.

II Theoretical anchoring

1 Pedagogical Applications of the Cognitive Linguistic Insights into the Teaching of Polysemous Words

Cognitive linguists’ discussion of the cognitive linguistics theoretical constructs yielded many insights about language and its relation to the mind and the physical and social world that surround us. Some of the insights that have possible implications for language teaching in general and polysemous words teaching and learning in particular are:

- Polysemous words are natural categories of senses (Lakoff, 1987),
- Polysemous peripheral senses are extended from core meanings (Lakoff, 1987; Evans and Green, 2006).
- Instead of being completely abstract, metaphorical extensions have literal bases. (Johnson 1987; Lakoff, 1987).
- Image schemas are so powerful that they can capture the multiple meanings of a given radial category and can serve as visual aids.
- Used as source domains in metaphors, image schemas can structure abstract entities and enable us to understand them in terms of entities with physical attributes (Lakoff, 1987).

In fact, many EFL teachers and textbook authors have applied these insights to grammar as well as to vocabulary teaching, but as the focus of this study is on the teaching and learning of polysemous words, I will limit myself to the applications of the insights that are relevant to vocabulary teaching.

- Polysemous words are natural categories of senses
  
  Cognitive linguists such as Lakoff (1987) and Tyler and Evans (2004) have shown that polysemous words are natural categories of semantically motivated senses, with the more basic sense lying in the centre and the extended meanings radiating towards the periphery. Proponents of such a theory believe teaching polysemous words as natural categories of semantically motivated senses might help EFL learners learn polysemous words better.

- Metonymic and metaphorical extensions have literal bases.
  
  The embodiment thesis as a cognitive theoretical construct implies that cognition is grounded in reality in the sense that our experiences with the world shape and inform our cognition and figurative thoughts, and that concepts have pre-conceptual, linguistic bases. Lakoff (1981, 1987) and Johnson (1987) argue that figurative meanings of radial categories are extended from basic, prototypical meanings, mainly through image schema transformation, metaphor, and metonymy. If teachers know the processes through which the figurative extensions of polysemous words are extended from their literal original meanings, and if teaching can show how the literal is related to the figurative, their learners will have better chances of understanding and retaining the meaning of these words (Csábi, 2004; Boers, Eyckmans and Stengers, 2007 and Boers et al, 2008).
• Image schemas

As shown by Tyler and Evans (2004), primary image schemas are characterized by their abilities to capture all the meanings of the polysemous words they represent. Pedagogically, this is helpful, as EFL learners will learn an array of meanings through one picture only. For instance, as suggested earlier when a learner is presented with a polysemous word primary image-schema, such as over, and its core meaning and five or six of its peripheral senses, he or she is likely to understand and learn all these meanings. Also, this will maximize the learner’s understanding of the potential new occurrences that will be encountered in the future. Often, image schemas which in theory should be too general to capture all the meanings of polysemous words meanings, are specified (enriched) to account for particular, single meanings.

So, presenting figurative meanings of polysemous words with their image schemas can be rewarding in a classroom setting. First, for teachers, as they will find it easy to teach metaphorical meanings through concrete images; and second, for learners, as they will better understand and retain these words. In this context, Boers et al. (2007) have discovered that etymological association—associating polysemous words’ metaphorical meanings with their original literal meanings—is “likely to call up a mental image of a concrete scene which can be stored in memory alongside the verbal form” (p. 43). In other words, presenting polysemous words with their image schemas is likely to create a dual verbal-nonverbal memory trace, and can thus result in better retention.

2. A survey of three studies

In an attempt to help EFL learners become aware of the mechanism underlying the meaning extensions of polysemous words, and to acquire the different senses of these words as an interrelated set, researchers and teachers have attempted, since 2004, to apply insights from cognitive linguistics. However some of these attempts didn’t seem to reach conclusive evidence as to the primacy of the CL approach because many factors as will be seen in the following section. This paradigm has theoretically advanced accounts of the semantics of polysemous words (e.g., Johnson, 1987; Lakoff, 1987; Evans and Green, 2006), which can be used in the teaching of these words. In this context, few small-scale studies (such as those of Csábi, 2004 and Morimoto and Loewen, 2007) have used conceptual metaphor and image schemas to help learners view the different peripheral meanings of a polyseme as motivated extensions derived from a core member.

These projects have tried to compare the effectiveness of the CL techniques with traditional approaches based on translation and memorization used in teaching polysemous words. While Csábi (2004) and Touplikioti (2007) found that the cognitive linguistics-based approach helped their experimental participants to assimilate polysemous words better than their control peers, who used a translation based and memorization approach, Morimoto and Loewen (2007) failed to find significant differences between both approaches. Also, while the data of her study confirms the beneficial influence of the cognitive linguistics pedagogy, Touplikioti (2007) could not offer conclusive evidence as to the primacy of the CL approach because other variables (which she claims were not controlled) might have helped her experimental participants outperform their control peers. In fact, all of these three studies neglect some of the learners’ characteristics, which may have a big influence on vocabulary acquisition in general and polysemous words in particular.
Equally significant, the first two studies proved to be short interventions, where learners were exposed to new words and concepts on one occasion only. In fact, this might have deprived the learners of the opportunity to digest the idea underlining the polysemization mechanism. This review (for a detailed account of these insights, see section 2 on Cognitive Linguistics and its Pedagogical Implications, Makni, 2013) helped me understand how insights from cognitive linguistics were applied to the teaching of some polysemous words, evaluate the findings of these studies, and find out how I can contribute to the field of teaching polysemes.

3. The Status of Polysemous Words’ Teaching in the UAE

I examined four English textbooks destined for four different levels in governmental schools, and found that polysemous words were scarce at the primary and preparatory levels and fairly common at the secondary level. In both cases, however, students were exposed to a good deal of polysemous words’ literal meanings only. Hence, learners might have been left with the feeling that each of these multi-meaning words has one single meaning.

4. Research Hypothesis

The experimental participants who will be taught polysemous words using the image-schema based vocabulary instruction method (ISBM) are expected to outperform the control group, who will be taught the same words using the translation based vocabulary instruction method (TBM).

III The Study

As in all pieces of careful research, prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted on students similar to the participants of the present study. In light of the results of this study, refinements and amendments were made to the main study.

1. Participants and Setting

The subjects that participated in the study are low-intermediate, pre-university UAE students. These participants were divided into two groups—an experimental group and a control group, each of which consisted of 20 students. Before joining the university, these participants had studied in governmental schools and had been taught English as a subject for five hours a week for 12 years. The subjects of this study consist of level 2 students who got TOEFL scores between 373 and 437.

2. Treatment Words and the Two Adopted Methods of Instruction

The instructional treatment of this study is a short course aiming at teaching polysemous words using two different teaching methods. It consists of 9 short lessons for each of the experimental and the control groups. The taught words for both groups are the same. They are hand, break, head, over, burn, push, beyond and root. I chose these words for the following reasons: First, most of them belong to the first 2000 most frequent words in both spoken and written English. Second, the participants knew most of the literal meanings of these words, a requisite condition for understanding the metaphorical extensions.

A. The ISBM

The ISBM was used with the experimental group. It is inspired from the cognitive linguistics approach to teaching polysemous words. The aim of the ISBM, as Boers and Lindstromberg (2008) put it, is to attempt “to make learners aware both of the word’s central sense and of how particular additional senses extended from this central sense” (p. 28). It is built on a constellation of principles, the most important of which are the:
i. embodied experience of non-propositional representations of concepts,
ii. the key concept of image-schema (Lakoff, 1987; Tyler and Evans, 2004), and
iii. the non-arbitrary nature of polysemous words senses.

Boers and Lindstromberg (2008, p. 28)

Also, this approach uses image schemas figuring the central meanings of the target words together with the specified, enriched schemas depicting the derived metaphorical senses. Figure 1, for instance, shows the primary image schema of *break*.

![Image Schema of Break](image1.png)

**Figure 1: The image-schema of the core meaning of break**

Tanaka (1987)

Once X and Y are specified, the primary image schema gives rise to other specified image schemas figuring meanings such as *to destroy the shape or function of something* in Figure 2 and *to not do what is agreed upon / put an end to* in Figure 3.

**Example 1:** Who **broke** this radio?

**Meaning:** *destroy the shape or function of something*

![Image Schemas of Break](image2.png)

**Figure 2: Image schema of the literal meaning of break (e.g. radio)**

**Physical Space:** Exert energy so as to destroy the shape or the function of something.

Morimoto and Loewen (2007, p. 370)

**Example 2:** You cannot **break** your contract now.

**Meaning:** *to not do what is agreed upon / put an end to*
Morimoto and Loewen (2007, p. 370) The ISBM has a number of advantages to other teaching methods. First, it will provide learners with various senses of polysemous words not in a piecemeal fashion, but in a gestalt-like way, thus helping learners to capture a unified picture of language. Second, it helps learners understand the intra-lexical structure underlying polysemous words via the use of image schema. Such a tool may account for the motivations of the literal and metaphorical senses of polysemous words. It may also help learners to acquire these words as image-schemas may aid in dual-coding. The third advantage, as convincingly discussed by Tanaka and Abe (1985), is that the use of image-schema has the potential to enable learners to understand the additional senses of polysemous words in the L2, particularly those which do not have exact counterparts in L1, without being constrained by its L1 equivalent (Morimoto, and Loewen, 2007).

B. The TBM
The control participants were taught the same list of polysemous words as their experimental peers along the lines of the translation-based approach. This traditional method treats polysemous words as homophones and teaches the different senses of polysemous words as they turn up. Thus, these words were presented to the participants in a piecemeal fashion. In each lesson, the researcher presented the participants with three metaphorical senses of three different words from the list in focus. More importantly, the researcher explained the semantics of the target words without showing how their metaphorical senses can be derived from their core meanings. Like the experimental group, the control group treatment was interwoven in their reading class, thus assuring that most of the target words (literal or metaphorical meanings) were presented in context.

3. Study materials
A. Pre-treatment instruments
i. Polysemous words knowledge test
The PWKT is a vocabulary-depth instrument which seeks to measure the participants’ deep knowledge of the polysemy aspect of the eight polysemous words that are taught in the treatment (see Appendix 1). It consists of 24 sentences (3 metaphorical meanings for each of the 8 target words) and has a gap-filling format. It is a productive test as the participants are required to complete one unfinished word in each sentence. In an attempt to guide the participants to the target words, a variable number of initial letters are provided for each blank. While the PWKT presents words in rich context (clues to the appropriate meaning are provided), it does not involve a significant amount of reading. In fact, most of the structures of the sentences are
simple, and the difficult words, that might hinder the understanding of any test sentence, were translated into Arabic – the participants’ L1. The PWKT was designed by me as a ready-made, commercial test about the polysemy aspect of polysemous words was not available.

ii Vocabulary Levels Test (1st and 2nd thousands) and TOFL Test
The vocabulary levels test (VLT) (Paul Nation and Laufer, 1999) used in this study is the online version of the original test. This test is used to assess the breadth of the participants’ vocabulary knowledge prior to the treatment. As the participants scored below 83% in the second level (words from 1001 to 2000), the researcher contended with the results obtained in the first two levels of this vocabulary test. Another measurement which was used to shed light on the English language proficiency of the participants and to group them under different levels was the TOEFL test.

B. Post-treatment Instruments
i. Immediate Polysemous Words Knowledge Test
After the two-month treatment, the PWKT was immediately administered to the participants to track their progress in understanding and learning the polysemous target words.

4. Methods of Data Analysis
Descriptive analyses such as the mean, the standard deviation, the median, the minimum and the maximum were calculated for the scores obtained from all the pre and post-treatments tests. In addition, in order to gauge the effectiveness of the instructional treatment for each of the experimental and the control groups, the paired-samples t-test was performed in order to compare the mean differences of the pre and post-treatment PWKT scores and to show whether or not the instructional treatment was effective. However, to show that the entry level is not significant between the experimental and control groups in the pre-treatment test (PWKT), the VLT, and the TOEFL, the independent samples t-test was applied.

IV Results
Before performing statistical tests, I tested my data to determine if it was normally distributed, and I found that most of the tests involved in the Independent T-tests were normally distributed.

1. TOEFL, VLT and PWKT
Overall, the analysed data of the TOEFL, VLT and PWKT show that there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the beginning of the study. The carried out Independent Samples t-Test of the TOEFL test scores of the experimental and control groups shows that the difference between the two groups is not statistically significant (t =.699, df = 29.353, p = .490). Similarly, the differences between both groups’ scores on both vocabulary levels tests, VLT K1 and K2, are not significant. Likewise, the difference between the two groups’ mean scores of the experimental and the control group in the PWKT test is statistically not significant (U= 197, P=.947).

2. Statistical analysis of the post-treatment collected data
i. PWKT
Table1. Differences between the pre-treatment and the post-treatment PWKT scores (experimental group)

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<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>PWKT pre-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.90</td>
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Arab World English Journal  www.awej.org
ISSN: 2229-9327
Table 2. Differences between the pre-treatment and the post-treatment PWKT Scores (control group)

<table>
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<th>Control Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PWKT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-treatment</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWKT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post-treatment</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>4.57</td>
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As can be seen in Tables 1 and 2, there is no significant difference between the experimental and the control groups in the results of the PWKT taken before the treatment. At the post-test, though both the experimental (t = 9.053, df = 19, p < 0.0001) and the control group (t = 5.79, df = 19, p < .001) performed better (Tables 1 and 2), the gains of the experimental group were larger. The scores of the experimental group increased from (1.95±1.905) in the pre-test to (15.45±7.667) in the post-test compared to the control group which went from (2.35±2.450) to (8.45±4.571). The differences between the two groups in the PWKT post-test are significant (t = 3.507, df = 38, p = .001).

ii Analysis of the individual words of the post treatment PWKT

Control Group

The PWKT test includes eight words, namely, break, beyond, over, head, roots, push, hand, and burn. Examining the control participants’ correct answers at the level of these words, we notice that the participants did well on hand, push and head (scored between 32 and 27 out of 60), while they experienced some difficulties with break, beyond and burn (scored between 19 and 9 out of 60).

Experimental group

Examining the scores of the PWKT, the experimental participants were found to score better at the level of all the words. At the level of push, roots, and head, their scores ranged between 41 and 48 (out of 60), and in words like beyond, burn and break, they scored between 26 and 32.

Overall both groups found the metaphorical senses of words like push and head easy to understand and retain than words like break and burn.

V Discussion

1. Hypothesis discussion

In considering the study hypothesis, the results suggest that the experimental participants outperformed their control group peers on the PWKT which was used to assess the effectiveness of the treatment instructional methods – the ISBM and the TBM. The statistically significant difference between the scores of the experimental (15.45±7.667) and control groups (8.45±4.571) proves my hypothesis true. The good results achieved by the experimental group can be attributed to several factors, the most important of which are: (1) The usefulness of understanding the underlying mechanism of polysemous words’ meaning extension, (2) the beneficial role of dual-coding in understanding polysemous words, (3) the effectiveness of the
explicit instruction of vocabulary and (4) the power of the ISBM to deal with words which have more than one equivalent in their L1.

(1) The usefulness of understanding the underlying mechanism of polysemous words’ meaning extension

This finding indicates that the ISBM is better than the TBM in that it can help learners better understand, assimilate and recall the metaphorical senses of the polysemous words in focus. The cognitive linguistic instructional method was advantageous over the translation-based one as it helped the learners understand the intra-lexical structure underlying polysemous words via the use of image schemas and conceptual metaphors. Compared with the control participants, the experimental subjects found it relatively easier to understand the underlying mechanism existing in polysemous words’ meanings extension. The cognitive approach allowed the experimental participants to learn the metaphorical meanings of the treatment words in a gestalt-like version, in the same way they are presented in the mental lexicon according to many researchers (e.g., Cruse, 1986; Lakoff, 1987; Deane, 1988; Tuggy, 1993).

Equally significant, the understanding of the links that exist between the different meanings of polysemous words might have facilitated the assimilation and the retention of these meanings for the experimental group. The drawn findings about the primacy of the ISBM over the TBM in making the experimental participants aware of the intra-lexical structure underlying the meaning extensions of polysemous words are congruent with the results reached by other studies inspired by cognitive linguistics and notably those of (Demecheleer and Boers, 1998; Csábi, 2004 and Touplikioti, 2007).

(2) The beneficial role of dual-coding in understanding polysemous words

Equally important, the good performance of the experimental group on the PWKT can be attributed to the implementation of the dual coding theory. The instructional approach in accordance with which the experimental participants studied polysemous words adopted image-schemas accompanied by verbal explanations in showing how metaphorical senses are extended from core meanings of polysemous words (see Appendix 2 for treatment lessons). As a result, image-schemas were used as visual aids that might have helped the experimental participants better understand the metaphorical extensions of the taught polysemous words. According to proponents of the dual coding theory (e.g. Paivio, 1971; Clark and Paivio; 1991, Boers et al, 2007), visual aids used in the form of image-schemas in this study might have had the potential to concretize the taught figurative, abstract senses which are long-considered to be beyond the EFL learners’ grasp.

(3) The effectiveness of the explicit instruction of vocabulary

More importantly, the experimental group obtained better results on the post PWKT, which might have been made possible through the deliberate instruction of the treatment words. This finding provides evidence in the support of the view that vocabulary should be deliberately targeted for instruction (Nation, 2001; Laufer, 2005).

(4) The power of the ISBM to deal with words which have more than one equivalent in their L1

The good performance of the experimental participants on the PWKT reveals the possible potential of image-schemas to enable the experimental learners to understand the extended senses of polysemous words in general and those which do not have exact counterparts in L1 in particular. As we have seen in the results, the verb burn (in some sentences, phrasal verb), for instance, does not have a one-to-one equivalent in Arabic as indicated in the sentences in Table 3 below.
Table 3. English definitions and Arabic translations of burn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>English meaning</th>
<th>Arabic translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It was a terrible fire and the whole house was burnt to the ground.</td>
<td>To destroy, damage by fire or heat (literal translation)</td>
<td>يحرق</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The man will burn himself out by working too hard. He works even on weekends.</td>
<td>ruin one’s health (metaphorical meaning)</td>
<td>يهلك صحته</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s recommended to work out on daily basis to burn off a few calories.</td>
<td>lose fat, calories … by working out (metaphorical meaning)</td>
<td>السعارات الحرارية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You must have a temperature, your forehead is burning.</td>
<td>feel unpleasantly hot (metaphorical meaning)</td>
<td>يشعر بالحرارة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The control participants found this and other words figuring the same problem such as break and beyond tricky. This is clearly seen in the post PWKT scores. This problem was partly avoided by their experimental peers who scored significantly higher on these three words as indicated in the table below, and this can be attributed to the advantage of the ISBM over the TBM in teaching these sorts of words. It seems that the cognitive semantic explanations the experimental participants got from the cognitive–based instructional treatment helped them outperform their control peers who seemed to rely on translation and blind memorization. Such a finding sheds light on the limitations of L1 = L2 equation and the inappropriateness for the EFL learners to fall back on their L1 when dealing with polysemous words. These results appear to be in line with Tanaka and Abe’s (1985) assertion that the use of image-schema has the potential to enable learners to understand the L2 additional senses of polysemous words, particularly those which do not have exact counterparts in L1, without being constrained by its L1 equivalent (Morimoto and Loewen, 2007).

Table 4. Scores from the PWKT of the polysemous words with more than one Arabic equivalent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment polysemous words</th>
<th>Maximum score</th>
<th>Experimental group scores</th>
<th>Control group scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>burn</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beyond</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>break</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drawing on the results displayed in table 4 and on the results obtained from the other treatment words, it is possible to deduce that literal translation is likely to fail as mismatching is predominant between Arabic and English. In this context, students are likely to make production errors in speech and writing as differences in the native and target language exist (Odlin, 1989, p. 167). The low scores the control group obtained on these individual words in particular might be attributed to their reliance on the literal translation of these words when taking the PWKT. This is consistent with what Gabrys-Barker (2006, p. 145) refers to as ‘calques’ which he defines as the “literal translations of complex words or phrases”. Resorting to literal translation and
VI Conclusion

1 Summary
This study sought to compare the effectiveness of two different approaches to teaching polysemous words to Arab EFL learners: an image-schema approach based on insights from cognitive linguistics and the traditional translation method.

The findings drawn from the statistically analyzed results confirm the primacy of techniques inspired by cognitive linguistics over those based on translation in learning polysemous words. Such findings give pedagogic support to the tenets of cognitive linguistics and prototype theory within cognitive linguistics (e.g., Brugman, 1980; Lakoff 1987; Tyler and Evans, 2004; Evans and Tyler, 2008). Additionally, the results of this study confirm findings from other studies using teaching methods based on the insights from cognitive linguistics. (e.g., Csábi, 2004; Touplikioti, 2007).

2 Implications
The findings of this study have a number of pedagogical implications for teachers. First, given the efficiency of image schemas and verbal explanations in helping the experimental participants assimilate the polysemous words of the treatment, teachers are advised to adopt the dual coding theory in teaching vocabulary.

Also, concerning the techniques of teaching polysemous words, like Morimoto and Lowen (2007) I warn against applying the insights from cognitive linguistics to the teaching of polysemous words on one occasion only. The findings of this study support the idea that “isolated, one-off lessons might not be sufficient to ensure students’ full internalization and restructuring” of their knowledge of the polysemous words’ literal and metaphorical senses (Morimoto and Lowen, 2007 p. 362). For this reason, polysemous words should be taught strategically.

Third, to avoid the mismatching phenomenon discussed above, EFL teachers should draw their learners’ attention to limitations of word-for-word translation when dealing with polysemous words. However, given the cases where we have matches between English words and their Arabic equivalents, teachers can additionally points this out using the translation method. In this case the L1 should not be seen as a thing to be avoided, but rather as additional asset in learning polysemous vocabulary.

Fourth, as cognitive linguistics have proven effective in equipping teachers with a feasible way of teaching English polysemous words to EFL learners, English teachers should be trained in techniques pertinent to polysemous vocabulary teaching proposed by this framework.

3 Limitations and directions for future research
I have tried to remedy for the pitfalls of the previous related studies but I encountered a few limitations during the course of my study.

Partly because the study was set out to be a fully ecological one, in the sense that the presentation of the polysemous words taught and the practice exercises of the instructional treatment for the control group replicated the mainstream teaching practices of polysemous words (unlike some previous studies), I was not able to control for these variables, piece meal presentation of polysemous words, different practice exercises between control and experimental group, and lack of translation test at the end of the experiment.
About the Author

Dr. Fawzi is a faculty at the University of Sharjah. Prior to joining the University of Sharjah in 2007, he worked for several Tunisian and Emirati high schools for 13 years. His areas of expertise encompass TESOL and Applied linguistics.

VII References


Applying Cognitive Linguistics to Teaching Polysemous Vocabulary

Newbury House.


VIII Appendices

Appendix A PWKT (sample sentences)

Complete the unfinished words.

1. Some bad eating habits are difficult to stop, for instance, for some, eating junk food daily is a habit which one cannot b……… easily.

2. Many people continue working b……… the age of 60. At this age people usually (بواصل) (توقف)

3. Your article is o……… the page limit. You wrote more than what is required.

4. Passing the TOEFL h………… the list of ambitions among all the students who ( niños) (طموحات) joined the Intensive English Program at the University of Sharjah.

5. I like Oman very much, and I’m proud of my Omani ro……….. We live in the (فخر) (مملكة)

6. The new manager managed to pu……….. his ideas to reform things in the company. (مدير) (يصر) (شركة) (إقع) (ثقة)

7. When we went out, we left the kids in the good ha……….. of our babysitter. We all trust her and think that the kids will be safe with her.

Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327

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8. Her cheeks were being with embarrassment when she failed to know the answer.
9. You’ll be yourself out by taking drugs and drinking too much alcohol. These bad habits will ruin your health.
10. We didn’t know we were being the law until the policeman arrested us and gave us a ticket.

Appendix B
A. Lesson Sample Handout (push) (for experimental group)

Example 1.
Christine pushed the poor boy into the water.

Push definition: When you push something, you use force to make it move away from you or away from its previous position.

Step # 1. Can you come up with other sentences showing other uses of push?

Step # 2: Let’s see how this meaning can be presented.

Physical space
Use force so as to make something move away and consequently changes position.

Step # 3: Now let’s see how figurative meanings of push can be presented

Examples showing figurative senses
1. He pushed his way through the crowd until he reached his son.
   Meaning: move forward using force
4. My parents pushed me into going to college. I didn’t want to pursue my studies, but they forced me to do so.
   Meaning: to force
3. After pushing his new political ideas, the candidate was elected.
   He kept talking about his new ideas until people trusted him.
   Meaning: to convince people to accept one’s ideas in a forceful way

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ISSN: 2229-9327
Abstract space:
Use force so as to cause someone to change position and behave in a different way.

Step # 4
Explain the following sentences with reference to the image-schema below.

Sentences
1. The naughty boy pushed the closed door open with his foot.
2. The poor mother pushed her way through the crowd (A………B) looking for her son.
3. The teacher pushed his new ideas until he persuaded his students. They were not convinced with what he called for in the beginning, but as he kept talking about his new ideas repeatedly, they finally trusted him.
4. My friends pushed me into attending the party. At first I refused the invitation, but as they forced me to go, I changed my mind (accepted).

Exercises
Words in context
1. Suzan pushed the desk aside to clear the way for her students. The chair will
   a. change its position
   b. remain in the same place
2. If you push your way through the crowd, you
   a. move forward using force
   b. move backward using force
3. If your friend pushes her ideas about a particular subject, you’ll probably
   a. change your mind/position
   b. keep your position
4. The test pushed her to study very hard. The test must be
   a. very easy
   b. very difficult

Part of push Network
to use force to make sth move (literal meaning) to force

Lesson Sample Handout (push / root / burn) (for control group)
(Just like experimental students, control participants were presented with the three different meanings of push, but in a piece meal fashion, i.e. on three separate occasions. In this sample lesson they were presented with one of these three meaning – to force)

Themes: Exams and traveling
Literal meanings of push, root and burn: _________. _________. _________.
How many meanings do you think does each of these words have? _________.

Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327
Sentences translation: ____________________________________________________________

Below are words you know used figuratively.

1. Push:
   Example: Standardized tests like TOEFL seem to push students to work really hard.
   English meaning: (verb) to force
   Sentences translation:

2. Root:
   Example: Robert traveled to Vietnam in search for his roots. He was born there.
   English Meaning: (preposition) origin, place where one was born
   Sentences translation:

3. Burn: (to destroy something with fire)
   Example: In order to pass the TOEFL, the student studies day and night. She may burn herself out by working too hard.
   English meaning: (verb) ruin one’s health
   Sentences Arabic translation:

Exercise # 1
Words in context:

1. How can one search for his/her roots?
   a. surfing the internet  b. reading novels

2. How can teachers push students to work very hard?
   a. giving them a lot of homework  b. deducting marks

3. Who might burn himself out?
   a. a drunkard  b. a fireman working 6 hours a day

Exercise # 2
Gap filling

burn - roots - push

1. Teachers don’t seem to _____ these kids very hard. They don’t force them to work hard.
2. The workaholic risk ________ themselves out.
3. Certain TV programs can help people search for their_________.

Gender and Learning Style Preferences of EFL Learner

Adel Abu Radwan
Department of English, College of Arts and Social Sciences
Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

Abstract
This study presents the results of an investigation of the relationship between gender and learning style preferences, and language perception and use of EFL learners. Participants in this study were 212 undergraduate students majoring in English at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in Oman. The students were 58 males and 158 females from different years of study. The students’ learning styles and patterns of language perception and use were measured using a questionnaire consisting of thirty items. The results yielded in this study showed that although all styles were represented in both groups of learners to varying degrees, the female group was significantly more communication oriented than the male group. The results did not reveal any significant differences between the two groups with regard to their perception of the importance of English. They did reveal, however, significant differences between them in the amount of time they spent practicing English outside the classroom, as well as in their enjoyment of learning English. The study suggests that success in learning a foreign language depends on adopting effective learning strategies, as well as on the learners developing awareness about their own learning. The study also maintains that language teachers need to help learners expand their learning styles by encouraging them to use more effective learning techniques.

Keywords: learning styles, learning strategies, language perception, strategy training, gender
1. Introduction
Over the past two decades, second language research has focused on the differences among students in how they approach learning tasks. While, for instance, some learners might prefer reading a textbook, others like listening to verbal explanations. One factor contributing to such differences is preferred learning. Oxford (2003) believes, along with many other researchers (see., e.g., Benson, 2003; Chamot, 2004; Nunan, 1999; Reid, 1987; Willing, 1988), that learning styles and strategies are among the most important factors that determine the extent of success in learning a foreign/second language. Reid (1987, p. 88) argues that “identifying the learning style preferences of nonnative speakers (NNSs) may have wide-ranging implications in the areas of curriculum design, materials development, student orientation, and teacher training.” Willing (1988, p.1) also suggests that the “efforts to accommodate learning styles by choosing suitable teaching styles, methodologies and course organization can result in improved learner satisfaction and attainment.” Similarly, Claxon and Murrell (1987) found that developing instructional methodologies and techniques that match students’ learning styles had positive impact on their reading scores and their perception of the learning experience.

Recent cognitive models view language learners as active, self-determining individuals who process information in complex ways (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). It is believed that language learners who develop the ability to learn-how-to-learn are more able to assess their weaknesses and strengths and employ strategies that meet the task demands and match their own strengths. Chamot (2004, p. 14) noted that effective and strategic language learners possess “metacognitive knowledge about their own thinking and learning approaches, a good understanding of what a task entails, and the ability to orchestrate the strategies that best meet both the task demands and their own strengths.” Similar findings were reported by Nunan (1991), Benson (2001) and others. Nunan (1991) found that effective language learners developed a high degree of autonomy and self-direction in the learning process, and possessed conscious awareness of the processes underlying their own learning. Likewise, Weinstein, Zimmerman and Palmer (1988) believe that learners can be trained to process new information and acquire new skills by exploiting more effective learning strategies.

Considerable research has been done on learning styles and strategies and the relationship between them in the western context (see, e.g., Oxford, 2003; Reid, 1987; Schmeck, 1988; Willing, 1998). Few studies, however, have addressed this issue in the Arab world (see, e.g., Al-Otaibi, 2004; El-Dib, 2003; Khalil, 2005; Radwan, 2011; Shamis, 2003). The findings in the western context, though informative, cannot be extrapolated automatically to the Arab world context, especially in light of research findings showing that different cultures manifest different modes of thinking (Anderson & Oxford, 1991; Witkins, 1976) and different learning styles (Reid, 1987). This study, therefore, explores the relationship between gender and learning styles and patterns of language perception and practice among SQU students.

2. Background
Since the mid 1970s, research in second/foreign language has focused primarily on the language learner, exploring the roles that different psychological, cognitive, cultural and affective factors play in learning a second language (Brown, 2000). This interest in the language learner has led to substantial research on the qualities that distinguish the successful learner from the less successful one, focusing in particular on learning styles and strategies (see, e.g., Anderson, 2005; Cohen, 1998; Green & Oxford, 1995; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2007; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1993; Oxford & Anderson, 1995; Reid, 1995, to name just a few). Rubin (1975) and
Stern (1975) attempted to characterize the ‘good language learner’ by identifying their personal characteristics, learning styles, and preferred learning strategies.

Learning styles are broadly defined as “cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment” (Keefe, 1997, p. 4). A similar definition states that styles are “an individual’s natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills” (Kinsella, 1995, p. 171). Learning styles are “relatively stable and will be deployed by individual regardless of the subject being studied or the skill being mastered” (Wong & Nunan, 2011, p. 145). These various definitions emphasize the stable nature of learning styles.

Research has offered numerous taxonomies and classifications of learning styles using mostly self-reporting questionnaires. Dunn (1984) believes that learners possess four perceptual learning modalities: visual learning (reading and studying of charts), auditory learning (listening to lectures), kinesthetic learning (experiential learning), and tactile learning (hands-on learning). Christison (2003) goes beyond the perceptual modalities identified by Dunn and distinguishes between three major learning styles: cognitive style (field-dependent vs. field-independent, analytic vs. global, reflective vs. impulsive), sensory style (visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic) and personality style (right brain vs. left brain dominance, tolerance of ambiguity). On the basis of learners’ preferred learning strategies, Willing (1994) identified four learning styles based on Kolb’s (1976) distinction between cognitive styles (field-dependent vs. field-independent) and personality traits (active vs. passive). These styles are the communicative style (field independent and active), the analytical style (field independent and passive), the authority-oriented style (field dependent and passive), and the concrete style (field dependent and active).

It should be noted, however, as Oxford (2003, p. 3) pointed out, that learning styles are not dichotomous and “generally operate on a continuum or on multiple, intersecting continua.” This basically shows that, although each learners has a preferred learning style, the other styles might be represented in him/her to varying degrees.

Early research in learning styles has focused on English native speakers, especially those learning a second language (see, e.g., Hansen & Stansfield, 1982; Hodges, 1982; Ramirez, 1986; Witkins, 1976). In general, research findings emphasized the existence of differences in learning styles to due to social, ethnic and cultural factors. Witkins (1976), for example, demonstrated that different cultures adopt different modes of thinking (global and abstract functioning). Building on this research, Reid (1987) investigated the learning styles of 1234 ESL students and 159 native speakers of English using clusters of variables including language background, gender, duration of stay in the United States, etc. She found that the learning style preferences of the native speakers differed significantly from those of non-native speakers. She also found that the other variables related to significant differences in learning styles. Oxford and Anderson (1991) also found that ESL learners from a variety of cultures demonstrated differences in their sensory preferences. In addition, Ehrman (1996) established a positive significant relationship between personality traits and proficiency in English. Likewise, Wong and Nunan (2011) showed that more ‘effective learners’ tend to be more communication oriented in their learning styles than ‘less effective learners’.

As for learning strategies, they are defined as specific behaviors, communicative procedures or thought processes that learners employ to enhance their own L2 learning and language use (Chamot, 2004; Oxford, 2003; Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992). Likewise, Cohen (1990, p. 4) defines them as “processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in actions taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language through the storage,
retention, recall, and application of information about that language.” Weinstein and Mayer (1986, p. 315) add that learning strategies aim to “affect the learner’s motivational or affective state, or the way in which the learner selects, acquires, or integrates new knowledge.” If used properly, learning strategies can make learning more enjoyable and more effective, and at the same time make the learner more independent, self-directed and autonomous (Oxford, 2003). When learners are consciously aware of the strategies they are employing, learning can become quicker and more effective (Nyikos & Oxford, 1993). However, since students are generally inclined to use strategies that suit their own learning styles, teachers need to encourage their students, especially the less successful ones, to use strategies that may fall outside their style preferences (Oxford, 1996).

Research has offered different taxonomies of learning strategies (see, e.g., O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001; Willing, 1988), but Oxford’s (1990) classification was the most comprehensible. Oxford has classified strategies into six categories: metacognitive strategies (help learners control their own cognition and enable them to maximize learning through monitoring their language use, planning, coordinating the learning process, and looking for opportunities to use the language.), cognitive strategies (helping learners understand and produce new language through practicing, summarizing, reasoning deductively, and analyzing), memory-related strategies (helping learners remember, store and retrieve new information when there is a need for communication), compensatory strategies (enabling learners to use the language to overcome any limitations and gaps in their linguistic knowledge through guessing, making up new words, and using circumlocution and synonyms), affective strategies (helping learners through lowering their anxiety levels, increasing their motivation, and controlling their emotions), and social strategies (helping learners to interact, communicate, cooperate, and empathize with others to maximize learning).

Research into learning strategies has explored the relationship between strategies and a number of variables including gender, age, proficiency, motivation, cultural background, and beliefs (see e.g., Dornyei, 2005; Chamot, 2005; Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003; Kato, 1996; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2007; Radwan, 2011). Kato (1996) and Oxford and Ehrman (1995) demonstrated that cognitive strategies are significantly related to L2 proficiency. Purpura (1999), however, showed that metacognitive strategies have an “executive function” over cognitive strategies and are relatively strong predictors of L2 proficiency. In the initial stages of language learning, when learners need to build their repertoire of new lexicon, memory-based strategies were shown to relate positively to L2 proficiency (Kato, 1996). However, these strategies were shown by Purpura (1997) to negatively impact learners’ test performances in grammar and vocabulary. This could be because memory strategies are less critical to success in language learning in the later stages, since the learner by then is probably well equipped with vocabulary and structures of that language (Oxford, 2003).

As for the link between learning styles and strategies, Marina (1996) states that the learners’ style preferences are likely to influence their choice of learning strategies. Oxford (1993) argues that for learners to succeed in learning a second language they need to be consciously aware of their own learning styles, attempt to maximize their potentials and adapt their learning strategies to suit the learning requirements in different contexts. While language learners cannot change their learning styles, they can adjust their learning strategies to make up for any disadvantaged caused by their learning styles (Wong & Nunan, 2011). This, according to Reid (1995), can be done when students “stretch their learning styles so that they will be more empowered in a variety of learning situations.” Language teachers, for their part, have to encourage their students
to stretch their learning styles. They also need to help the less proficient ones to adopt more effective strategies. At the same time, they should modify their own teaching style to accommodate the various style preferences of their students (Christison, 2003).

3. The Study
This study investigated whether there were any differences between male and female and students in their learning styles, strategy preferences, and patterns of language practice and use. In particular, the study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. Are there any differences between male and female students in their overall learning styles?
2. Are there any differences in the individual learning strategy preferences of the two groups?
3. Are there any differences in the amount of time the two groups spent on practicing English outside the classroom?
4. Do students in the two groups differ in their perception of the importance of English?
5. Do students in both groups differ in their enjoyment of learning English?

3.1 Participants
The questionnaire used in this study was distributed to 234 undergraduate students majoring in English at Sultan Qaboos University during their regular classes. Of these, only 212 returned the surveys completely answered. The sample was not balanced, with only 58 males and 154 females. In fact, this reflects the demography of the English department, where the female-male ratio is 2 to 1. The students come from different years of study: 5 freshmen, 73 sophomores, 56 juniors, and 78 seniors.

3.2 Instrument
The study used a slightly modified version of Wong and Nunan’s (2011) survey, which was based on Willing’s (1994) learning strategy questionnaire. The survey consisted of two parts. The first part collected biographical information, including gender, students’ GAP in English courses, rating of importance of English, year of study, extent of enjoyment of English, and number of hours of English practice off campus per week. The second part consisted of thirty statements, asking students to rate themselves on a four-point scale with regard to their use of in-class and out-of-class strategies. Many of the statements used in this survey resemble strategies used in Oxford’s (1990) well-established SILL, designed for ESL/EFL learners.

Following Willing (1994), learners were classified into four categories based on their strategy preferences: (1) concrete learners: these learners tend to like games, pictures, films, video, using cassettes, talking in pairs and practicing English outside class, (2) analytical learners: these learners like studying grammar, studying English books and reading newspapers, studying alone, finding their own mistakes and working on problems set by the teacher, (3) communicative learners: these students like to learn by watching, listening to native speakers, talking to friends in English and watching television in English, using English out of class in shops, trains, etc., learning new words by hearing them, and learning by conversations, and (4) authority-oriented learners: these learners prefer the teacher to explain everything, like to have their own textbook, to write everything in a notebook, to study grammar, learn by reading, and learn new words by seeing them.
4. Results

4.1. Learning style and gender

The first research question examined the relationship between gender and the overall learning styles of the students. Data analysis revealed that the dominant learning style for female students was the communicative style (57.9%), followed by the authority-oriented style (18.4%), the concrete style (13.8%), and finally the analytical style (9.9%). For male students, the dominant style was also the communicative style (38.9%), followed by the authority-oriented style (35.2%), the analytical style (18.5%) and the concrete style (7.4%). A chi-square analysis showed that the two groups differed significantly in their overall learning styles (chi-square = 17.522, p = .001).

A chi-square analysis of the different styles revealed significant differences favoring the female group in the use of the communicative style (chi-square = 26.778, p = .013). Results for the other styles did not show any differences between the two groups: the concrete style (chi-square = 20.405, p = .202), the analytical style (chi-square = 21.379, p = .125) and the authority-oriented style (chi-square = 14.343, p = .500). Table (1) shows the descriptive statistics for both groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning style and gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Gender and individual learning strategy preferences

The second research question explored the differences between the two groups in the use of individual learning strategies. Analysis of students’ individual preferred strategies showed that the five most popular strategies of the female group were:

1. “I like to learn by watching/listening to native speakers.” (M = 3.65)
2. “I like to learn many new words.” (M = 3.47)
3. “I like to practice sounds and pronunciation.” (M = 3.43)
4. “In class, I like to learn by conversation.” (M = 3.41)
5. “I like to go out with the class and practice English.” (M = 3.33)

As for the male group, the five most preferred strategies were:

1. “I like to learn by watching/listening to native speakers.” (M = 3.53)
2. “I like to learn many new words.” (M = 3.47)
3. “In class, I like to learn by conversation.” (M = 3.38)
4. “In class, I like to learn by pictures, films, videos.” (M = 3.28)
5. “I like to learn by suing English outside class in stores, etc.” (M = 3.28)

These findings show that the two groups shared three of their top five most popular strategies. Not surprisingly, these strategies were communicative in nature, which is consistent with our finding that students in both groups are predominantly communication oriented. A chi-square analysis of all individual strategies showed significant differences between the two groups only in the use of two strategies: “In class, I like to learn by games.” and “I like to go out with the
class and practice English.” In these two strategies, the mean scores were significantly higher for the female students than their male counterparts (chi-square = 16.395, p = .001, for first strategy; chi-square = 9.387, p = .025, for the second strategy).

4.3. Gender and patterns of language use
The third research question investigated the differences between the two groups in the amount of time each group spent on practicing English outside the classroom per week. The results reported in Table 2 show that while only 29.22% of female students spent less than 1 hour using English outside the classroom, 46.55% of the male student did so. Another noticeable difference between the two groups occurred in the 4-5 hours range. While about 12% of the male group spent between 4-5 hours a week using English, almost 37% of the female group did so. A chi-square analysis of these results revealed significant difference between the two groups (chi-square = 12.844, p = .005).

Table 2. Gender and amount of time spent using English outside the classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>chi-square</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 hour</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12.844</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 hours</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 hours</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 hours</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4. Gender and language perception
The fourth research question examined student’s perception of the importance of English. Results showed that almost 90% of the male respondents agreed that English was either ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ important for them. Similarly about 94% of the female participants rated English in the same way, see Table 3. A chi-square analysis did not reveal any differences between the two groups (chi square = 1.634, p = .442)

Table 3. Gender and importance of English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>chi-square</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely important</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.634</td>
<td>.442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.34%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last research question explored the relation between gender and students’ enjoyment of learning English. Data analysis showed that the almost 78% of the female group enjoyed English either ‘a lot’ or ‘a great deal’. In contrast, about 62% of the male group reported enjoying English in a similar way (see Table 4). A chi-square test revealed significant differences between the two groups (chi-square = 7.604, p = .05).

Table 4. Gender and enjoyment of learning English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>chi-square</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Discussion
In this study, female learners were significantly more communication oriented in their learning styles than their male counterparts. According to Willing (1994), communicative learners are likely to possess active personality and be field-independent cognitively. These learners tend to actively seek opportunities to maximize their own learning. Female students in the English Department seem to exhibit these two qualities, as they are generally autonomous, self-directed and active in the learning process. They seek opportunities to maximize their learning inside and outside the classroom, which makes them more effective language learners than male students. This is corroborated by students’ reported measure of their proficiency (GPA in English courses). While 61.7% of the female students reported a B-and-Above GPA, only 32.8% of the male group reported this level of proficiency. This finding concurs with results obtained by Wong and Nunan (2011), Gan (2004) and Willing (1994), showing that effective language learners are more involved in interactions for learning purposes that other learners. The result can also be explained in light of learning strategy research that shows that overall female students use more social strategies than male students, and they excel at building vast social networks (Khalil, 2005). Social strategies help learners to interact, communicate, cooperate, and empathize with others to maximize learning (Oxford, 1990).

The study showed that female students spent significantly more time practicing English outside the classroom than the male students. This result is consistent with their dominant communicative learning styles. Learners with this style are known to assume more control of the learning process and they are generally more active in seeking opportunities inside and outside the classroom to maximize their learning. Similarly, proficient learners, as pointed out by Wong and Nunan (2011), spend more time practicing English outside the classroom than the less proficient ones, and they are generally more autonomous than the other group. Given that the majority of students in the female group belong to the proficient group, it is expected for them to be self-driven and independent learners who spend a great deal of time practicing the language inside and outside the classroom.

Both groups give approximately equal importance to English. This can be understood in light of the fact that most of the students in both groups have joined the English Department at SQU to become English teachers. It is basically an easy pass to a reasonably good career after graduation, and as such they “place a high premium on facility in English” (Wong & Nunan, 2011, p. 153). Despite this finding, the female learners seemed to be enjoying learning the language more than the male group. This, as pointed out by Wong and Nunan (2011), could be an attitudinal issue. The male group did not seem to be as much involved and in the learning process as the other group. This might affect the level of enjoyment they experience in the learning process, which in turn can affect their overall progress in the language. This is well manifested in their GPAs in English courses, which were lower than those obtained by the female group.

Despite the noticeable differences between the two groups, it is worth noting, as the results show, the different styles are present in both groups to varying degrees. In fact, Reids (1995) argues that all styles, which exist on “wide continuaums”, could be present in every individual;
however, certain styles are more dominant than others. Thus, while it is not possible to change someone’s style, pedagogical interventions need to be style-neutral, and the language learner with the help of their teachers need to ‘stretch their styles’ (Christison, 2003). This means they are required to become more independent learners, take more responsibility of their learning, be more willing to adopt more effective learning strategies, and seize every opportunity to maximize learning inside and outside the classroom.

6. Conclusion
This study investigated the relationship between gender, on one hand, and learning styles, language perception and patterns of language use on the other. The data yielded by this study revealed significant differences between the male and female groups in their style orientations and patterns of language use. Overall, the results showed that the two groups differed in their orientations. Analysis of individual styles revealed that this difference is a result of the female group being more communication oriented than the other group. In general, communicative learners tend to be independent and active learners that makes them more effective learners, and thus are likely to excel in developing their proficiency in the target language (Oxford, 2001).

The two groups seemed to give the same degree of importance to learning English. This, however, was translated in the female group into extra effort at learning the language than the male group. They spent significantly more time practicing the language outside the classroom than the other group. This could have been the result of the higher levels of enjoyment of learning the language they exhibited. Enjoyment of language has probably driven them not to be content with what was offered in the classroom, so they sought learning opportunities outside the classroom.

From a pedagogical point of view, both teachers and learners have to change their perspectives about the learning/teaching process. The language teacher should be cognizant of his students preferred ways of learning and need to change his ways and approaches to suit their style preferences (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006). A one-suits-all strategy will not be very effective and is deemed to fail. While teachers cannot change students’ orientations, they can help students, especially the less proficient ones to develop varied strategies to enhance their own learning, and they can also add “a learning-how-to-learn dimension to the curriculum” (Wong & Nunan, 2011, p. 155).

Students, on the other hand, need to take more control of their own learning, not limiting themselves to what is offered by the teacher in the classroom. To excel in learning a new language, they need to be more active and self-driven learners who seek opportunities to maximize their own learning. In addition, they need to be more conscious of their own learning and try to adopt more effective learning strategies.

About the Author:
Dr. Radwan received his Doctorate in applied linguistics from Georgetown University in Washington, DC. He worked as an adjunct professor at George Mason University in Virginia, USA. He is currently an associate professor of Linguistics at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman, where he teaches courses in psycholinguistics, language acquisition, theoretical linguistics, and translation. Dr Radwan’s chief interests include psycholinguistics, second language acquisition, individual differences in EFL, attention and awareness in language learning, translation, and contrastive rhetoric.
References


The Influence of Kindergarten in Overcoming Diglossia among Primary School Pupils in Saudi Arabia

Munira Al-Azraqi
University of Dammam, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
Does diglossia, a natural linguistic phenomenon, present extraordinary challenges to children that are just starting school? The form of Arabic a child has to use in school is not usually the form that he/she uses at home. In school, books are written in standard Arabic, but at home the form used is typically a local dialect. Does this switch impede knowledge acquisition? In kindergarten, children encounter standard Arabic for the first time, and it is during this stage of a child’s education that he/she is prepared for primary school. This study examines the benefits derived from language learning in kindergarten to overcome diglossia among first-grade Arab primary school pupils. I examine whether the year a child spends in kindergarten helps him/her to overcome diglossia during the first year in primary school. A sample of 101 female pupils (ages 6-7) was randomly selected from the first grades of five primary schools in Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia. They were divided into two groups: the first subsample included pupils who had attended kindergarten for at least one year before primary school, while the second subsample included pupils that had not attended kindergarten before starting primary school. The results show that there was no significant difference found between the mean scores of children who attended and those who did not attend kindergarten in all four dimensions of the presented diglossia test and in the total score. In summary, children show a similar level of diglossia regardless of whether they attend kindergarten before starting primary school.

Keywords: Diglossia, Arabic, kindergarten, Saudi Arabia, education.
Introduction

Diglossia could be a troubling phenomenon, especially among children starting primary school. Arab children spend their early age at home using their parent’s dialect which can be different from the variety he finds at schools where teachers are, supposedly, using standard Arabic to deliver lessons. Knowledge is usually acquired through language, thus, when language skills are developed, children will acquire the knowledge easily and quickly.

Diglossia refers to the existence of two varieties of the same language used in different fields and functions (Ferguson, 1959). It can be summarized as the phenomenon through which the same language is presented in two forms. One form is considered to be more prestigious, such as the language used in literary works, lectures, and religious lectures. By contrast, the second form is considered to be simple, and it is typically composed of the colloquial dialects spoken among community members in their daily lives (at home, in the market, etc.). As many scholars have already noted, this simultaneous presence of standard and colloquial Arabic is found throughout the Arab world. Traditionally, there has consistently been a call to implement the use of standard Arabic in all situations, especially by educators; however, opponents claim that local dialects are easier for speakers to use, and that therefore countries should adopt local dialects as national languages (e.g., Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, etc.). Such supporters of divergent Arabic consequently renounce the standard language and consider it to be archaic and, at least to some degree, worthless (Al-Mousa, 1987; Anis, 1990; Cote, 2009). Diglossia has not been occurred in Egypt, Morocco, or Syria, mainly because the Arabic language has just recently been introduced in these countries (Al-Mousa, 1987; Anis, 1990). Diglossia is, however, found on the Arabian Peninsula, a region whose people use only Arabic. For example, Al-Azraqi (2005) discusses the general trend towards the pervasiveness of diglossia in Saudi society, particularly in Al-Ahsa in the east of the country (the context of the present study), and notes its widespread acceptance by local communities. Indeed, 86% of the participants routinely use a colloquial dialect when speaking within the family. Although this study identifies and explicates the case of diglossia, it does not suggest methods for overcoming the challenges that this linguistic phenomenon poses among speakers.

Some studies have found that diglossia adversely affects Arabic language acquisition. According to Ayari (1996), diglossia hinders Arab children from acquiring reading skills because first-grade pupils are asked to study in standard Arabic, which differs from the colloquial language used at home. Ayari concludes that Arab children do not use the standard language before starting school, suggesting that children in the first grade view standard Arabic as a quasi-second language. What this means, then, is that children are required to read and write in two languages simultaneously. But Ayari adds that early exposure to the standard language during pre-school helps children overcome this problem. Haddad (2004) also confirms that the huge gap between dialectical and standard Arabic adversely affects melodic awareness and reading and writing skills, especially for children who face difficulties reading and writing in general.

Building from Ayari and Haddad, the present study examines the benefits derived from language learning in kindergarten (for children aged 4 to 6 years) to overcome diglossia among first-grade primary school pupils. The findings of this study contribute to the body of knowledge on this topic for the following three reasons. First, they guide educators on the importance of teaching solid linguistic skills to kindergarten children in order to facilitate children’s language transition. Second, they help families recognize the potentially negative educational impact of
using a local dialect at home. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, these findings call attention to the importance

Language Acquisition and the Importance of Kindergarten

Researchers have examined the necessary platforms of a child’s development and growth, including language development. Language is the essence of mental processes and the most complex aspect acquired by humans. Although previous evidence on the way children acquire language is inconclusive, a number of theories have been proposed to explain it, including behavioral theory, innate theory, and knowledge theory (see Skinner, 1957; Chomsky, 1959; Lenneberg, 1964, 1967; Reutzel, 1997).

Lenneberg (1967) finds that the ability of a child to acquire language diminishes after the age of six. At this point, brain programming changes in biological terms from language learning to knowledge learning. The author also states that maturational constraints restrict the time within which a first language can be acquired. Because first-language acquisition relies on neuroplasticity, if language acquisition does not occur by puberty, full mastery cannot be achieved. This is known as the “critical period hypothesis”. The critical period hypothesis was developed further by Pinker (1994), who proposed that language acquisition is certain during childhood, gradually endangered until puberty ends, and is doubtful thereafter.

This theory has often been extended to a critical period for second-language acquisition, although this is much less widely accepted, see Singleton and Lengyel (1995) While the window for learning a second language never completely closes, certain linguistic characteristics seem more affected by the age of the learner than others. For example, adult second-language learners nearly always retain an immediately identifiable foreign accent, including some who display perfect grammar (Oyama, 1976). Some writers have suggested a younger critical age for learning phonology than for syntax.

The difficulty faced by Arab children in relation to diglossia is that they are not regularly exposed to standard Arabic; instead, they acquire and use the local dialect until the age of 5 or 6. This might cause difficulty for them when they start school. If Arab children cannot overcome this difficulty before the age of six, learning standard Arabic will become equivalent to learning a second language, rather than being considered the acquisition of the mother tongue. In Saudi Arabia, where compulsory education for a child begins at six, it is no overstatement to say that the child would find difficulty in absorbing much of the standard vocabulary and structures, which, in turn, could delay the acquisition of knowledge. Although linguists and educators are aware of this issue, they are trapped in the dilemma of finding a solution to the linguistic dimension faced by Arab children when starting school. Learning a language after the age of six requires greater effort by the child because the process at this stage is considered to be learning rather than acquisition (Al-Qasimi, 2007).

History of Kindergartens in Saudi Arabia

Before discussing the role of kindergartens in Saudi Arabia, we should first refer to the definition of kindergartens and their history around the world. Froebel established his Play and Activity Institute in 1837 in Germany, which he termed “kindergarten” in 1840. From that point onwards, kindergartens spread to surrounding countries and then across Europe and around the world. For instance, in the United States, the first kindergarten was established in 1855 in Watertown, Massachusetts, and the concept spread quickly, reaching 4500 establishments by 1900 (Faraj, 2009).
Al-Ghamdi & Abdul Jawad (2005) confirms that kindergartens in Saudi Arabia, as in many other countries around the world, are not considered to be part of the formal education hierarchy, although they are administered by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Services. In other words, education is voluntary and not necessary for a child’s passage into the first year of primary school.

The private sector in Saudi Arabia was the first to focus on establishing kindergartens, and was solely responsible for the kindergartens in Saudi Arabia until 1385 H/1966, when the Ministry of Education assumed responsibility for them. The Ministry opened kindergartens in Riyadh in 1386 H/1967, followed by two kindergartens in the Eastern Province the following year. In 1399/1979, the Ministry of Education formulated a set of educational objectives to be reached in kindergarten. Although still not mandatory, the importance and necessity of this stage were thus further underlined (Faraj, 2009). It also continued to strengthen this private–public partnership until 1400 H/1980, when it was announced that all kindergartens would be affiliated to the General Presidency for Girls’ Education, which aimed to establish 350 kindergartens by 1424 H/2004. (Al-Ghamdi & Abdul Jawad, 2005; Faraj, 2009).

From 1423 H/2003, 211 kindergartens were affiliated with the Cooperation Department in the Ministry of Social Affairs, while the Ministry of Defense and Aviation supervised eight kindergartens affiliated with schools for their employees. The National Guard also oversaw twelve subsidiary kindergartens. Moreover, the statistics from 1425–1426 H/2005–2006 indicates that the overall number of kindergartens in Saudi Arabia had reached 1320 (Faraj, 2009).

Although the curricula used in kindergartens differ by country, the fundamental principle of education is usually through games, activities, songs, and stories, because playing is as essential for a child as sleeping and eating. The current curriculum in kindergartens in Saudi Arabia is based on so-called educational units. It has passed through many stages, beginning with teachers' and supervisors’ efforts when shaping the formation of the first kindergartens and ending with the development of the current curriculum on which the Presidency for Girls’ Education has been working since 1408 H/1987, which focuses specifically on self-learning (Faraj, 2009).

Literature Review

Among the studies to have examined the effect of diglossia on the acquisition of language skills in the Arab world, the seminal work by Haddad (2003, 2004, 2005, 2007) and Haddad and Levina (2008) in local schools in Palestine studied the contrast between the use of standard and dialectical language and assessed its impact on pupils’ language acquisition. The authors concluded that this linguistic dimension results in a difficulty in language learning and acquisition. The study by Ayari (1996) goes further by linking diglossia in the Arab community with illiteracy, which, according to a 1985 UNESCO report, reached 56.5% in the Arab world. Likewise, Maamouri (1998) reports the serious lack of linguistic competency in the Arab world and its negative impact on educational attainment and societal progress. The author stresses the need to develop a linguistic plan to overcome this difficulty and thus improve standards of education and living. Al-Dannan (2000) attempts to help to resolve this dilemma. Indeed, his project to encourage the use of standard Arabic in kindergartens in Kuwait, Syria, and other Arab countries led to a successful result (Al-Dannan, 2000).

Mohammed’s (2006) study examines the relationship between the lack of certain pre-academic skills in kindergarten children (e.g., identifying numbers, letters, shapes, and colours,
as well as awareness or phonological perception) and their willingness to attend school. The study finds a positive relationship between pre-academic skills and willingness to attend school. Moreover, the ability of kindergarten children to identify letters, numbers, and shapes serves as the best predictor of school readiness.

Similarly, Isabella et al. (1998) note the importance of providing young children with verbal, language, cognitive, sensory, and mental signals. They find that linguistic development is directly proportional to the mother’s attachment behaviours as represented by speech and understanding, and to her behaviour in referring to and naming things and asking the child what he/she knows, leading to the development of the child’s discussion, exploration, signaling, and simulation competences.

Al-Qasimi (2007) believes that that the means of communication can play a significant and positive role in a preschool-aged child’s standard Arabic language acquisition; television, for example, where programs may be broadcast in standard Arabic rather than the local dialect. Moreover, after starting school, children should continue to be encouraged in different ways to speak standard Arabic in order to build on what they have already learned.

Education policymakers in the Arab world must recognize the importance of language learning at the kindergarten stage, however. Kindergartens can support the child linguistically, in preparation for the transition to primary school.

The Present Study

As mentioned earlier, the present study examines whether the year that the child spends in the kindergarten benefits him/her to overcome diglossia. Based on the foregoing, a test was formulated to test the following two hypotheses in the present study:

H1: Diglossia is demonstrated among first-grade primary school pupils.

H2: There is a relationship between the degree of diglossia and attendance at kindergarten.

Methodology

A sample of 101 female pupils (aged between 6 and 7 years) was randomly selected from the first grades of several primary schools. The sample was divided into two groups. The first subsample included pupils who had attended kindergarten for at least one year before the primary grade, while the second subsample included pupils that had not attended kindergarten before starting school. The following five kindergartens in Al-Ahsa were used: Al-Tuwaitheer Modern Kindergarten, Al Taraf Kindergarten, Al Kifah Kindergarten, Al Anjal Kindergarten, and the Fifth Kindergarten in Hofuf. These kindergartens were representative of the different social, economic, and cultural levels in the study region.

The participants were not subjected to any kind of training. Further, children were not forced to adhere to any linguistic program, and only the usual program approved by the Ministry of Education for the kindergarten stage was used. In the next step, an IQ test prepared by Sara (1988) was applied to ensure that the sample was devoid of any individual below the normal level of intelligence. Basic information was then collected about the pupils’ social lives and family backgrounds to ensure the representativeness of the sample.

For data collection, I relied on the personal observations of participants when carrying out the diglossia test. The diglossia test was composed of three parts: (a) naming objects, (b) articulating sounds, and (c) narrating (which included ordering images and forming sentences).

1 The researcher is indebted for Dr. Safa Al-Buhairy and her fieldworkers for their efforts and cooperation during the collection of the data and for her suggestions and help in putting the tests.
In this test, linguistic differences between the two subsamples were noted when pronouncing certain language sounds and using nouns incompatible with the standard language. The formulation of this test relied on the findings of Al-Azraqi (2005), Haddad (2003, 2004, 2005, 2007), Maamouri (1998), and Ayari (1996).

After testing the study sample for the first time, the diglossia test was modified to alter certain ambiguous images and retested using the same participants two weeks after the first application. Table 1 shows the correlation coefficients between the first and second applications. These correlation coefficients were based on each test score and the total score for the dimension to which that question belonged.

**Table 1. Correlation coefficients between the first and second applications of the diglossia test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naming objects</td>
<td>0.678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulating sounds</td>
<td>0.703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordering images</td>
<td>0.659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming sentences</td>
<td>0.685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>0.736</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The correlation coefficients between the first and second applications were significant at the 1% level, confirming the stability of the test. The correlation coefficients between each dimension of the scale and the total scale score were also calculated for the first subsample only, and ranged between 0.391 and 0.584 at the 1% significance level.

**Results**

To test H1, the means, standard deviations (SDs), and percentages for the responses to the diglossia test were calculated, as presented in Table 2. To calculate the percentage, the mean score was divided by the maximum score for that dimension.

**Table 2. Responses to the diglossia test by participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Maximum score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naming objects</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2.629</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulating sounds</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.19</td>
<td>3.005</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordering images</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.292</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming sentences</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.813</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>58</strong></td>
<td><strong>20.32</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.747</strong></td>
<td><strong>35%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that the percentage of responses to all parts of the test was very low, ranging between 22.2% and 30.4%. Likewise, the response to the scale as a whole was only 35%, suggesting that the majority of the children sampled exhibit diglossia, except for the articulating sounds dimension (58.5%).
To test H2, a t-test was applied to independent groups in order to compare the mean scores of both subsamples, as illustrated in Table 3.

**Table 3. Differences between the mean scores of both subsamples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Attended kindergarten (N=33)</th>
<th>Did not attend kindergarten. (N=71)</th>
<th>t-test score</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naming objects</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>2.195</td>
<td>7.51</td>
<td>2.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulating sounds</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td>2.919</td>
<td>8.32</td>
<td>3.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordering images</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.273</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming sentences</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>3.299</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19.61</td>
<td>6.638</td>
<td>20.65</td>
<td>6.818</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that there are no significant differences between the mean scores of the two subsamples in all dimensions of the diglossia test as well as in the total score. Figure 1 illustrates the differences between the mean scores of the two subsamples.

**Figure 1. Differences between the mean scores of the two subsamples**
Conclusions and Recommendations

It is well known that language grows, changes, and develops throughout an individual’s lifetime (Wardhaugh, 1992). Diglossia is a natural linguistic phenomenon that occurs when a language has a long history and its users continue to expand geographically. Manifold forms of Arabic exist and these are used in a range of different situations. However, moving between these forms, especially between standard Arabic and regional dialects, can cause difficulties for young children. This paper examined whether the language learning programs in kindergarten prepare children to move from the form of language used at home to that used at school (i.e., standard Arabic).

The results of the present study show that current language learning programs at kindergarten are insufficient to help children overcome diglossia. No significant differences were found between the mean scores of children who attended and those who did not attend kindergartens in all four dimensions of the presented diglossia test and in the total score. In summary, children show a similar level of diglossia regardless of whether they attend kindergarten before starting school.

These results suggest that the linguistic learning programs in kindergartens are not well suited to bridge the gap between standard Arabic and the child’s local dialect. In general, it seems that it is a lack of awareness of diglossia that causes this matter.

Policymakers should thus develop linguistic plans in order to overcome the negative influence of diglossia, especially when children start primary school. In terms of practical recommendations, policymakers should first review and modify the content of the language courses offered in kindergarten. Second, they might consider the effectiveness of government plans to support the use of standard Arabic as a modern language. Finally, they should educate families to help their children and encourage them to read and use standard Arabic. This study did not examine the linguistic contents used in the kindergarten under study neither watch the classes when running. This was not the focus of the current study, but reviewing the contents of the lessons and the methods that are usually used might clarify why children do not benefit from this stage regarding using standard Arabic.

About the Author:

Munira Al-Azraqi is an associate professor of linguistics at University of Dammam, Saudi Arabia. She received her PhD. in 1998 from University of Durham, UK. She has 14 published papers in the field of dialectology and sociolinguistics. She is currently interested in endangered languages. She has held various leadership positions in King Faisal University. and Dammam University.

References

The Influence of Kindergarten in Overcoming Diglossia


Beyond Traditional Testing: Exploring the Use of Computerized Dynamic Assessment to Improve EFL Learners’ Reading

Adeline Teo
Department of English Language and Literature
Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan

Abstract
The present study implemented a computerized dynamic assessment (CDA) program in EFL classes at a university in Taiwan. Unlike a traditional assessment, the CDA program provided learners with pre-programmed mediation during assessment. This study examined the effects of the CDA program in enhancing Taiwanese college EFL students’ reading skills. The participants in this study were 137 non-English major students, who were divided into a control and an experimental group. The procedure included a pre-test, CDA intervention phase, and a post-test. The three reading skills investigated in the study were identifying main ideas (FMI), using contextual clues (CC), and making inferences (MI). The research questions included: (1) Is there a significant difference in the participants’ reading skills between and within the control and experimental groups before and after the CDA program? and (2) What is the frequency of the computerized mediation usage in the intervention phase? Inferential and descriptive statistics were used to answer the research questions. The findings showed that the experimental group improved more significantly than the control group in FMI, MI, and overall reading skills. However, the CDA program did not have a significant impact on the participants’ CC skill in either group. The improvement in the FMI and MI skills is believed to be caused by the design of the computerized mediation. Also, in the FMI and MI tasks, the frequency of mediation usage decreased gradually and consistently throughout the intervention sessions. Furthermore, although the participants’ in both groups showed significant progress in their FMI skill, the experimental group improved more due to the CDA intervention.

Keywords: computerized dynamic assessment, EFL reading, mediation, MLE, ZPD
Introduction

In a traditional assessment, when a teacher determines how well her students understood the materials they had learned in class, she usually gives them a test within a given time period. Then, she grades the test while the students wait to be informed of the results. Students usually perform this test-taking activity individually. Feuerstein, Feuerstein, and Falik (2010) called this type of test “static assessment” because it assumes that individuals are born with a certain intelligence that remains fixed throughout life. Due to the static nature of the traditional assessment, no interaction between the teacher and the students is encouraged during the assessment process. The teacher is not expected to provide any instructions to the students during the test. The static nature of language assessments, according to Poehner (2008), has caused frustration among many L2 teachers who felt that the assessment is distinct from the objectives of teaching. Lantolf and Poehner (2004) also commented that static language assessment is not sufficient to evaluate a student’s ability anymore because it cannot detect the cause of the learner’s weakness in his ability. Furthermore, static assessments are product-oriented, rather than process-oriented. Lantolf and Poehner thus proposed the use of dynamic assessment (DA) and claimed that without the interaction between the examiner and the test-taker during an assessment, a teacher can easily miss out on the learners’ dynamic and modifiable learning abilities.

Literature Background

Theoretical framework

The central theoretical framework of dynamic assessment (DA) is grounded in the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in Vygotsky’s (1978) Sociocultural Theory, and Feuerstein’s (1979) Mediated Learning Experience (MLE). Vygotsky used ZPD to elaborate his insights on the relationship between development and instruction. He defined ZPD as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). Vygotsky claimed that when it comes to promoting one’s learning ability, a novice needs the guidance of a more capable counterpart. The responsibility of this higher-level counterpart is to provide constructive mediations, or scaffolding, to the learner. New cognitive functions and learning abilities originate within this interpersonal interaction, and later they are internalized and transformed to become the student’s inner cognitive processes. Thus, Vygotsky emphasized that instruction/mediation should lead to development because a learner’s internalization of knowledge takes place with the help of mediation provided by a more capable counterpart. This learning ability may serve as a better predictor of the students’ educational needs than the static scores indicated in a static assessment.

The second framework that forms dynamic assessment (DA) is the Mediated Learning Environment (MLE) construct, developed by Feuerstein, Rand and Hoffman (1979). Feuerstein et al. pinpointed the main difference between “static” and “dynamic” assessment by stating that traditional assessment is static in nature because it is conducted under the assumption that learners’ performances are inflexible and unchangeable. The key component in MLE is mediation. Feuerstein et al. claimed that individuals have the potential to change and are modifiable if provided with an appropriately-mediated learning environment. Through mediated learning, learners can change the way they think and achieve the purpose of cognitive modifiability. Also, learners will develop efficient thinking skills that are necessary to become
autonomous and independent in their learning process. In a properly-mediated learning environment, a mediator is expected to attend to the learner’s responsiveness to the mediations and then modify the mediations according to the learner’s needs. The model provided by the mediator then enables the learner to move beyond his current capacities. The learner’s cognitive ability will eventually change with the assistance of effective mediations.

**Background and previous studies of computerized dynamic assessment (CDA)**

A few known CDA studies were conducted in the field of education. One was conducted by Jacobs (2001) who investigated the ability of a CDA program called KIDTALK in identifying potential language disorders in preschoolers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Jacobs investigated whether the CDA training and scoring would make a difference in the information gathered about the individual children’s performance. Tzuriel and Shamir (2002) designed a CDA procedure for the assessment of kindergarten children’s seriation thinking abilities related to children’s mathematical skills. Another study was conducted by Guthke and Beckmann (2000). They developed computerized versions of the Leipzig Lerntest (LLT) to provide a series of training tasks to help young learners master the skills in classifying objects based on various characteristics such as the objects’ forms, sizes, and colors. If learners failed an item, the program immediately took them to a set of training tasks.

In the ESL/EFL dynamic assessment (DA) discipline, most of the known research has been conducted in a human-to-human and one-on-one interactionist DA approach format (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004; Lin, 2009; Kozulin & Garb, 2002, 2004; Poehner, 2007, 2008; Teo, 2012). Poehner (2008), a prolific scholar in EFL dynamic assessment research, claimed that research in computerized dynamic assessment (CDA) is scarce and he highly recommended future researchers to explore how technology can be used effectively to promote the implementation of dynamic assessment. In the past, there were some concerns about the use of technology in language assessment, such as learners’ unfamiliarity with using computer-delivered assessment, in L2 or EFL language testing (Chalhoub-Deville, 2001). This concern may be taken lightly nowadays because researchers found that since about a decade ago, computers have become increasingly prevalent, not only in language education but also in language assessment (He & Tynms, 2005). For example, Taylor, Jamieson, Eignor, and Kirsch (1998) reported in their study that more than 80% of computer-based TOEFL takers were familiar with the use of computers. They also found that lack of experience in using computers did not show adverse effects on the test results. A study conducted by Sims (2010), which involved 210 Taiwanese freshmen, has further supported Taylor et al.’s study. This study compared the effects of paper and computer-delivered reading exams in Taiwan, and the results indicated that there were no significant differences in the measurements of reading comprehension between the two platforms, except that the participants completed the computer-delivered reading exams faster than the paper-delivered ones. Both methods were proven to be equally valid for assigning English reading comprehension tasks to university students in Taiwan. Sims further recommended teachers, testing services, and educational programs to consider adapting reading tests to a computer platform without being overly concerned that students will be disadvantaged by taking a computerized reading test.

Since the 1990s some researchers have also recommended the use of technology to promote Vygotsky’s concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). For example, Dixon-Krauss (1996) suggested that educators should take advantage of technological tools available to realize Vygotsky’s vision of designing lessons in a way that facilitates instruction that is slightly ahead of the learner’s development. Crook (1991) also claimed that computers could act much
like a human partner or classroom teacher within the ZPD because technology is capable of making the computerized tool pertinent to the mediation periods associated with internalization. In other words, CDA may be used effectively to compensate for the shortcoming of human DA, and act as the “more competent peers” by providing the learners with mediated feedback to enhance their ZPD.

One study found on using CDA on EFL reading was conducted by Pishghadam, Barabadi, and Kamrood (2011). They used an interventionist approach to develop a C-DA program and investigated its effect on high and low Iranian EFL achievers’ reading comprehension skills. The main shortcoming of this study is its brief and over-simplified mediation, which prevents one from examining closely the significant role of mediation in ZPD as suggested by Vygotsky. Their mediation began by simply indicating whether the participant’s answer was right or wrong. The second level of mediation requested the participant to choose a key word in the question, without instructing them “how” to look for the key word. The third level of mediation pointed one key word to the participant, and the fourth level provided another key word. The fifth/final level of mediation provided the participants with the correct answer directly without further explanation. Overall, what is found lacking in the mediation design is the detailed and step-by-step explanation that could provide the participants with in-depth mediation that they need to move beyond their current level. A recent CDA study was conducted by Teo (2012) who investigated the effects of CDA in EFL learners’ inferential reading skill and their metacognition. The limitation of the research is that it was a small-scale within group study that compared the same learners’ performance before and after receiving computerized mediation. It thus was not possible to determine whether the learners’ improvement was a result of natural progress due to passing of time or the positive impact of the CDA program. Also, Teo’s research only focused on examining one type of reading skill, which was the learners’ inferential reading. The present study attempted to overcome the limitation of the previous CDA studies in EFL research described above and gain more comprehensive insights on EFL reading discipline.

The Present Study

To help fully understand the impact of mediation in CDA, the researcher in the present study created a more detailed CDA program than in Pishghadam, Barabadi, and Kamrood’s study. The mediation adapted the interventionist approach, which means that the mediation was scripted beforehand and progressed gradually from implicit to explicit levels with the intention of using the mediation to help learners move beyond their current level. The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of the CDA program in promoting Taiwanese EFL learners’ reading skills in finding main ideas, using contextual clues, and making inferences. Since many Taiwanese college EFL teachers are challenged by larger class sizes, heavy workloads, and time constraints, having one-on-one mediational DA becomes unrealistic. The present study is thus unique in the way that the CDA program provided learners with pre-programmed mediation without having to rely on one-on-one or group human mediation to enhance Taiwanese college EFL learners’ reading skills. It is believed to help solve the large class size and time constraint problems.

Research Questions

Between group

Research question 1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the overall pre- and post-test scores between the control and experimental groups?
Research question 2: Is there a statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-test scores for each of the three reading skills (finding main ideas, using contextual clues to predict the meaning of vocabulary words, and making inferences) between the control and experimental groups?

Within group
Research question 3: Is there a statistically significant difference in the overall pre- and post-test scores within the experimental group and within the control group?

Research question 4: Is there a statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-test scores for each of the three reading skills (finding main ideas, using contextual clues to predict the meaning of vocabulary words, and making inferences) within the experimental group and within the control group?

Research question 5: What is the frequency of the computerized mediation usage in the intervention phase?

Method
Method designs
The research method design in the study took the form of pre-test–CDA intervention–post-test. This means that all the participants first took a static test as a pre-test where no mediation was provided. Then, in the intervention phase, the computerized mediation was provided for the participants in the experimental group through the computerized dynamic assessment (CDA) program. Meanwhile, the participants in the control group worked on the CDA program reading activity without computerized mediation. Once they submitted their answer to each question, they would be informed whether their answer was correct. Afterward, each participant from both groups took the static post-test. This design allowed the researcher to compare the participants’ performance with and without the mediation intervention. The reading passages used throughout the study were adopted from past TOEFL samples.

In the intervention phase, the Viewlet software was used to implement the CDA program. The CDA program, serving the purpose of unifying assessment and instruction as a single development-oriented activity, involved preprogrammed mediation for the participants to use as guidance and support. With the provision of mediation, the CDA program was dynamic and interactive in nature because it allowed the participants to learn from their errors in the process. The mediation of the pre-test–intervention–post-test sequence was a teaching phase intended to strengthen the participants’ reading strategies. The computerized mediation was organized in a way that it progressed from implicit to explicit level. Flowcharts of the CDA program for each of the three types of reading skills are shown in Appendixes 1, 2, and 3.

Participants and setting
The study was conducted at a university in Taiwan. The participants were 137 EFL college freshmen who were enrolled in a required two-semester course titled “Freshman English for Non-English Major Students” (FENEMS). Their ages were 18 to 20. FENEMS was held two hours weekly for eighteen weeks each semester. At the beginning of the first semester, the participants were assigned to two different intermediate-level FENEMS classes by the university’s General Education Center based on their scores in the English subject of the Taiwanese national college entrance exam. Their scores ranged from 58 to 88 out of 100. Then, based on a random drawing, these two classes were assigned by the researcher into a control group and an experimental group. There were 64 participants in the control group and 73 in the experimental group. None of the participants had experienced CDA prior to the present study.
The CDA program took place in a computer lab at the university where each participant had his own computer and could get access to the Internet to work individually on the CDA program.

**Prior to implementation of study**

To ensure that appropriate reading passages and questions were selected for the pre-tests, post-tests, and the mediated sessions, the following evaluation process was conducted before the study began.

1. Two college reading instructors reviewed and selected appropriate previous years’ TOEFL reading passages and reading questions for the study. They compared test specifications and test content, and then chose the reading passages and questions they believed were appropriate reading materials for the participants. When the two reading instructors did not agree with each other, a third reader was involved in making a decision. In the end, 7 reading passages and 21 questions were chosen for the pre-test and the post-test individually. Three reading passages and three questions were selected for the weekly mediated sessions.

2. A pilot test was implemented with 30 participants. These pilot test-takers had a similar reading level as the participants of the actual study, but were not selected for the study.

3. Afterwards, the researcher computed the correlation between the pre- and post-tests scores. Pearson Product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the strength of the relationships between pre- and post-tests variables. The r value was 0.873, which indicated a high correlation between these two tests.

4. Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency, was used to test the reliability of each of the three types of questions in the pre-test and post-test taken by the 30 pilot test-takers mentioned above. Table 1 shows that the 3 types of reading items achieved satisfactory internal consistency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Question Items</th>
<th>Pre-test Alpha</th>
<th>Post-test Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding Main Ideas (FMI)</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual Clues (CC)</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Inferences (MI)</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. After the reading passages and questions were selected, the same reading instructors evaluated the mediation designed for each reading passage that were used for the mediated sessions. The procedure was the same as in Step 1 described above.

6. Prior to the actual study, a pre-test was given to both control and experimental groups to ensure that they were at a similar reading proficiency level. There were 7 reading passages in the pre-test. Each reading passage had 3 questions. Altogether, there were 7 FMI questions, 7 CC questions, and 7 MI questions. After the pre-test, an independent t-test was used to determine whether the scores were significantly different between the two groups. The pre-test results are shown in Table 2. The p-value is larger than 0.05 in the participants’ overall test and in each reading skill. No significant differences were found in the overall pre-test scores and their scores in each reading skill. Both groups were at equivalent reading levels in the pre-test.

**Table 2. Pre-test overall and each reading skill performance**
Present study’s implementation timeline

Week 1
The participants took a pre-test. The procedure was described in Step 6 above.

Week 2 to Week 9
The participants took 8 mediation tests, one weekly. Each mediation test had 3 reading passages. Each passage had 1 question. Altogether there were 1 FMI question, 1CC question, and 1 MI question. So, in the 8-week mediation phase, the participants completed 24 reading passages, and went through 8 mediation treatments for each type of reading skill. There was no time limit for each mediated session because the primary purpose of the mediation stage was to provide the participants with as much in-depth reading strategies intervention as needed.

From Week 2 through Week 9, the participants in the control and experimental groups were also given a “Running Record” (RR) to record their learning. Each participant was asked to report on their use of reading strategies during the reading activities, and supply concrete self-selected evidence of their reading abilities. The RR served two purposes. First, it allowed the participants to get used to thinking about their learning process (metacognition) while working on the CDA program. Secondly, RR helped reduce the chance that the participants might randomly choose an answer from the multiple choices given in the CDA program and then move on to the next question. When the participants were requested to record their thinking processes, they had to slow down and justify their answer each time before selecting their answer from the options provided in the CDA program.

Week 10
The participants took a post-test. The level and format of the post-test was equivalent to the pre-test, which had 7 reading passages with 3 questions in each reading passage. Altogether, there were 7 FMI questions, 7 CC questions, and 7 MI questions.

Mediation Designs
The CDA program consisted of three specific mechanisms of mediation suggested by Aljaafreh & Lantolf (1994). First, the intervention was graduated, starting at an implicit level and progressively becoming more specific until the appropriate level is reached. In this way, the mediator will be able to estimate the minimum level of guidance the learners need. Secondly, the mediation was contingent. For each reading passage in the CDA program, mediation was presented to the learners when they failed to provide the correct answer. Meanwhile, the computerized mediation ended automatically when the learners found the correct answer to the question. Third, the continuous assessment process was conducted in an interactive manner, which allowed the learners to interact with and respond to the preprogrammed computerized intervention.

Also, the CDA program was designed with consideration for usability, flexibility, and dynamism. Each page of the program incorporated effective web design principles. The tool that was used to develop this CDA program is Viewlet software. This software uses Adobe Flash...
technology and allows educators to create interactive programs that can be saved as executable files and accessed through a web browser on the Internet. The CDA program stored the participants’ responses and recorded the number of incorrect responses and the mediation that were activated. This program provided the dynamic mediation to the participants of the study by allowing them to receive instruction while being assessed. Meanwhile, it allowed the researcher to analyze the reading strategies the participants used while trying to answer the questions.

The CDA program included reading passages, reading comprehension questions, and computerized mediation which followed each reading question. The mediation was presented in a structured manner. For example, the participants first read a reading passage shown on the computer screen. Afterward, they were required to answer the reading comprehension questions. If their answers were incorrect, they would be provided with the preprogrammed mediation in numerical order, namely Mediations Level 1, 2, 3, and 4, until they obtained the correct answer to each question. When they answered a question incorrectly, they were given up to three chances to work on the same question. Each successive mediation provided more detailed guidance, progressing from implicit to explicit feedback. If the participants were unable to answer the question correctly after the third attempt, they would move on to a new question. Each participant was allowed to work at his own pace.

The content of the four mediation levels in the CDA program is described in detail below:

Level 1: It provides the most implicit mediation, focusing on using a general question to guide the learners toward the direction where the answer could possibly be. (e.g., In the passage, it seems like the author is trying to arouse our interest on a certain issue. What is it?)

For inferential questions, Level 1 mediation involves helping learners to understand the main idea of the passage if their first attempt to answer the question was incorrect.

Level 2: It provides more explicit mediation than the one in Level 1. Hints are narrowed down to guide the learners to focus on certain paragraphs, or sentences while looking for the correct answer. (e.g., Pay attention to the 3rd sentence through the last sentence. What is the point the author was trying to make here?)

Level 3: It provides very explicit, context-specific mediation, focusing on ONE sentence, phrase, or word. The goal is to pinpoint how the specific information can lead the learners to the correct answer. (e.g., What does the word “critical” in the 3rd sentence tell you how the author felt about the air pollution problem?)

Level 4: At this level the correct answer is provided followed by a step-by-step explanation. When a learner arrives at this stage, it usually shows that he is still far from fully mastering the reading strategy required to understand the concept tested.

Appendixes 1, 2, and 3 show the flowcharts of the CDA procedure. A website http://tinyurl.com/btwy6s2 was also created to show three samples adapted from the present study.

Results

Between group

Research question 1: Is there a statistically significant difference in the overall pre- and post-test scores between the control and experimental groups?

An independent t-test was used to compare the post-test results of the experimental group and of the control group to determine whether there were statistical differences. Table 2 shown earlier indicates that both control and experimental groups had no significant difference in their
reading levels in the pre-test, prior to the intervention phase. However, as shown in Table 3, the post-test \( p \)-value was 0.00, which indicates that the experimental group’s overall score in the post-test (M=73.64, SD=14.21) is significantly higher than the control group’s overall score (M=58.28, SD=13.64).

### Table 3. Post-test overall and each reading skill performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Overall M (SD)</th>
<th>FMI M (SD)</th>
<th>CC M (SD)</th>
<th>MI M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control (N=64)</td>
<td>58.28 (13.64)</td>
<td>18.64 (7.04)</td>
<td>17.66 (7.68)</td>
<td>21.13 (7.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental (N=73)</td>
<td>73.64 (14.21)</td>
<td>24.85 (6.93)</td>
<td>21.93 (8.14)</td>
<td>27.07 (5.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( P )-value</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. M=mean; SD=standard deviation*

Research question 2: Is there a statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-test scores for each of the three reading skills (FMI, CC, and MI) between the control and experimental groups?

The control and experimental groups had no significant difference in each of their reading skills in the pre-test. However, Table 3 shows that the \( p \)-values for the control and experimental groups’ post-test scores for each reading skill are less than 0.05. The participants in the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group in FMI, CC, and MI in the post-test.

**Within group**

Research question 3: Is there a statistically significant difference in the overall pre- and post-test scores within the experimental group and within the control group?

Research question 4: Is there a statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-test scores for each of the three reading skills (FMI, CC, and MI) within the experimental group and within the control group?

A paired samples t-test was used to compare the pre- and post-test results of the experimental group and the control group. Table 4 shows that the \( p \)-values for the overall, FMI, and MI are smaller than 0.05. This indicates that the difference between pre- and post-test scores for the experimental group in these three categories is significant. The only exception is the CC skill because the \( p \)-value was greater than 0.05.

### Table 4. Experimental group’s pre and post-test scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental Group (N=73)</th>
<th>Overall M (SD)</th>
<th>FMI M (SD)</th>
<th>CC M (SD)</th>
<th>MI M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>56.97 (18.87)</td>
<td>16.29 (8.89)</td>
<td>19.84 (7.55)</td>
<td>20.74 (10.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>73.64 (14.21)</td>
<td>24.85 (6.93)</td>
<td>21.93 (8.14)</td>
<td>27.07 (5.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( P )-value</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. M=mean; SD=standard deviation*

In terms of the control group’s performance, Table 5 shows that the \( p \)-values for the overall, CC, and MI were greater than 0.05. This indicates no significant difference in the participants’ performance in their pre- and post-tests in these three skills. The exception is the FMI skill, which shows a \( p \)-value of 0.009 and indicates a significant improvement in the post-test.

### Table 5. Control group’s pre and post-test scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Group (N=64)</th>
<th>Overall M (SD)</th>
<th>FMI M (SD)</th>
<th>CC M (SD)</th>
<th>MI M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( P )-value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Beyond Traditional Testing: Exploring the Use of Computerized Mediation

Research question 5: What is the frequency of the computerized mediation usage in the intervention phase?

Each time when a participant used mediation during the intervention phase in the study, it was recorded. Then, the total number of participants who used the mediation in each session was converted into a percentage. The percentage figure was calculated based on the number of mediation users divided by the total number of participants in the experimental group, and then multiplied by 100. The procedure was applied to each mediation level for each type of reading skill. The descriptive statistics of the data was examined for the varying frequencies in which the participants benefitted from the mediation when answering the reading questions. Since the four-level mediation provided a wide range of reading strategies, varying from using general guidelines to relying on specific clues, the frequency change in the use of mediation helped to identify the development of the participants’ reading skills during the computerized dynamic assessment. Thus, the data were used to compare the impact of the preprogrammed computerized mediation at different levels. Table 6 lists the descriptive data of the number of the participants who used mediation in each session, and the frequency of the mediation usage at each level and session throughout the intervention phase.

Table 6. Frequency of four-level mediation use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finding Main Ideas (FMI)</th>
<th>Session 1</th>
<th>Session 2</th>
<th>Session 3</th>
<th>Session 4</th>
<th>Session 5</th>
<th>Session 6</th>
<th>Session 7</th>
<th>Session 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>49 (67%)</td>
<td>44 (60%)</td>
<td>46 (63%)</td>
<td>30 (41%)</td>
<td>27 (37%)</td>
<td>25 (34%)</td>
<td>21 (29%)</td>
<td>21 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>31 (42%)</td>
<td>25 (34%)</td>
<td>22 (31%)</td>
<td>13 (18%)</td>
<td>18 (25%)</td>
<td>10 (14%)</td>
<td>6 (8%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>16 (22%)</td>
<td>17 (23%)</td>
<td>17 (21%)</td>
<td>10 (14%)</td>
<td>15 (21%)</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>5 (12%)</td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>6 (8%)</td>
<td>6 (8%)</td>
<td>9 (12%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Contextual Clues (CC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>54 (74%)</td>
<td>30 (41%)</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
<td>22 (30%)</td>
<td>25 (34%)</td>
<td>15 (21%)</td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>42 (58%)</td>
<td>10 (14%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>9 (12%)</td>
<td>11 (15%)</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>23 (32%)</td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>12 (16%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Inferences (MI)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>32 (44%)</td>
<td>32 (44%)</td>
<td>28 (38%)</td>
<td>23 (32%)</td>
<td>23 (32%)</td>
<td>17 (23%)</td>
<td>6 (8%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>22 (30%)</td>
<td>15 (21%)</td>
<td>18 (25%)</td>
<td>17 (23%)</td>
<td>19 (26%)</td>
<td>6 (8%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>11 (15%)</td>
<td>11 (15%)</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
<td>6 (8%)</td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
<td>7 (10%)</td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Note. Number of participants was 73.

An analysis based on the data shown in Table 6 is presented below:

1. For the FMI reading task, the overall change of frequency in the participants’ use of mediation was rather consistent for each mediation level throughout the eight-week intervention phase. The participants relied on the mediation at all levels more frequently during the beginning than in the later sessions. For example, in the first three sessions of FMI...
task, 67%, 60%, and 63% of the participants utilized Level 1 mediation respectively; 42%, 34%, and 31% used Level 2 mediation respectively; 22%, 23%, and 21% used Level 3 mediation respectively; and 12%, 7% and 8% used Level 4 mediation respectively. However, in later sessions, as the participants became more independent, the frequency of their use of mediation decreased gradually. Toward the end of the study, as in Sessions 7 and 8, the percentage figures in Levels 2 to 3 mediation had dropped to single digits. For Session 7, only 29% of the participants used Level 1 mediation; 8% used Level 2 mediation; 4% used Level 3 mediation; and 0% used Level 4 mediation. In Session 8, 29% used Level 1 mediation; only 1% used Level 2 mediation, and none used any mediation at all at Levels 3 and 4.

(2) A similar situation happened to the MI task, where the frequency of mediation use decreased consistently. In the first three sessions, 44% to 38% of the participants employed Level 1 Mediation. Throughout Sessions 4, 5, and 6, there was a gradual drop in the use of mediation. In the last two sessions, only 8% in Session 7 (6 participants) and 4% in Session 8 (3 participants) employed Level 1 mediation. For Mediation Levels 2 to 4, the decrease was also gradual and consistent. The change in usage from Sessions 1 to 6 dropped from 30% to 8% for Level 2 Mediation; 15% to 7% for Level 3; and 10% to 5% for Level 4. None of the participants used any of the Levels 2 to 4 mediation provided in Sessions 7 and 8. The consistently decreasing use of the four-level mediation in FMI and MI tasks showed the participants’ decreasing need for the mediation in these two tasks during the latter stage of the study. Meanwhile, as shown in Table 4, they scored significantly higher in the FMI and MI sections of the post-test.

(3) Unlike the FMI and MI tasks, the CC task showed inconsistent change in the frequency of mediation usage throughout the study. For example, there was a high usage of Levels 1, 2, and 3 mediation in the first session, which was at 74%, 58%, and 32% respectively. In the second session, the frequency decreased drastically to 41% for Level 1, 14% for Level 2, and 7% for Level 3 mediation. In the third and fourth sessions, the frequency dropped noticeably further. However, Level 1 mediation climbed back up to 30%, 34%, and 21% for Sessions 5, 6, and 7 respectively. Furthermore, for Level 2 mediation, although it reached 58% in Session 1, the frequency of mediation use stayed at 3% in Sessions 3 and 4. Then, the figures climbed to double digits in Sessions 5 through 7. Level 3 mediation’s frequency was at 32% in Session 1, and dropped to 7% in Session 2 and remained single-digit percentages throughout the remainder of the sessions. Level 4 began with 16% and then dropped to 0% and 1% in subsequent sessions. To conclude, after all the inconsistent highs and lows throughout the eight sessions for the CC task, in the last session, the frequency decreased to single-digits for all four mediation levels.

Discussion

Although both control and experimental groups were at a similar level in all three reading skills in the pre-test, significant differences between these two groups were found in the post-test. The participants in the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group in their overall performance, as well as in FMI, CC, and MI in the post-test.

When the control group’s reading scores in the pre- and post-tests were compared, no significant differences were found in all areas, except for the FMI skill. It can be concluded that practicing reading and answering questions without computerized mediation for eight weeks did not help enhance the participants’ CC and MI reading skills. One noteworthy aspect is that the
control group showed improvement in FMI even without the CDA program intervention. However, when the control group’s FMI post-test score was compared with the experimental group’s FMI post-test score, the latter was significantly higher. This scenario can be reasonably explained that time is the factor that caused both the control and experimental groups to improve in their FMI skill. However, with the CDA program intervention, the participants in the experimental group showed significantly more improvement.

When the experimental group’s pre- and post-test scores were compared, significant differences were found in the overall, FMI, and MI skills. However, the CC skill showed no significant difference. This means that the CDA program did not have an impact on promoting the participants’ CC skill. This conclusion can be further supported by the descriptive data shown in Table 6. The mediation was used in high frequency in Sessions 1 and 2, and it dropped significantly in Sessions 3 and 4. Then, the use increased significantly in Sessions 5, 6, and 7, and decreased again in the last session. It showed that the mediation usage frequency was inconsistent throughout the eight-week intervention sessions. Due to the unpredictable mediation usage frequency, there was no evidence that the mediation could help the participants become more independent in their CC skill. On the contrary, the CDA program proved to have helped expand the participants’ ZPD in their FMI and MI skills. This can be seen from the Table 6 data that show the participants became more independent throughout the intervention sessions as the frequency of their mediation use gradually dropped. Meanwhile, their post-test scores increased significantly after the eight-week intervention.

A possible reason causing the CDA program to have no significant effect on the participants’ CC skill could be due to the nature of the CC skill and the design of the CDA mediation in promoting the CC skill. Throughout the intervention sessions, the participants were provided with more opportunities to receive mediations in FMI and MI skills than CC skill. According to Harvey and Goudvis (2000), the reading skill in making inferences (MI) is a cognitively-demanding skill which requires learners to read between the lines and make educated guesses on certain outcomes, events, or actions based on their understanding of the reading materials. An EFL students’ ability in MI reflects whether he understands the overall main ideas of the reading materials as well as his critical thinking skills. Therefore, the teaching of FMI skill was integrated into the mediation design for the MI skill. As shown in Appendix 3, Level 1 Mediation in the design for the MI skill included finding main ideas strategies. What this means is that when a participant answered an MI question incorrectly, he would be asked to identify the main ideas of the reading passage. If he failed to select the correct main idea, he would be provided with the main idea followed by a step-by-step explanation on how to find the main idea in Level 1 Mediation. After the overall main idea was provided, the subsequent mediation would focus on guiding the participants to use the implied messages in the passage to make inferences. As a result, the participants experienced twice the amount of practice in the FMI and the MI tasks than in the CC tasks.

Unlike the mediation designed for the FMI and MI skills, the CC skill in this study was considered an independent skill, which was not associated with mediated strategies used in the FMI nor MI skills. The mediation design focused entirely on guiding the participants to use hints from the surrounding contexts to make educated guesses on the underlined words in the passages. Therefore, the amount of mediation the participants received on promoting their CC skill was less than the other two types of reading skills. One aspect that should be pointed out is that the experimental group’s CC skill mean scores in the post-test (M = 21.93) was higher than in the pre-test (M = 19.84), although the difference is not significant. However, without the CDA
medication, the control group’s CC skill actually digressed in the post-test mean score (M =19.66 in the pre-test, and M=17.66 in the post-test).

Conclusion

Based on the results, the CDA program proved to promote improvement in the participants’ reading skills in finding main ideas (FMI) and making inferences (MI). With the support of appropriately-designed computerized mediation, the participants could interact with a human-like “more competent other,” which helped them gradually become independent and proficient readers. Also, with the help of technology, the CDA program was able to show a list of attempts the participants made when they were trying to solve the reading questions. The number of attempts the participants made, the corresponding answers they chose, and their responses to the mediation can provide teachers with more diverse and in-depth information about a student’s performance at the current level than simply a score shown in a static assessment. Furthermore, the gradual progress from implicit to explicit mediation can help the teacher understand to what extent a learner would need individualized levels of assistance for a certain type of question. As a result, the teacher can modify and fine-tune mediations to accommodate the learner’s needs in one-on-one human interactions.

Another advantage of the CDA program is that it allows teachers to “teach” reading strategies to students in a situation where the number of students is a serious concern. It can save teachers time and allow them to instruct all their students while assessing them at the same time. It also leaves teachers extra time to provide face-to-face interactions and mediation for learners with special needs. An effective CDA program is a win-win for both the teachers and the students.

Like any other study, there are some limitations in this current study. First, the chance that the participants might have skimmed through the content and randomly guessed and selected the answers throughout the pre- and post-tests, as well as during the mediation phase cannot be entirely eliminated. Secondly, the present study only involved Taiwanese university students who were randomly divided into the control and experimental groups. More variables such as learners’ gender and learning styles should be explored to gain a more complete picture of the effects of the CDA program. In addition, as shown in the findings, the computerized mediation did not have a significant effect on the participants’ skills in using contextual clues (CC). The research designs employed in the present study could not identify and provide an absolutely certain explanation as to the ineffectiveness of the CDA program on the CC skill. It is thus highly recommended that future research be implemented to explore and develop effective computerized mediation to promote learners’ CC skill in reading.

About the author: Dr. Adeline Teo is an assistant professor in the English Department at Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan. She teaches courses including Academic Writing and Teaching EFL Reading and Writing. Her research interest includes ESL/EFL dynamic assessment as well as ESL/EFL reading and writing skills development.

Acknowledgement: This study was funded by the Fu Jen Catholic University Office of Research and Development (Project Grant No. A0102006) and the National Science Council in Taiwan (Project Grant No. NSC 101-2410-H-030-056).
References


Appendix A

Flowchart for Finding Main Idea Questions

1. Login

2. Reading Passage & Main Idea Question
   - If correct, then go to next question
   - If not correct, then go to Mediation 1

3. If correct, then go to next question
   - If not correct, then go to Mediation 2

4. If correct, then go to next question
   - If not correct, then go to Mediation 3

5. If correct, then go to next question
   - If not correct, then go to Mediation 4
     (provision of answer)

6. End
Appendix B

Flowchart for Contextual Clues Questions

1. Login
2. Reading Passage & Main Idea Question
   - If correct, then go to next question
   - If not correct, then go to Mediation 1
      - If not correct, then go to Mediation 2
         - If not correct, then go to Mediation 3
            - If not correct, then go to Mediation 4 (provision of answer)
               - If not correct, then go to next question
      - If correct, then go to next question
3. If correct, then go to next question
4. If correct, then go to next question
5. If correct, then go to next question
6. End
Flowchart for Inferential Questions

1. If correct, then go to "End"
2. If not correct, then go to Mediation 1 (Main Idea)
   - If main idea is correct, then followed by Inferential Question
     - If Inferential Question answer is correct, then go to "End"
     - If Inferential Question answer is not correct, then go to Mediation 3
       - If Inferential Question answer is correct, then go to "End"
       - If Inferential Question answer is not correct, then go to Mediation 3 (provision of answer)
         - If Inferential Question answer is correct, then go to "End"
Rethinking Teachers Accountability and Evaluation through Portfolios

Majida “Mohammed Yousef” Fahmi Dajani
Al-Quds Open University, Palestine
&
English Language Supervisor at Al-Eman Schools

Abstract
This study explored teachers’ views on the use of portfolios as part of accountability and evaluation system. It was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the use of portfolios to evaluate teacher performance both for the purpose of being accountable and for ongoing professional development. The teaching portfolio at Al-Eman Schools in Jerusalem/ Palestine is a careful and thoughtful compilation of documents that teachers create to highlight their teaching philosophies, methodologies and goals as well as their experiences, expertise and growth- things that couldn’t be achieved during the traditional way of evaluation which was based only on classroom observation. The introduction of teaching portfolio assisted Al-Eman Schools administrators to take better decisions for achieving the quality of teacher performance. The data showed that teachers viewed the portfolio as a better way to evaluate their performance but they also had some concerns about the demands of time commitment. Further research is needed to help teachers better develop the creation of their own portfolios for their own professional growth and development.

Keywords: Teaching portfolios, evaluation, accountability, professional development, analytical reflection
Introduction

This study was conducted as part of decision making process at Al-Eman Schools in Jerusalem, Palestine. It aimed to decide whether to use teaching portfolios as an essential part in teachers’ evaluation and teachers’ professional development. In recent years, there has been a surge of interest in the field of implementing effective teacher evaluation systems that leads to teacher improvement and development. Research asserts that teacher evaluation continues to be “a pressing issue in education and educational reform” (Pearlman and Tannenbaum, 2003, P. 633).

Part of developing English language teachers at Al-Eman Schools is teacher portfolios. Teacher portfolios are a topic of growing interest in the field of education and have become an effective tool in improving instruction. They are considered an essential part of teacher development and evaluation. Portfolios are a collection of teachers’ work that allows them to reflect on. They are living documents that will change over time as teachers reflect and evaluate their own work. In other words, teachers will revise and update their teaching portfolio throughout their career as instructors. The change and the revision of the portfolio are considered part of teachers’ growth and development (Sledin, et al 2010).

Al-Eman Schools consider teacher portfolios as a description of teacher/teaching strengths and accomplishments. They include data which teachers collect through their action research and through their reflective experiences. They represent evidences about teachers’ change in their practices over time and the quality of English language teachers’ teaching performances.

Portfolios at Al-Eman Schools are designed to promote professional growth and accountability through the process of developing the portfolio and through the review of portfolio by another professional.

Therefore, teacher portfolios are used at AL-Eman Schools as a way to demonstrate one’s teaching credentials to the institute and to colleagues. Portfolios are used as a means of intelligent accountability. They are also used as a means to help teachers to think critically about their practices and as a way to improve the quality of teaching English as a foreign language at Al-Eman Schools. They are samples of teachers’ breadth and depth of work.

The Significance of the Study

People involved in education recognize the importance of the evaluation of teachers. A successful evaluation process should assist the professional development of teachers and not to hinder it. Therefore, the purpose of this action research is to explore alternate ways to evaluate and empower teachers' development.

Al-Eman institute needs to help most teachers be committed to quality education. The institute believes that there is always room for teachers to improve and develop through their teaching career. Through teaching portfolios teachers are being held accountable for their own growth and development.
Teachers’ evaluation can become a very positive experience when the process is continuous rather than occasional especially when evaluation is directed towards professional development. Portfolios could be appropriate measures that encourage the fullest development of teachers. These measures imply that Al-Eman Schools have trust in professionals. They also imply that teachers are accountable for identifying their own strengths and weaknesses and for working hard to improve their performance as an English language teacher and as a leader of continuous improvement and development.

Accordingly, this research determines how English language teachers respond to the use of portfolios as an evaluative process that leads to professional development.

Problem Statement

Teachers’ evaluation at Al-Eman schools has relied heavily on direct observation either by the supervisor or by the school principal (hierarchal control). Teachers’ class is observed three or four times a year by the supervisor and two times by the principal who often lacks specific content expertise especially in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. Feedback is given to a teacher through a written document without any oral discussion or explanation. This typical classroom observation has limitations and isn’t always a purposeful way to assess and evaluate teacher performance. A classroom observation checklist is not enough in measuring the quality of classroom practices and teacher accountability.

Recently, Al-Eman Schools administration has realized that there is a need to modify the current evaluation. It needs formative evaluation that helps teachers develop individual skills, discover new techniques and enhance their present ways of teaching. We need formative assessment that provides feedback that aimed at promoting continuous improvement. Therefore using the portfolio as a tool for evaluation and accountability to support teachers’ professional development and as a source of multiple data that can greatly enhance comprehensiveness of teacher performance evaluation might highly be appreciated by the teachers and by the administrators.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study is to explore the views of the seventeen English language teachers towards the first implementation of “Teaching Portfolio” for the purpose of formative evaluation that helps in continuous professional growth and development of teachers.

The goals are first, to help teachers document and record their achievements or accomplishments that allow them to reflect analytically and critically on their own work and help them develop different approaches to teaching.

Second, to help teachers improve and develop their work by providing them with formative feedback and giving them opportunities to communicate their teaching practices effectively with their supervisor and with their colleagues. By providing them with sufficient information, teachers will be able to evaluate themselves and modify their performance accordingly.
To facilitate the implementations of using teaching portfolios, several actions were taken:

**The First Action was explaining what teaching portfolio is:**

The first action was a meeting that was held at the beginning of school year 2012-2013 to all English language teachers to discuss the idea of teaching portfolios and the possibility of implementing it at Al-Eman schools as a process of formative evaluation that leads to professional development and growth. The English language supervisor explained to the English language teachers that “teaching portfolio is a means to document individual growth, excellence and talents of one’s professional practices.”

In further support research findings were provided to the teachers. Sledin, et al. (2010) in their studies about teaching portfolio preparation emphasized that teaching portfolio is also a means to improve teaching practices through reflection. Reflection helps teachers critically observe and evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching practices.

Teachers were told that through portfolio they can think about their teaching practices both in and outside the classroom. It is a way that helps them develop and analyze more effective approaches to their teaching. It is a valuable resource through which they can demonstrate their teaching abilities and accomplishments to other people (supervisor, colleagues, principal, and to the administrators at Al-Eman Schools). Materials from portfolios will help others see beneath the surface of teaching performance and the presentations of teaching portfolios will help teachers practice discussing their teaching practices in a thoughtful and analytical manner. Through discussing their teaching practices, they will be actively engaged in learning together and from each other.

Finally, teachers were told that their teaching portfolio assumes their responsibility of their own practices and their commitment to their personal development in teaching and their evaluation of students’ learning outcomes. It was concluded that portfolios might help teachers think deeply about their teaching practices inside and outside their classrooms.

**The Second Action: Showing a sample of a teacher portfolio to see how it looks like and showing the principles in developing a portfolio of professional practice**

The second action was presenting a sample and discussing its content and then taking decisions of what Al-Eman Schools portfolios should include. Based on research about portfolios the main three principle of portfolio is collect, select and reflect.

**What a portfolio should include and how it is organized (content and organization)**

We decided that the portfolio should include the following:

- Cover page
- Content
- Curriculum Vitae
- Teaching Philosophy
- Statement of Teaching Responsibilities
- Teachers’ Prayer
- Professional Development Certificates
- Teaching Objectives, Strategies, Methodologies
The Third Action: Reading articles and watching You Tube to take a decision

The third action was encouraging teachers to read some articles or watch some You Tubes related to the importance of having teaching portfolios. Then, the decision of developing teachers’ portfolios was taken anonymously.

The decision was that teachers must develop a portfolio with written summaries and reflections on their teaching that explore not only what they did in particular lesson but what they would do differently in the future in order to develop the quality of teaching English as a foreign language at Al-Eman Schools. The portfolio is tended to emphasize aspects of good teaching and adjustment of instruction to meet the needs of students with different learning styles. Through portfolios, teachers can identify their strengths and accomplishments and they can also work on their weaknesses. They can also celebrate success stories where other colleagues can read, discuss or implement. Effective portfolios are deliberately structured to allow for both accountability and creativity.

The Fourth Action: Evaluating Teachers Portfolios

The last action was discussing the rubric that will be used for evaluating English language teachers’ portfolios (See Appendix One). The rubric was designed based on some samples but it meant to be very simple and brief as this was the first year in which teachers develop their teaching portfolio.

Some questions were provided to teachers as to lead them after developing the draft of the portfolio. The following questions served as a helpful checklist. The questions were based on the book “The teaching portfolio; A practical guide to improved performance and promotion: tenure decisions (Seldin, et al, 2010):
Does your portfolio identify your own responsibility as a foreign language teacher?

Does the reflective statement adequately describe your teaching philosophy, strategies and methodologies?

Does your reflective statement help in improving your teaching actions?

Does your portfolio include some activities that support or inform teaching and learning?

Does your portfolio include some data related to performance evaluation?

Does your portfolio include some evidences of student learning?

Does your portfolio clearly identify what, how and why you teach your subject as you do?

Literature Review

In this literature review, the researcher summarized some of the research related to teaching portfolios and their effect on teacher growth and development. Portfolios are intended to provide a comprehensive sampling of the broad spectrum of teacher performance over time and in varying contexts. However, the portfolio, itself, is not an end; it is the means to achieving the ultimate end of improved student achievement. Organizing teacher portfolios for effectiveness and efficiency is a critical step in implementing a teacher evaluation system. Organizing portfolios requires that the role of teacher performance standards be established and that the role of artifacts relative to those standards be set (Tucker, et al, 2002. p. 34). Thus, a teaching portfolio is a means to the end and not the end itself.

Mokhari et al. (1996) defines portfolio as “a cumulative record of progress that fosters reflective thinking and can be used for advisement, assessment and eventual placement” (p.245). While Perkins and Gelfer, (1993) defines portfolio as “a folder of personal data on an individual basis that includes a record of achievement, samples of work, observations made by a supervisor, a colleague, or oneself’, personal evaluations and any other relevant data” (p. 235).

Teacher portfolio is a careful and thoughtful compilation of documents that teachers create in order to shed a light on their teaching philosophies, methodologies, techniques, strategies, and goals in addition to their experiences, expertise and growth. Teaching portfolios serve as learning instruments that guide to improvements in teachers’ professional practices.

Unfortunately most teacher evaluation processes identify effective and ineffective teaching without addressing teachers’ needs and questions of how they really need to change some of their teaching behavior in order to be better teachers. Research asserts that using portfolios as formative way to evaluate teachers allow them to make adjustment to what and how they are teaching (Arreola, 2000).

Formative evaluation is expected to improve the content, process and outcomes of teaching for teachers. Hammond (1990) states that schools are always asked to document their accomplishments for the purpose of evaluation and measuring educational programs. As teachers play a very important role in developing educational programs, professional portfolios are frequently recommended.

Boliington (1994) states that effective formative evaluation is a very important part in teacher professional development. Formative evaluation guide teachers with steps required for comprehensive improvement and development. It is considered part of the ongoing learning...
Rethinking Teachers Accountability and Evaluation through Portfolios

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process for teachers. Formative evaluation is based on providing constructive feedback to teachers to improve their performance. It is a process that helps teachers receive information from various sources, their peers as an example. Teachers usually need specific information regarding their performance that helps them improve and employ appropriate methods.

Fisher (1994) notes, "a teacher portfolio offers the educator opportunities to display quality work examples which can be used for evaluative purposes" (p. 20). She also suggests that "another use is a vehicle for the selection and development of professional entries so that teacher reflection, dialogue, and growth can occur” (Fisher, 1994, p. 21).

Shifts in beliefs and practices about the teacher professional development and evaluation have led educators and scholars to explore new approaches that can serve education and that can give trust and professional responsibilities to the teachers. One of these is teaching portfolio which is in its basic form is a collection of work which highlights and demonstrates teachers’ knowledge and skills of their professional practices that is used for self assessment, self reflection and for professional development. So, rather than abolishing authoritative accountability systems on teachers, we apply a new type of accountability system that builds on mutual accountability and responsibility.

Methods and Data Collection

Research Questions

This research addresses the following two questions:

1. How do the teachers at Al-Eman Schools in Jerusalem view the employment of teacher portfolios in the formative evaluation process and professional development?
2. What issues emerged from the use of portfolios as noted by the teachers involved?

The Sample

The sample population for this study consisted of all the seventeen English language teachers teach at Al-Eman Schools in Jerusalem. Fifteen teachers were females while two teachers were male. Seven teachers teach at the two elementary schools while ten teachers teach at the two secondary schools.

Data Collection

In this study the researcher attempted to investigate the views and reflections of the seventeen teachers regarding the development of teaching portfolios and the employment of portfolios as a part of teacher formative evaluation and professional development.

This study used qualitative methodology relying on the seventeen participants. The researcher collected field notes during staff meetings that were held every two weeks about how teachers view the employment of teacher portfolios in the evaluation process and the professional development. It also included “think-aloud” techniques which involved verbalizing one’s thoughts while engaged in their work. Additional data were collected by reviewing, examining and analyzing the teacher portfolios during the first and the second semester.
(documents as the primary source of data collection, teachers’ artifacts and documentation review). The portfolios were examined for content, personal professional knowledge and analytical reflection on practice and the implementation of action research. The researcher observed some classes to identify the materials that teachers submitted in their portfolios as well as to examine their written reflections. Peer observation and peer review for the portfolios were also used during the staff meeting that was held every two weeks.

**Research Findings**

Through the various qualitative data collection methods, fifteen teachers (about 88%) revealed that using portfolios in formative evaluation is better than the traditional classroom observation checklist approach because teachers through portfolios have evidences of their strengths and accomplishments. They said that they have the opportunity to include samples of their best work. They reflected that the most important part of developing the portfolios was the open communication and the feedback between the supervisor and the teacher, and among teachers themselves. They believed that this open communication created dialogue that might enhance the development of professional growth of a teacher. They emphasized that portfolios help them organize their work and get as they said a bank of documents from which they can adopt and reuse in coming years. These documents also helped them dialogue their work with their colleagues and thus enhance professional learning communities. Teaching portfolio helped them practice the skills of being selective, realistic, reflective and organized. One sample of written teacher reflection on the use of teaching portfolio is included (See Appendix Two).

Teachers who have positive views towards portfolios indicated that using teacher portfolio as a tool for evaluating and improving their performances was encouraging. They revealed that this evaluation is more constructive and informative. They felt that they are more trusted and supported. Having their living documents to present and share either with their supervisor or their colleagues has been very fruitful. They implied that using portfolios as a part of teacher formative evaluation and professional development can reinforce cooperation among teachers and reduce the atmosphere of ineffective competitiveness.

Twelve percent (12%) of teachers indicated that they were not really convinced with the validity of the portfolio in evaluation. They think that portfolio is only a gathering tool for documents and materials. They believe that teachers may include excellent documents in the portfolio but without applying them in the classroom. They think that the end product of teaching and learning is actually not presented in portfolios. They are convinced that classroom observation is more credible diagnosis of teachers’ performance. Though, one of the teachers indicated that the use of portfolios might identify ones strengths and weaknesses. Teachers who were not fully convinced with the importance of creating portfolio of professional development agreed that the discussion and the dialogues among colleagues are the most valuable. They believe that learning communities are the best tool for professional development and not the compilation of documents. They suspect the validity of formative evaluation to evaluate their portfolios.
Some issues emerged regarding the use of portfolios as noted by the teachers involved. They recognized that there is an improvement in communication between the teachers and the supervisors and among teachers themselves. The process of self observation and self reflection through creating their own portfolios helped them think all the time about what they do in the classroom and collect information about what goes on to explore their own practices that lead them to changes and improvements in their teaching.

Teachers complained that portfolios required a considerable time commitment. It seems that teachers need to determine what to include in their portfolio and subsequently reduce the time commitment. A teaching portfolio is so demanding and their schedule is overloaded. Developing a reflective teaching portfolio is undoubtedly a demanding and time consuming process in some cases and for some teachers. Teachers also commented that they need to learn more about how portfolios will help them to reflect on their own performance. They commented that their reflection is still more descriptive than analytical (See Appendix Three).

The main limitation of this study is that it was based on the English language teachers who teach at Al-Eman Schools. For the generalization of the results more teachers in other schools should be included. Despite this limitation, the researcher believes that the results clearly appear to indicate that teaching portfolio is a useful tool to highlight and demonstrate teachers’ knowledge and skills of professional practice. Teaching portfolio serves as learning instruments that help teachers held responsible to criticize their work and to evaluate the effectiveness of their professional practice. Portfolio construction provided cues for teachers to gain insight into their own teaching and learning processes and professional development. Portfolio constructions provided useful starting points of the importance of conducting continuous portfolio meetings.

More research is required regarding the use of teaching portfolio for formative evaluation that helps teachers be responsible and accountable for their professional growth. More research is also required to study the process of teachers’ reflection on their own work in the portfolio and how this reflection helps in their professional development.

**Summary and Conclusion**

In this study it was emphasized that portfolios can serve as an evaluative tool that helps teachers be accountable and helps them develop a continuous professional development. In brief the goals of English language teachers’ portfolios at Al-Eman Schools are to develop and improve teaching skills, experiences, enhance success stories and use as credentials in a meaningful positive package. Teaching portfolio is a tool for an ongoing professional development and professional growth through which we can help teachers be long life learners.

A careful consideration of the purpose of the teaching portfolio can guide teachers, administrators, and policy makers in making informed decisions about the design and the use of teaching portfolios.
About the Author
Dr. Majida Dajani is an assistant professor of Teaching English as a Foreign Language at Al-Quds Open University. She is also an English language supervisor at Al-Eman Schools, Jerusalem. Currently, she is working as a consultant and in-service teacher trainer on a project called leadership and teacher development program (LTD) with the Palestinian Ministry of Education and the AMIDEAST. Dr. Dajani has more than 20 years experience in teaching. She has participated in many international conferences and published some research in education.

References

Appendices
Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>In Progress</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327
### Portfolio Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding Conceptual Framework Principles</th>
<th>Artifacts were selected and the explanation of why selected demonstrates no understanding of the conceptual framework or principle</th>
<th>Artifacts were selected and the explanation of why selected demonstrates a primary understanding of conceptual framework or principles</th>
<th>Artifacts were selected and the explanation of why selected demonstrates an understanding of conceptual framework or principles</th>
<th>Artifacts were selected and the explanation of why selected demonstrates a thorough understanding of conceptual framework or principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Organization of the Material in the Portfolio</strong></td>
<td>Portfolio portrays little or no evidence of ability to organize the material and to respond in a thoughtful, critical manner</td>
<td>Portfolio portrays some limited evidence of ability to organize the material and to respond in a thoughtful, critical manner</td>
<td>Portfolio portrays adequate evidence of ability to organize the material and to respond in a thoughtful, critical manner</td>
<td>Portfolio portrays exceptional evidence of ability to organize the material and to respond in a thoughtful, critical manner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Portfolio Elements</strong></td>
<td>Portfolio addresses at fewer than 80% of the required elements contained in the portfolio template</td>
<td>Portfolio addresses at least 80% of the required elements contained in the portfolio template</td>
<td>Portfolio addresses at least 95% of the required elements contained in the portfolio template</td>
<td>Portfolio addresses 100% of the elements required in the portfolio template</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Quality</strong></td>
<td>Lacks relevant material and organization; fails to meet the professional standard</td>
<td>Few required documents are relevant to specific instructional context; is not very well organized, but could be improved</td>
<td>All required documents are relevant to instructional context; is organized, but could be improved to reach exemplary</td>
<td>All required documents are included; organization is excellent; the presentation of information is effective; meets a high professional standard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix B**

**A Sample of Teachers’ Comment**
Teaching portfolio is an efficient way to evaluate continually our teaching as we gain experience in the classroom. I believe that teaching portfolio can improve the delivery of our syllabus. Teaching portfolio helps us develop new teaching methods and strategies. It is a way to document our strengths and to pinpoint our weaknesses. We use our teaching portfolio to improve teaching skills and develop new strategies, methods and techniques. Teaching portfolio is changeable as teachers’ take on new teaching challenges. Through this experience we learnt that it is good to criticize oneself and others work and to know that we are not always correct. Portfolios embody professionalism because they encourage the reflection and self-monitoring that are the hallmarks of the true professional.

Appendix C
A Sample of Teacher Reflection

Class 4C was given Unit 8 Lesson 4 from Pupil’s Book. The warm up activity was well liked by the students and many didn't want the activity to end. All of the students wanted to participate in that particular activity. When it was time to do the review using shouldn't be and should be, many students said the sentences by using shouldn't be and should be incorrectly. Some students eliminated the use of shouldn't be and should be altogether. I should have used a different approach when I saw the incorrect responses to the exercises such as writing on the board the words shouldn't be and should be to help students comprehend the directions. Also when the students listened to the song they weren't very interested in the tune of the song, therefore, when it was the students turn to sing the song, most of the students’ voices were not heard. I should have changed the tune of the song to suit their style of music.
Students' Insights and Experiences of Web-Based Learning Support; The Case of Second Year Students of the University of Batna - Algeria

Bahloul Amel
University of Batna – Algeria

Abstract
With the help of the innovations in technology, the use of web-based learning level has become a major strategy for improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes at the university level. This study explored how university students perceived and experienced web-based learning support designed for an English course. A qualitative phenomenological research design was used in the study. Data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with the students enrolled in the “Oral Expression” course. Through intensity sampling strategy, out of 526 students, enrolled in the system, six were selected for the study. The findings showed that students perceived web-based learning useful and their experiences with it were mostly positive.

Keywords: Self-directed learning, Web-based learning support.
Introduction

With the help of the innovations in technology, the use of Web-based learning level has become a major strategy for improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes at the university level. Web-based learning environments have various advantages when compared to traditional face-to-face learning. First of all, it provides self-regulated learning and autonomy. As Stevens and Switzer (2006) state, it provides a better opportunity for students to foster their autonomy. In addition, the students are more autonomous and less dependent on teacher’s approval and instruction.

There are various ways of using web support for instruction, and research is crucial to test and compare them for their effectiveness and impact on student learning. Studies focus on effective use of web based learning environment, students perspective, and its application on different areas. There also studies on the effect of web-based learning environment on success and motivation of students along with studies on web-based learning as self-directed learning.

Thomas (2008) studied the effective use of web-based learning environment. They tested the students’ level of anxiety and evaluated their performance. They found that the students were not anxious about the use of technology as they got used to in their real life. Also, they found that the use of web-based learning environments affected the success of students in a positive way.

About the students’ perspectives, Sweeney O’Donoghue and Whitehead (2004), in their studies used a qualitative research design undertaken at one Australian University through in-depth interviews. In the study, the roles of the tutors, the students themselves and the peers in face to face and web-based tutorials are explained. It is concluded in the study that students had an active role in their own learning in web-based learning tutorials. Also, the students did not favor one tutorial types to the other, they wanted the correct balance between both strategies.

Furthermore, Gómez and Duart (2011) studied a hybrid postgraduate program in a university in Colombia and concluded that students had a very positive opinion of the subjects and the educational model in the program. Similarly, Tselios, Daskalakis, and Papadopoulou, (2011) investigated Greek students’ views toward blended learning. The findings obtained showed that both perceived usefulness and simplicity of use have a positive impact on attitude toward using a combination of online and face-to-face instruction in the university.

Chang (2005) studied the motivational perceptions on applying the self-regulated learning strategies in the web-based instruction. In this study, Chang gave a questionnaire to the students who took a web-based course to measure their motivational orientations. He found out that web-based instruction motivated the students in their self-regulated learning strategies and self-evaluation. They were intrinsically motivated and became responsible for their own learning strategies.

Moreover, Dabbagh (2006) in his article entitled as “Self-regulations and Web Based Pedagogical Tools” gives suggestions on how college instructors can use web-based pedagogical tools to promote students’ self-regulation. He thinks that instructors can help students in setting
their own goals, self-monitor themselves and self-evaluate their own learning process by using web-based pedagogical tools and in that way their level of achievement may be higher.

As it can be seen from the literature, there are studies on the influence of web-based learning environment on students’ achievement and attitude. Most of these studies are quantitative and attempt to establish relations among variables in relation to web-based instructions. However, an in depth understanding of students’ experiences and the meaning of these experiences seem to be missing in the literature. Therefore this study will investigate university students’ experiences and opinions through interviews in terms of how they adapt to the use of web-based instruction and use it to be more successful in the course. The web-based support for teaching English has been experimented at Batna University for integrating the use of technology to the students’ self-studies and to provide variety in the learning environment. For that reason, its assessment based on the approaches in the literature is significant to draw lesson on the implementation of web-based learning support at universities.

Research Design and Methodology

In this study, a qualitative phenomenological research design was used. One of the main aims of qualitative research is providing better understanding to human behavior and experiences and it emphasizes the conceptions of the subjects on the related phenomena (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). For that reason, the concept of web-based learning was studied based on qualitative phenomenological research design to attempt exploring the perspectives of the students on web-based learning support. Within this perspective, the research questions included:

1- What is the meaning of web-based learning support (WBLS) for the university students?
2- How do university students experience web-based learning support?
3- What are the strategies that university students adapt in use of web-based learning support?
4- What is the contribution that web-based learning support makes in university students’ learning experiences?

Context

The study was conducted in the Department of Foreign Languages at Batna University. The students of “Introduction to Communication Skills in English” course used the web page of their course books as the web based learning support. The main aim of the course is to help students improve their overall proficiency in the English language which will enable them to follow their departmental courses with ease. For that reason, this course attempts to develop students’ four skills of English as reading, writing, listening and speaking.

To this end, two course books and a supplementary pack was used in 2011-2012 Fall Term. One of the course books was used to develop reading and writing skills, and the other one was used to develop listening and speaking skills of the students. These course books have a web page which tries to support the self-study of the students. 5% points is allocated to web based learning studies as for the assessment part of the course to encourage the students to use the support in their self-studies.
To be able to use the support, the students are given an access code attached to their course books and asked to register. Then, with the login name and password they determine, they are able to open the web page and do the activities organized according to the units. Each unit has the reading texts stated in the course book, reading practices, vocabulary development activities, presentation and practice activities in grammar and writing, listening and pronunciation activities, video activities integrated activities, games, puzzles and achievement tests. Also, students may communicate with their instructors and friends asynchronously. There are computer labs at the university for students’ use, but students generally prefer doing the activities at home.

Participants

The students who participated in the study were chosen through purposive sampling strategy as a basis of qualitative research design to select information rich cases (Patton, 1990). For that reason, intensity sampling strategy was used to determine the subjects as they provide intense information about their experiences of using the web based learning support. To this end, data was gathered from the students enrolled in “Introduction to Communication Skills in English” course offered by the Department of Foreign Languages at Batna University. Out of 630 students, enrolled in the system, six students who use the support the most were chosen. These students were selected through intensity sampling because they are expected to have more experience with the web-based instruction system.

Data collection procedures

Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews. In-depth interviews “uncover the participants’ views” about “how the participants frames and structures” a phenomenon (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p.101). The interviews took half an hour and there were two parts as background questions about the participants, and content and process of web based learning support. The questions about the content and process of web based learning support covered the areas of the frequency and the reasons of the use, the favorite types of activities and the difficult ones, the problems they encountered, the solutions they found, the feelings and expectations of the users on the support, the kind of learning strategies they adopted and the differences between face to face learning and web-based learning support.

To reach the relevant sample, first, the students who used the web-based support most were determined. Then, appointments were made for the interviews. The interviews were tape recorded with permission of the participants. They took about 25 minutes. Notes were also taken during the interviews to support the recorded data.

Data analysis

After the interviews were transcribed, qualitative content analysis was employed to analyze the data. Content analysis involves reaching in the concepts and themes that will explain the data collected. In content analysis, data is collected and the realities that are included in data are tried to be explored (Lamy & Hampel 2007, p. 277). In line with this process, the data in this study were read closely to identify the meaningful units based on the research questions and the descriptive codes such as “retention”, “flexibility of time” and “controlling achievement” were
assigned to these units. Later, the descriptive codes were grouped into categories such as “use of technology”, “support for learning”, student-centered learning experiences” and “anticipations”. Then, the categories formed the themes like “meaning of web-based learning support” and learning strategies “.

**Results**

The data analysis produced four themes: conception of web-based learning support, use of web-based learning support, learning strategies and contribution to learning.

**Conception of Web-based learning support**

The conception of web-based learning support involved six meanings. The first meaning was attached to “the use of technology”. The students accepted web based learning as an important source for their learning. They thought that the activities on the web-page were supportive especially in studying English. With the help of the exercises, they practiced especially their vocabulary, listening, and reading skills. Also, this support meant the consolidation of the units in their course books. As it was the collection of resources and included variety of activities, the students thought that they practiced the units that they covered in their course books and especially the trial and error techniques were helpful for them in retention of the topics. Also this support was seen a tutorial for the students. In addition, the students stated that it was suitable for different learning styles and they found this useful.

Web-based learning was also perceived as an exam support. The students perceived it as part of homework as they used it when the activities were assigned as homework. Moreover, they found it useful in their exam studies. The students stated that they controlled their achievement before the exams and in that way they could recognize the points they need to study.

Furthermore, web-based learning was recognized as a support for motivation. They stated that doing all the activities from the course book was sometimes boring. However, using the computer and the internet, and doing different types of activities provided higher motivation to the course.

Moreover, by doing the activities successfully and using a web-based support in the age of technology, they claimed that they gained higher level of self-confidence. In addition, as the activities were not so difficult and they could interact with their teacher and friends while doing them, they said they were highly motivated to do the activities.

The students referred to the support as student-centered learning experiences. They thought that web-based learning support provided self-efficacy and flexibility. They stated their own goals, they did the activities with their own strategies, they did the activities alone, in the time they liked, and in the place they wanted to study. Also, they controlled their own learning as they evaluated themselves. The students found this support helpful for individual development as they were active in their own learning process.

Before starting to use this support, they had some anticipation. They thought they were curious about it, they recognized this support as a waste of time. Also, they were concerned about making mistakes. They thought that they would have just one attempt to do the activities and then they would not be able to try it once more. However, after using the support, they
changed their time and as they had the chance of doing the activities repeatedly, they thought they were learning.

**Experiences of Web-Based Learning Support**

Students’ experiences of web-based learning support can be recognized around seven concepts. It was found that while using the web-based learning support, the students preferred to use supportive materials such as the course book and dictionary. Also, the students generally used the support when the activities were assigned as homework and before the exams as an exam support.

The activities that the students liked to use through web-based learning were grammar, vocabulary, reading and pronunciation activities. Also, some of them preferred the activities which they called “difficult”. There were academic and motivational reasons for this. For the academic reasons, they thought that these activities showed them how to use the new vocabulary correctly. Also, with the help of drill and practice, they found it easy to learn and recall the new words. In addition, the usefulness of the model sentences especially in grammar and vocabulary activities were stated as the reasons for doing these activities. And for the motivational reasons, the students found these activities interesting and easy. Also, as they did fewer mistakes, they had higher grades, and this provided self-confidence for them.

On the other hand, the activities that they found difficult were stated as listening, writing, and pronunciation and puzzle activities. As for the academic reasons, it was found that the students had comprehension problems in listening activities. They found the level of the listening activities higher and the rate of the speaking fast. Although some of the students stated it as the best activity, pronunciation activity was found difficult too, because of the difficulty that the students had in speaking. Moreover, as for the motivational reasons, these activities, especially puzzle, were found time consuming and not interesting by the students. Also, as the writing activities, the students’ level of English, failure in the activities and their belief of the activities’ being difficult were the reasons of difficult activities.

Finally, the students generally did not have important problems in experiencing the support, but they found the connection to the web site and the submission process of the activities too long. Also, they found the level of listening activities above their levels.

**Learning Strategies**

Students adapted some learning strategies to use web-based learning support. These were mostly related to self-directed learning strategies. While doing the activities, they felt that there was a teacher observing them, so they did the activities carefully. They preferred taking notes of the things that they wanted to remember. Also, they started from doing the topics that they were more familiar, and then, they did the less familiar ones. In that way, they felt more self-confidence. Moreover, the students focused on the importance of self-directed learning. They said that, as they were flexible in terms of time and place, they organized their own learning. Also, when they did mistakes, they tried it again and again and by developing their own strategies they thought that they learnt.
Finally, students used other materials to get support while doing the activities. They used their course books to remember the units or dictionaries to find the meanings of the new words. They sometimes used e-dictionary or the electronic version of the course book.

**Contribution to Learning**

Web-based learning support contributed to students’ learning. The students recognized the contribution especially in terms of vocabulary learning. With the help of vocabulary activities, they practiced the new vocabulary and that drill and practice activities were helpful in recalling the vocabulary. In that way, the activities contributed to their exams studies.

Moreover, web-based learning support contributed to students’ motivation. As they were using technology and multimedia, they liked the course more, they did not get bored of doing the same kind of activities and this provided higher level of motivation. Also, as they could easily recognize their success in doing the activities, they saw the activities as reinforcement to their learning. By seeing that they could do the activities, they also gain self-confidence.

Finally, flexibility of learning was seen as a contribution. The students thought that the topics that they should study were presented on the web-page as a summary and they felt the convenience of time and place in addition to the variety of resources. In that way, they learnt according to their individual needs and this supports their learning.

**Conclusion**

In the light of the findings, it can be concluded that university students had positive perceptions about web-based learning support. They use the web-based learning environment as a support for their learning process, exams and motivation for face to face learning environment. Through web-based learning support, they develop self-directed learning strategies.

However, one of the most effective reasons of the students’ using web-based learning support is its being one of the course requirements, and they also generally prefer to do the activities that are assigned. For that reason, teachers using this program as a support should focus on the explanation of the benefits of using this support, and the activities to which will be assigned should be chosen carefully knowing that the students may only do the assigned ones.

In order to create effective learning environments, teachers may benefit from the attractiveness of web-based learning materials for students. They provide various activities suitable for different learning styles. In addition, with the help of web-based learning environments, students shape their own learning by deciding what to learn, when to learn, where to learn and how to learn.

For this reason, there is a need for continuous research on this area with the growing innovation in technology and learning theories to see how effective web-based environment can be used in different areas. In that way, teachers may benefit from the research on how to use web-based learning materials effectively.
About the Author:
Dr. Amel Bahloul has been a teacher at the University of Batna (Ageria) , Department of English since 1998. She got her Doctorate degree in 2008. She is specialised in theoretical and applied linguistics. Her main interest is investigating new ways to teach students the skills they need. To understand Foreign language acquisition and promote change at the university level.

References
Different Performance of EFL University Students on TOEFL and IELTS

Saleh Saafin
University of Sharjah, Sharjah
United Arab Emirates

Abstract
TOEFL and IELTS are increasingly used as university admission requirements all over the world. This research investigates students' performance on these tests. The TOEFL and IELTS results during the academic years 2005-9 and 2010-13 were analyzed. The findings showed that about 25% of students passed TOEFL, but when IELTS was used beside TOEFL, the pass rate went up to 31%, and it rose dramatically to about 52% when the IELTS cut off band score was lowered to 5.0. Furthermore, it was found that the students who earned less than 380/390 TOEFL scores on their entry were the least likely students to pass TOEFL or IELTS after having English training. Some possible reasons for the differing performance of EFL students on TOEFL and IELTS were discussed.

Keywords: TOEFL; IELTS; placement; proficiency criteria; pass rate
Introduction

English is the language of instruction in many universities all over the world. Many of these universities require their EFL students to demonstrate proficiency in English as a foreign language before they can attend their academic programs. TOEFL and IELTS tests are widely used as international tests to measure the English proficiency of EFL students. Universities require different admission test scores. In general, candidates are required to score at least a 500 on TOEFL or band 5.0 on IELTS. In this study, the paper-based TOEFL and IELTS results of the University of Sharjah (UoS) students in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are used as a concrete example to investigate the performance of EFL students on these two tests after attending the intensive English program (IEP) for one or two semesters. While IELTS tests were conducted inside and outside the university, TOEFL was usually administered on campus to evaluate the English language ability of new students on their entry. Scoring 500 on this test was an unattainable goal for the majority of high school graduates. Table 1 contains the details that give an overview of the TOEFL results of the students on their university entry in 2005-2009.

Table 1. Pre-IEP TOEFL results of new students in August of the academic years 2005-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Students Got 500 or above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-6</td>
<td>1042</td>
<td>161 (15.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-7</td>
<td>1153</td>
<td>139 (12.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-8</td>
<td>1293</td>
<td>179 (13.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-9</td>
<td>1431</td>
<td>243 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4919</td>
<td>722 (14.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that about 15% of UoS candidates who have just graduated from high schools passed the TOEFL on their entry. This means that about 85% of them were unable to achieve a score of 500 on TOEFL, and as a result they could not enter into their Bachelor programs. Most of them chose to attend the IEP for one or two semesters so that they could improve their English and meet university language requirement. The number of teaching hours in the IEP was 25 hours a week for all levels in the years 2005-2009, but it changed to 25 hours for levels 1 and 2, and 20 hours for levels 3 and 4 in the years 2010-2013. Students were placed into one of the four English levels based on their pre-IEP-TOEFL score. Table 2 shows the exit criteria that the IEP used to send students to different levels during the investigated periods.

Table 2. TOEFL Exit Criteria for IEP Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Criteria followed between 2005-2009</th>
<th>Criteria followed between 2010-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>389 and below</td>
<td>377 and below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>390-429</td>
<td>380-417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>430-464</td>
<td>420-460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>465-499</td>
<td>463-497</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were promoted from one level to another based on internal IEP tests or new TOEFL score that some of them gained during the period of attending intensive English courses.

Using International Tests for Admission Decision Making and ESL Placement

Many universities all over the world use international proficiency tests to evaluate the English language abilities of their candidates, and they all use different admission cut off scores. We do not know if these cut off scores are based on empirical data, experience, or personal decisions. According to Coley (1999), deciding on cut off scores is left to administrators who know little about language requirements. Also, Shohamy (2001) has suggested that the minimum admission scores were probably based on political or administrative reasons rather than whether or not
these scores can discriminate between capable and incapable students. Another issue of concern is that some universities use more than one proficiency test, but the cut off scores they use do not equal each other. For example, while the TOEFL cut off score at some universities is 500, the IELTS cut off band score is 5.0. This would result in having students who meet the language requirement with a wide variation in their level of English proficiency. Of course, it is impossible to exactly equate the scores of different tests that have different contents. But based on experience and research, more reliable comparison scores of different international tests can be made available.

Although universities use TOEFL and IELTS to measure the language abilities of its candidates, the contents of the IEP courses that were served to help them pass these tests were not based on them. Syllabi were essentially designed to help students develop their communicative language skills. In addition to these intensive English courses, a TOEFL and/or IELTS preparation course might be used to develop the testing skill of students. Wall, Clapham, and Alderson (1994) mentioned that some proficiency tests such as TOEFL do not reflect the contents of the intensive English courses. As a result, it is likely that such tests may not show to what extent students developed their English skills after attending English classes. It is likely that some of the students who failed the required proficiency tests, perform well in the ESL classes they attended. Besides using TOEFL to provide evidence of students' English proficiency, it is also used as a placement test for sending students to different English levels. This seems practical, but in fact it is not free of serious misplacement problems. Kokhan (2012, p.291) has stated that “there is no particular set of either total or section scores which can be used as a reliable criterion for dividing students into ESL classes without significant misplacement.” Similarly, Fox (2009) indicated that using TOEFL and IELTS for placement purposes in an English for Academic Purposes program at a Canadian university resulted in extreme variability in the levels of students within EAP classes. In order to help in minimizing the misplaced cases in the IEPs, teachers should be involved in placing students into the right levels. During the first two or three weeks of the EFL classes, and after teachers have had a chance to interact with students and involve them in some English activities, they would be able to identify some clear misplaced cases and recommend demoting or promoting them to lower or higher levels. This treatment is in line with the opinion of Green and Weir (2004), who argue that proficiency tests do not provide sufficient indications about students’ language abilities. Green and Weir have suggested using other procedures to get more accurate diagnostic information. Also, Fox (2009) suggested that the misplacement problem of standardized tests can be sorted out by giving continuous diagnostic tests. It seems inevitable to avoid having misplaced students in English programs. Therefore, determining appropriate scores for placing applicants into various levels does not completely sort out the problem, but it may minimize the numbers of misplaced students.

The purposes of this study were to (1) find the TOEFL and IELTS pass rate of the EFL students after attending intensive English courses; (2) identify the least likely students to pass TOEFL or IELTS; and (3) provide guidelines for placing students into ESL classes.

Method

**Test-Takers**

The subjects of this study were undergraduate EFL students who studied English as a foreign language at school starting from grade one. The subjects of the years 2005-2009 were admitted to the UoS in the fall semesters directly after they graduated from high school. As for the
subjects of the years 2010-2013, the vast majority of them joined the university in fall, but few of them were accepted in spring. Male and female students attended their English classes separately under one management. The average class size was about 20 students.

**Result Analysis**

The results were analyzed in three phases. Phase one contains the TOEFL results of the students who were pre-and-post IEP TOEFL tested and attended the IEP for one and two semesters in 2005-2009. Phase two includes IELTS together with TOEFL results of the academic years 2006-2009. In phase three TOEFL and IELTS results of the years 2010-2013 were presented.

**Phase One: TOEFL Pass Rate**

The TOEFL data analysis of one and two semesters in the years 2005-9 was conducted. The students who were not pre-and-post IEP TOEFL tested and those who passed TOEFL within less than one month at the beginning of a semester or more than one month after a semester finished were excluded in this phase. To be able to identify the capability of students of different pre-IEP TOEFL scores to pass TOEFL after having intensive English classes, these scores were classified into intervals of 10, as can be seen in Table 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-IEP TOEFL Score Ranges in Intervals of Ten</th>
<th>Students within Pre-IEP TOEFL Ranges</th>
<th>Students Got 500 or above in the Post-IEP TOEFL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 300</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-309</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>310-319</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320-329</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330-339</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>340-349</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350-359</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>360-369</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370-379</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380-389</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>390-399</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-409</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>410-419</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420-429</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430-439</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440-449</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450-459</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>460-469</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>470-479</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>480-489</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>490-499</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>397 (19.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that 19.9% of the students passed TOEFL after having intensive English courses for one semester. It also shows that the students who scored below 430 in the pre-IEP TOEFL made very little progress in the post-IEP TOEFL. Some progress was made in the ranges between 430 and 449, but the significant improvement was made starting from a score of 450. About half of the students who could not pass TOEFL in the first semester decided to continue attending the IEP for a second semester. Table 4 shows the TOEFL results of those students.
Table 4. Post-IEP TOEFL results of the students attended the IEP for two semesters (fall and spring) in the academic years 2005-9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-IEP TOEFL Score Ranges in Intervals of Ten</th>
<th>Students within Pre-IEP TOEFL Ranges</th>
<th>Students Got 500 or above in the Post-IEP TOEFL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 300</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300-309</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>310-319</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320-329</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330-339</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>340-349</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350-359</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>360-369</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370-379</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>380-389</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>390-399</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-409</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>410-419</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420-429</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430-439</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>440-449</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450-459</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>460-469</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>470-479</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>480-489</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>490-499</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>714</td>
<td>119 (16.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 illustrates that 16.7% of the students who attended the IEP for two semesters passed the post-IEP TOEFL. It can be seen that the students who scored less than 390 made very little progress. Those who scored between 390 and 440 made more improvement, but those who scored 440 and above made the best progress among other students. We also see that the number of weaker students in semester two increased and the stronger ones decreased compared with the students who attended the IEP in semester one.

To assess students’ progress from a different angle, TOEFL mean gains after having English training for one and two semesters were included in Table 5.

Table 5. The pre-post IEP TOEFL means, standard deviation and gain scores after attending the IEP for one or two semesters in the academic years 2005-9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One semester</th>
<th>Two Semesters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean for Total Scores of the Pre-IEP TOEFL</td>
<td>414.9</td>
<td>403.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean for Total Scores of the Post-IEP TOEFL</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>455.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Gain</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation for the Total Scores of the Pre-IEP TOEFL</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation for the Total Scores of the Post-IEP TOEFL</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference of Standard Deviation for the Total Scores of the Pre-and Post TOEFL</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Students Sat for both the Pre-and Post TOEFL</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be seen from Table 5, the average gain scores per semester declined from 34.1 in semester one to 26 in semester two. It can also be seen that the standard deviation was already significant before attending the IEP, but it dramatically increased after attending the IEP for one
or two semesters. This indicates a great deal of individual variation that increased after having English training.

The overall pass rate of EFL students who had English classes for one semester together with those who attended English courses for two semesters is 25.8%. This means that three quarters of the students could not meet the university language requirement using TOEFL as a sole proficiency criterion. Therefore, IELTS was used as an alternative criterion, hoping that this might result in better performance on standardized tests.

**Phase Two: IELTS and TOEFL Pass Rate**

The pass rates of TOEFL together with IELTS in the years 2006-2009 were identified. The passing IELTS band in this phase was 5.5 with 5.0 as the minimum band in separate skills. To have a holistic picture of the performance of EFL students, all students who attended the IEP for one and two semesters were counted irrespective whether or not they were pre-or-post IEP TOEFL tested. Table 6 includes TOEFL and IELTS results in three years.

**Table 6. Post-IEP TOEFL and IELTS pass rates of the students attended the IEP for one and two semesters in the academic years 2006-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One Semester</th>
<th>Two Semesters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Students Attended the IEP</td>
<td>2330</td>
<td>1097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StudentsExitedBased on TOEFL</td>
<td>296 (12.7%)</td>
<td>97 (8.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StudentsExitedBased on IELTS</td>
<td>212 (9.1%)</td>
<td>118 (10.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StudentsExited Based on Both TOEFL and IELTS</td>
<td>508 (21.8%)</td>
<td>215 (19.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen in Table 6 that after using IELTS as a second standard test, students made some improvement on their test performance. Their overall pass rate increased from 25.8% using TOEFL only in phase 1 to 31% using TOEFL and IELTS in phase 2. But this increase was not significant enough; many EFL students were still unable to achieve a score of 500 on TOEFL or a band of 5.5 on IELTS. In order to enable more students to meet the university language requirement, the cut off IELTS band was lowered to 5.0 in phase 3.

**Phase Three: TOEFL and IELTS Pass Rate after Lowering the IELTS Cut off Band Score to 5.0**

In the academic years 2010-2013 the IELTS passing band was lowered to 5.0 with no minimum in language skills. To know to what extent this modification helped in increasing the numbers of students who managed to meet the university language requirement, a further investigation was made on the TOEFL and IELTS results of these years. Table 7 includes the results of the students who passed TOEFL or IELTS within fall and spring semesters of the years 2010-2013.

**Table 7. The overall TOEFL and IELTS pass rates of the students attended the IEP in fall and spring semesters in the academic year 2010-2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Spring Semesters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Students Attended the IEP</td>
<td>1618</td>
<td>714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Passed TOEFL</td>
<td>84 (5.2%)</td>
<td>7 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Passed IELTS</td>
<td>685 (42.3%)</td>
<td>259 (36.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students Passed TOEFL or IELTS</td>
<td>769 (47.5%)</td>
<td>266 (37.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 shows that while the number of students who achieved the required TOEFL passing score went down sharply, the pass rate on IELTS increased substantially. It was clear that lowering the passing IELTS band made most students refrain from sitting for TOEFL and resort to IELTS that they found ‘easier.’ The Table illustrates that 42.3% of the students passed IELTS in the fall semester whereas only 5.2% passed TOEFL. Similarly, 36.3% of the spring semester students passed IELTS, but only 1% passed TOEFL. Taking into account that about 50% of the students of the spring semester were new students who attended the IEP in spring semester, the overall pass rate on IELTS of the students who attended the fall and/or spring semester was about 52%.

It is notable that EFL students of different levels made different amount of progress. Table 8 shows the TOEFL and IELTS pass rate of levels 1, 2, 3 and 4 in fall and spring semesters.

Table 8. The TOEFL and IELTS pass rates of the four levels in fall and spring semesters in the academic year 2010-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>TOEFL Pass Rate</th>
<th>IELTS Pass Rate</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>TOEFL Pass Rate</th>
<th>IELTS Pass Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>411 (25.4%)</td>
<td>2 (0.5%)</td>
<td>50 (12.2%)</td>
<td>91 (12.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9 (9.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>526 (32.5%)</td>
<td>6 (1.1%)</td>
<td>209 (39.7%)</td>
<td>241 (33.8%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46 (19.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>475 (29.4%)</td>
<td>25 (5.3%)</td>
<td>305 (64.2%)</td>
<td>269 (37.7%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>130 (48.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>206 (12.7%)</td>
<td>51 (24.8%)</td>
<td>121 (58.7%)</td>
<td>113 (58.7%)</td>
<td>6 (5.3%)</td>
<td>74 (65.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be seen in Table 8, the students who scored below 380 on the-pre-IEP TOEFL (level 1 students) made little improvement. The Table also shows that those who scored between 380 and 420 (level 2 students) benefited a lot from the advantage of lowering the IELTS cut off band. They had a much better performance in meeting the university language requirement than their counterparts in Tables 3 and 4 who sat for TOEFL only.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that the performance of EFL students has improved when IELTS was used as second English proficiency criterion besides TOEFL, and it improved further when the IELTS cut off band was lowered to 5.0. The pass rate increased from 25.8% using TOEFL as a sole proficiency criterion in phase one to 31% using IELTS beside TOEFL in phase two. But this improvement was considered little. About two thirds of the candidates still could not meet the university language requirement. This indicates that the IELTS cut off band 5.5 as well the 500 TOEFL scores were difficult for many EFL students to achieve. Therefore, there was a persistent need to lower the admission cut off score of TOEFL and/or IELTS in order to better balance the passing and failing ratios. Modifying the IELTS passing band to 5.0 with no minimum in separate skills in phase 3 resulted in doubling the number of students who passed IELTS. The pass rate on TOEFL and IELTS in phase 3 went up dramatically to about 52%.

In the light of the findings of the current study, there were substantial differences between the performance of EFL students on TOEFL and IELTS. One of the reasons was due to the fact that IELTS band 5.0 does not equate 500 scores on TOEFL. This was reflected in the significant differences between the pass rate of TOEFL and IELTS in phase three. While 944 students scored 5.0 or above on IELTS in fall and spring semesters, only 91 students passed TOEFL. A second reason is that due to the fact that seeing more and more classmates sitting for and passing IELTS made the vast majority of the study subjects to refrain from sitting for TOEFL and taking...
IELTS instead. As a result, they chose to have IELTS preparation courses besides the intensive English courses instead of TOEFL courses. Ying (2011) mentioned that an IELTS preparation program is necessary for students to give them practice and develop test skills that help students to perform better at IELTS. A third reason is that most of the subjects of this study got about 100 scores away from the required admission score which was not possible to gain in one or two semesters. On the other hand, many of the students who could not get 5.0 on IELTS in their first attempt were between 0.5 and 1.0 band away from the required passing band and this was not difficult for them to achieve in the second attempt especially after having ample practice of IELTS materials. Taylor (2011) pointed out that the students who are a band or more away from the required passing score benefit a lot from the IELTS preparation program. A fourth reason could be that mere using two different tests with different components, contents and question formats was an advantage for students who were also different in terms of language proficiency level and language skill abilities. The paper based TOEFL test used in this study consisted of three parts: listening, grammar and reading; IELTS test consisted of four parts that do not completely match with the TOEFL parts: listening, reading, writing and speaking. These differences between the two tests might serve better a wider range of students. Geranpayeh (1994) stated that British and North American English proficiency tests follow different test methods and this might affect the performance of examinees who sit for these tests. A fifth reason might be that different marking systems were followed in marking TOEFL and IELTS tests. In marking, for example, listening and reading tests, students in TOEFL were evaluated within one single score for each skill, but in IELTS students who earned different scores within a certain range of scores were given the same band. This helped the students who were at the bottom of the range to get the same band as the students who were at the top of the range. Although about 52% of EFL students managed to meet the university language requirement, still about 48% of them failed to achieve this goal. This is a big loss, and it should be an issue of concern for all educational institutions. Golder et al. (2011) mentioned that refusing to admit immigrants in universities because of language weakness was unfair. There is a need to find other measures that can provide evidence of language proficiency of some of those students who were disadvantaged because of using international tests. One of these measures could be using their IEP results instead of relying completely on standardized tests that may not sometimes give accurate information about students’ language competency. Some students do not usually perform well in international tests, but their performance is very good in English classes. Green and Weir (2004) pointed out that these standardized tests could give some information about students’ language level, but they do not provide sufficient details about their abilities. Another criterion could be considering high school results that may give an important indication of students’ performance when they attend universities. The study results of Seelen (2002) indicated that school-level English does not correlate with students’ academic performance. The researcher recommended using overall school performance as the main university entry criterion and considered it a better predictor of students’ performance than English. Considering such measures will give a final chance for more than 40% of the students who could not pass TOEFL or IELTS. However, many universities still insist on sticking to the results of the international proficiency tests and are not willing to consider any other solutions for the students who fail these tests. If this is the case then accepting the students who are unlikely to pass these tests in IEPs is a waste of time, money and effort.

Based on the TOEFL results in phase one, the students can be classified into four categories. The first one is the category of incapable students whose pre-IEP TOEFL score was below than
390. They were about a quarter of the students in this phase. They showed a lack of capacity to pass TOEFL. Only 3.8% of them passed the test within one academic year. While the overall mean gain score for two semesters was 52, the incapable students need to achieve a gain score of 110 or more which was impossible for them to do so. The second category is the limited performance students who ranged between 390 and 429. They were about 40% of the students. They made little improvement in the first semester, but when they attended the IEP for a second semester they showed some progress. About 15% of them exited the standard in one or two semesters. Again, it was still challenging for most of them to pass TOEFL. They needed to gain a TOEFL score of 70-110 to be able to pass the test and this was much higher than the average gain score of the students in phase one. The third category is the below average students whose pre-IEP TOEFL score ranged between 430 and 449 and they were about 15% of the overall IEP students. About 33% of them passed TOEFL. They made better improvement compared to the previous category and the gain score they were required to have was closer to the average gain scores of this phase. The fourth category is the capable students whose pre-IEP TOEFL score ranged between 450 and 499. They were about 20% of the students and their overall pass rate was 73%. The performance of this category was the best because the gain score they needed to achieve matched with the average gain score in phase one. In the light of the above, the appropriate cut off score for joining IEPs if TOEFL is used solely as proficiency criterion should not be less than 390. In fact, the TOEFL cut off score may range from 390 to 450 depending on the discretion of individual universities. In the case of using IELTS with cut off band score 5.0 and TOEFL with cut off score 500, the least capable students were level one students who got less than 380 on the pre-IEP TOEFL. They were 28.6% of the overall number of students in phase three and about 11% of them passed TOEFL or IELTS. Imposing the TOEFL scores 380/390 as a cut off score for attending intensive English courses would result in losing about a quarter of the IEP candidates. On the other hand, it would increase the pass rate from about 25% to 33% using TOEFL as a measure and 60% to 77% using IELTS and TOEFL as proficiency tests. This matches with the opinion of Des Brisay and Ready (1991) who stated that improving the pass rate in IEPs entails higher entry scores and this may result in seriously reducing the number of potential candidates.

Finally, placing students into the right English levels facilitates the teaching and learning process and makes the job of the teacher and the learner easier. Fulcher (1997) pointed out that accurate assessment of students’ language abilities and placing them in the appropriate language levels is important for all academic departments. However, placing students into different English levels can never be free of mistake. Placement tests themselves have their own deficiencies. Moreover, students’ performance could be different from one exam to another depending on the conditions exams were conducted under. Also, students’ unfamiliarity with exams could be a disadvantage for many of them. In fact, most of the new students have never sat for an international test before joining their universities. This gives some of them a kind of an exam shock that definitely affects their performance negatively. In spite of these challenges, misplaced cases can still be minimized if an appropriate cut off score that qualifies students to attend the IEP is imposed on new students. Accepting students who are incapable to pass standardized tests is a kind of misplacement because they are simply placed in the wrong place. When the cut off score is decided on, the expected gain scores that students need to achieve should be determined. Based on the findings of this study, students are expected to achieve a TOEFL gain score of about 25-30 per semester. This may help in minimizing student misplacement into ELS classes, a problem...
that Kokhan (2012) sees as inevitable: “It seems that for any score that I choose as a cut off score, there will always be a significant proportion of misplaced students.” (p.305)

Now that the TOEFL and IELTS result map of EFL students is made available, it is left to the discretion of individual educational institutions to decide where to draw the cut off line for admitting students into the IEP, admitting students into the university, and placing students into different IEP levels.

**About the Author:**

Saleh Saafin has a Ph.D. in Education in the field of TEFL from the University of Exeter in England. He teaches English in the English language Center of the University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. He has an extensive EFL teaching experience at a university level. His areas of interest include effective teaching and language testing.

**References**


Collaborative Reflection: Vehicle for Professional Growth

Amna Abdelgadir Yousif
Ahfad University for Women
Omdurman, Sudan

Abstract
This paper relates our own experience in working with our undergraduate students, who are studying to be teachers, in their teaching practice. It shows how these students can be involved in various reflective processes hopefully resulting in becoming increasingly aware of various theories of teaching and in the improvement and the development of their perspective of classroom practices. The framework within which we worked incorporated five criteria: observation, experiential practice, personal evaluation, group discussion, and comments by mentors. Problems in the implementation of this framework and possible solutions will be discussed.

Keywords: collaboration, reflection, observation, mentor, practicum.
Introduction

Girls’ education in Saudi Arabia has expanded tremendously in the last 25 years. This expansion has created a need for pre-service education and teacher professional development programs resulting in the establishment of colleges of education throughout the country. These colleges were recently affiliated with various universities. A central aim of the colleges is to develop professional knowledge of pedagogical theories and methods. Such knowledge cannot be merely transmitted but achieved through practice and experience.

The college of education for girls in Almajmah is one of the many girls’ colleges previously under the auspices of the Presidency of Girls’ Education in Saudi Arabia and recently affiliated to Almajmah University. It is upgraded to offer a Bachelor of Education in 1994. It comprises eight departments: Islamic Studies, Arabic Language, Science, English, Home Economics, Mathematics, Computer Science and Education. English language is a compulsory subject in the first two years in all the departments and in all four years in the department of Arabic. This is not only because English is an international language but also because there is a particular need for English within the Saudi community. English is an important tool in the oil, banking and medical industries. Saudi Arabia is the largest oil export country. In addition English is used for communication and transactions in the business and medical industries. There is also a large community of speakers of other languages that use English as a lingua franca.

The English language department, which teaches a combination of linguistic, literary and educational subjects, provides the Almajmah province and surrounding towns and villages with primary and secondary English language teachers. ELT methodology and training are essential components of the English department.

This paper describes our own experience in working with our students in their teaching practice. It explores the actual processes involved in assisting these students on developing their potentials by embracing reflective processes hopefully resulting in highlighting potential problems and examining alternative means of overcoming them besides becoming increasingly aware of various theories of teaching and the development and improvement of their own classroom practices.

Practicum

The practicum includes a variety of activities. Students are required to observe teachers and peers in action, devise a lesson plan for teaching a specific activity, teach a class, reflect on their own teaching behavior and discuss their own and their peer teaching behavior in seminars. Below is a schedule for the practicum.

| Table 1. Students’ Participation during Practicum |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| Phase           | Week        | Number of lessons | Activity                          | School          |
| Third year class |             |               |                                    |                 |
| 2nd semester    | 1           | 3-4           | Observation                        | Junior secondary|
|                 | 1           | 2-3           | * Periodic teaching +observation   |                 |
|                 | 2           | 6-7           | *Continuous teaching               |                 |
|                 | 5           |               |                                    |                 |
| Fourth year class |           | 6-7           |                                    |                 |
| 1st semester    | 2           | 3-4           | Periodic teaching +observation     | Senior secondary|
|                 | 8-13        | 6-7           | *Continuous teaching               |                 |
|                 | 14-15       |               |                                    |                 |

*Teaching once a week
*Teaching two weeks consecutively
The students start their practicum in the second semester of their third year (phase 1). The practicum during the first phase takes place at Junior Secondary level in government schools. The schools are usually selected in collaboration with the ministry of education regional office of girls’ education and according to the availability of the classes required for practice. The students attend schools once a week in the first five weeks of the second term (phase 1). In the first week they observe 3-4 classes taught by class teachers. Following observation in a session specifically assigned for discussion, they discuss with their mentor what happened in each class. In weeks 2-5 of phase 1 students deliver lessons themselves and observe lessons taught by their peers which are followed by discussion.

Continuous teaching practice lasts for two weeks; however students do not spend all two weeks in schools. Depending on the school schedules, each student teaches a specific number of lessons and is assessed in two lessons.

Similar to phase 1, phase 2 is focuses on teaching, observation of peer teaching and discussion; however the teaching is performed at senior secondary schools.

Phase 2 concludes the practicum. For two weeks the students give lessons either to a particular class or different classes according to availability of English classes and they are assessed in two of these classes.

Models of teacher learning
Wallace (1993) outlines three main models of teacher learning: the craft model, the applied science model and the reflective model.

In the craft model learning occurs as a result of observation and imitation. The student observes professional actions of a model teacher and imitates them.

In the applied science model the students study theoretical courses and then apply them to classroom practice, whereas in the reflective model they observe or teach lessons and then reflect on their teaching either individually or in a group.

The teaching practice in our college adheres to the reflective model. Reflection however, was found to be unsuccessful in developing countries (O’Sullivan 2004) because learners are accustomed to being instructed by their teachers. To make our model as real as possible so as not to be swimming against the current we incorporated mentor’s comments in our model. Our reflective model is represented by figure 1.
Observation

One way that students can begin to acquire insight into the complexity of the foreign language classroom is through ‘guided, systematic and focused observation’ (Day, 1990, p. 43) of real classroom situations. Such a process will assist the students in:

1. developing a terminology for understanding and discussing the teaching process
2. developing an awareness of the principles and decision making that underlie effective teaching
3. distinguishing between effective and ineffective classroom practices
4. identifying techniques and practices student teachers can apply to their own teaching.

(Day, 1990, p. 43)

Day identifies two approaches to classroom observation: the qualitative approach and the quantitative approach. The qualitative approach is too broad and requires an overall view of the activities that take place in the foreign language classroom. Because a lot happens in the language classroom it would be difficult for students to grasp the whole activity and record events reliably and accurately. Students need to be highly trained in order to be able to perform a competent and reliable observation.

The quantitative approach on the other hand is based on completing a checklist. The checklist provides guidelines for effective observation. Checklists are simple to construct and use and they do not require extensive training. However, they may fail to capture all features of a class that
need to be observed. With this shortage in mind, we adhered to the quantitative approach in preparing our students for observation.

**Preparation for observation**

Following Nunan’s (1990) previewing activity, the students were asked to generate a set of features they expect to observe in a language classroom. A summary of the aspects they came up with was put on the board. These are usually features they have discussed in their English language methodology classes ‘and this reinforces the notion that observation is not value free but will reflect the beliefs and attitudes we have internalized through various means’ (Nunan, 1990, p. 66).

Based on their methodology course, students nominated the following features:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Feature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of blackboard</td>
<td>Elicitation techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching aids</td>
<td>classroom management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s personality</td>
<td>Use of L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the lesson</td>
<td>language accuracy and fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time allotted</td>
<td>lesson variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error correction</td>
<td>methods used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students looked at a previously designed checklist, compared it with their list, discussed items not included in their list and inquired about items they did not understand. Such a process makes them feel that they have participated in the construction of the checklist rather than the list being imposed on them. Providing them with a checklist of their make to fill is fruitful and may assist in discovering things about their skills and abilities as well as areas of weakness as they are compelled to fill the list. The checklist affords the students the opportunity to focus their observation and later assist in evaluating ‘their performance against clear criteria such that they are measuring their progress against targets which are self-identified’ (Stefani, 2004, p.164).

This checklist is then used for observing language classes and evaluating students’ performance at the end of the practicum. The purpose of this practice is to sensitize students to various aspects of the language classroom, familiarize them with the observational tool they are to use and stimulate discussion on internalized theoretical issues. By participating in discussing aspects for observation and evaluation we hope to develop the ability to describe classroom activities and peers’ behavior, and identify techniques students can apply to their own teaching.

**Observing classroom teachers**

During this stage of observation the students equipped with their checklist attend classes (table1, phase1, week1) on real time taught by the class teachers and take notes. On a session following the classes they discuss with their mentor the various classroom behaviors they have coded and whenever possible relate them to theoretical issues. In this way they can identify techniques they can employ in their own teaching. Moreover, they will be able to comprehend what happens in the classroom and relate it to what they have studied in their methodology class.

**Observing peers**

Students observe each other when doing their teaching practice on preparation for reflection. The purpose of this activity is to enable students to compare and contrast what their peers do to what they themselves do when they are in their shoes and to bring to their attention techniques of which they might not be aware. Observation of peers provides ground for reflection.
**Drawback of checklist**

To catch most of the activities that go on in the language classroom we adopted a long checklist. Although the students were familiar with the aspects in the checklist, its length hindered their ability to pursue the numerous items. One way of overcoming this is to devise various checklists each dealing with a specific behavior in the foreign language classroom e.g., error correction, classroom management etc. The whole group of students can look at one classroom phenomenon or they can be divided into smaller groups each observing a specific behavior.

**Experiential practice**

There are two main periods for the execution of teaching, the periodic and the continuous periods. In the periodic teaching experience each student has an opportunity to teach between 3-5 classes while in the continuous teaching practice each one teaches 10-12 classes. During the periodic teaching practice prior to the implementation of each individual lesson the students prepare their lesson plans and discuss them in a meeting with their mentors. This is intended to afford students with an opportunity to focus attention on problematic areas and means of overcoming them. During the presentation of the lessons their peers and mentors observe them using the checklist. Usually at the beginning of the practice the students were nervous and lacked self-confidence. This gradually disappeared as they observed, discussed and presented lessons.

**Reflection**

Although a great number of educators agree on the advantages of the use of reflection to promote teacher development, there is no consensus on the definition of reflection (Hatton and Smith, 1995). For the purpose of our training we adhered to Farrell (2001) who defined reflection as means used by to-be-teachers to consider the methods they use, why they use it and whether using it will effect change.

**Modes of reflection**

Subsequent to observation and experiential practice we have a seminar session of 60 minutes in which students reflect on their actions verbally. The importance of such sessions is that they provide chances for students to talk about their teaching and to discuss their experiential practice. Such settings afford students opportunities to ask questions about teaching problems and get responses to their questions, which will help them gain new insights (Gebhard 1990). Discussion also provides alternative possibilities that can be adopted. Reflecting on their actions will hopefully lead to a change of behavior.

We followed two modes of reflection individual reflection and peer group discussion.

**Individual reflection**

Individual reflection affords students chances to talk about their teaching to increase self-knowledge (Gebhard 1990). Students are invited to talk about their own teaching experience. They are encouraged to identify the positive and negative aspects of their lessons. By considering their lessons ‘in light of positive and negative values’ they ‘begin to evolve personal standards and goals for future teaching in the practicum and beyond’. (Paddington, 1990, p. 144) They reflect upon factors that influence their behavior during lesson implementation and in so doing, they reveal their own perceptions and beliefs (Hatton and Smith 1995). For example one student stated her negative views on pair work. This brought up a lively discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of pair work, when to use it and for what purpose. However, most of the time students were reluctant to voice their views either because they lack confidence or are not aware of or embarrassed by their shortcomings.

**Peer group discussion**
Peer group discussion affords students opportunities to talk about their peers’ teaching. Subsequent to observation of their peers’ lessons students discuss the teaching behavior according to their coded observation checklist. ‘Through this process they have the chance to relate their experiences to those of others, to gain awareness of possible teaching behaviors, and to consider their own teaching decisions’ (Gebhard et. al.,1990, p. 22).

Discussion can provide ground for problem solving in which students ‘share ideas about how to solve a problem and work together in a decision making process’ (Gebhard 1990:23). For example, in one of our practicum seminars, one student indicated her difficulty in making students understand her instructions and appealed for a solution for her problem. The lesson was taught to 1st year junior secondary students who were in their 3rd month of encountering English as a foreign language for the first time. The following are some of the suggestions from the group:

- Repeat the instruction
- Rephrase the wording of the instruction
- Simplify your language
- Give the instruction in Arabic

This last suggestion raised a ‘hubbub’ of pros and cons on using L1 in the English language classroom and I had to intervene to bring it to an end. Paradoxically, the discussion was carried out in Arabic. I guess they were too eager and excited to defend their views.

**Obstacles associated with reflection**

There are a number of problems that impede the attainment of reflection. Time limitation imposes constraints on acquiring the reflective skills needed for development. We noticed that developing reflection appears to take an extended period for our students. The time allotted for our sessions (60 minutes per week) seems inadequate for developing reflective teaching techniques.

Feelings of vulnerability: Such feelings result from exposing one’s ideas to others that may reveal weaknesses through reflection and may cause students to be defensive.

Social inhibition: Students are reluctant to talk about their teaching. They indicate that they have no comment on their lessons or their peers’ lessons or they just say ‘the lesson was good’ or just keep silent. Their social upbringing inhibits them from making comments especially if they tend to uncover weaknesses. Admitting incompetence doesn’t ‘come easy to some people. It is blocked by a sense of embarrassment or inhibition, a fear of being scrutinized by others, or a sense of friendship towards some of their peers.

**Collaborative reflection**

To overcome these problems and facilitate reflection we attempted collaborative reflection within which students can discuss together as ‘critical friends’ (Farrell 1998). For example;

- observe a number of classes prior to discussion to eliminate judgment and focus on description of language aspects.
- whole class discussion to identify behavior(s) that needs modification highlighting the activity rather than the person performing it.
- divide class into groups of 3 and ask them to discuss why a specific behavior needs to be changed and what are the ways by which change can be effected.
- whole class discussion of ideas generated during small group collaborative reflection.
In an out of class assignment the students were advised to reflect on their own teaching behavior and write how they behaved during their lessons. Based on the results of the group discussion and collaborative reflection they were asked to record how this behavior could be altered to produce more efficient teaching. Hopefully their reflection will result in a change of undesirable behavior in their subsequent classes. This process will also afford students opportunity to compare their current experience with their previous ones and detect where modification occurs.


Nevertheless, our students stood short of performing this activity complaining that it is time consuming. This is in accordance with Cornford (2002) who stated that writing journals is ‘time consuming and not resulting in substantial insights’ (p. 225).

Mentor’s role
The main role of the mentor is to train to effect change. The literature gives us different modes of fostering change in teachers by helping them to teach more efficiently. Freeman (1990) identified three modes of offering such assistance; directive, alternative and non-directive

Directive mode
In the directive mode the mentor takes an authoritative role. She he comments on the students’ lessons, directs and informs students of proposed changes. She he even sometimes provides an example to be followed which is based on her his views of what constitutes effective teaching. The role of the students is to effect change by implementing the mentor’s directions. The problem with the directive mode is that it ‘may give rise to feelings of defensiveness and low self-esteem on the part of the (student) teacher’ (Gebhard, 1990, p. 156).

Alternative mode
In this mode the mentor proposes 3 or 4 alternatives to the point under scrutiny and the student chooses from among the alternatives. Discussion of the reasons for the selection of a particular alternative then follows.

Non-directive mode
The student finds solutions to teaching problems herself without direction from the mentor. The role of the mentor is ‘to provide the student teacher with a forum to clarify perceptions of what he or she is doing’ (Freeman, 1990, p. 112). The mentor points out some of the things that occurred in the lessons and the student is free to express and clarify ideas and decide how to act. The mentor refrains from making suggestions, giving examples or proposing solutions but shows understanding and responds with paraphrasing the student’s words (Freeman, 1990).

We used an eclectic method comprising elements of the directive and the alternative modes. Our students are under training and they expect the mentor to voice her views on teaching techniques. They expect to be assisted to acquire various teaching techniques and to be empowered to develop and improve their way of teaching. They may not think highly of their mentor if she stopped short of directing them. Hence the role of the mentor is:

To provide information by giving it herself, by advising on other relevant sources, by eliciting it from the students themselves during the reflection sessions and/or encourage students through question and answer technique to express their thoughts and present their own new ideas.

Conclusion
The purpose of the practicum is to empower students with pedagogical techniques that enable them to teach more efficiently. Structured observation, individual reflection, peer group discussion, collaborative and written reflection, and mentor’s comments are means of effecting change. They help students comprehend and appreciate what transpires in the language classroom and they assist them in developing techniques for handling their own classes. However, care must be taken to empower students with clear criteria that enable them to evaluate their performance. Hoover (1994) cautioned that reflection requires time and opportunity and Cornford (2002) argues that such programs like ours lack sufficient ‘practice and feedback to ensure long-term skill retention and effective performance’ (p. 223). Hence, our course needs to be restructured to provide enough time for the practicum to develop students’ awareness and empower them with different means of effective reflection that assist them not only in their practicum but also in their later teaching.

About the Author:
Dr. Amna A. Yousif is an Associate Professor at Ahfad University, Sudan. She holds a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Reading and a Med from the University of Wales. She taught linguistics and EFL methodology at tertiary institutions in Sudan and Saudi Arabia. Her main interests are learner autonomy and teacher training.

References


Performing Identity: Differences between Native and Nonnative Speakers of English in Gatekeeping Encounters

Hassan M. T. Qutub
University of Bristol, United Kingdom

Abstract
The current study investigates how native and nonnative speakers of English applying for teaching positions performed their identities in job interviews. The data included two teacher job interviews; one was with a native speaker of English, and the other was with a nonnative speaker. Both interviews were transcribed and analyzed in accordance with Pomerantz and Fehr’s (1997) conversation analysis framework and Gee’s (2000) identity framework. Results indicated that miscommunication, feelings of a lack of experience compared to westerners, and unsuccessful co-membership affected the identity performance of the nonnative speaking candidate. The identity performance of the native speaking candidate was characterized by the absence of miscommunication and successful co-membership. The paper recommends that nonnative speaking teachers of English be exposed to the pragmatics of interviews through direct instructions in teacher preparation and professional development programs. This will help in increasing their chances of successful identity performance in teacher job interviews and other forms of gatekeeping encounters.

Keywords: Gatekeeping encounters; Identity; Miscommunication.
Introduction

Social identity is shaped by the different contexts and the roles participants assign to themselves (Tajfel, 1982; Turner & Oakes, 1986; Zimmerman, 1998). In gatekeeping encounters, identities of participants are shaped by their institutional roles (i.e., as gatekeepers or gatekeepees); hence, producing unique institutional identities based on the roles participants assume in these encounters (Kerekes, 2006). Gatekeeping encounters can be defined as “asymmetric speech situations during which a person who represents a social institution seeks to gain information about the lives, beliefs, and practices of people outside of that institution in order to warrant the granting of an institutional privilege” (Schiffrin, 1994, 146). Several studies investigated gatekeeping encounters in various settings including professor student advising sessions (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993), academic counseling (Erickson & Shultz, 1982), and job interviews (Gumperz, 1992; Kerekes, 2006, 2007). Most of the literature examining gatekeeping encounters investigated miscommunication, which has been viewed as the result of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences between interlocutors (Gumperz, 1982; Roberts, Davies, & Jupp, 1992). Gumperz’s pioneering research in interactional sociolinguistics indicated that miscommunication in gatekeeping encounters goes back to cultural and linguistic differences between interlocutors belonging to different ethnic and/or cultural groups (Gumperz, 1982, 1992). In other words, interlocutors belonging to the same first language (L1) background are viewed to be more congruent and hence have fewer chances of facing miscommunication compared to interlocutors with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This miscommunication can affect the successiveness and the decisions made in gatekeeping encounters. Tannen (2005) further supported the above view by claiming that even though interviewers in job interviews believe that their judgments are only based on candidates’ qualifications, they are markedly influenced by the linguistic features used by candidates during interviews. However, these views were challenged for taking into account only situational factors that are merely based on contextualization cues in investigating miscommunication and ignoring the individual characteristics of interlocutors belonging to different cultural backgrounds (Sarangi, 1994; Shea, 1994). Kerekes (2007) referred to the importance of Hinnenkamp’s (1987) notion of pretext in understanding miscommunication within gatekeeping encounters. Pretext involves the concepts of power and prejudice and reflects the overall context influencing interaction, which includes the linguistic, cultural, and ethnic affiliations (Kerekes, 2007; Shea, 1994). Therefore, the pretext of a gatekeeping encounter reflects the different identities of interlocutors as affected by the broad context of the interaction. This brings us to the conclusion that the way interlocutors perform their identities has a major impact on the amount of miscommunication and hence the successiveness of gatekeeping encounters. Even though gatekeeping encounters were repeatedly investigated in talk-in-interaction studies (e.g., Kerekes, 2006, 2007; Gumperz, 1992), most of that research was directed towards fields other than education. However, most of the research on the interaction in educational settings was mainly directed towards the classroom, turning a blind eye to other important forms of interaction such as teacher job interviews as forms of gatekeeping encounters (Cohen, 2008). Despite its crucial importance, in fact, performing identity in teacher job interviews has not received enough attention from talk-in-interaction studies. Moreover, most talk-in-interaction studies were more concerned with the interaction between native speakers as a means of revealing a candidate’s identity, giving little or no attention to the crucial role non-native speakers’ interaction can play in gatekeeping encounters (Bowles, 2006; Schegloff, Koshik, Jacoby, and Olsher, 2002).
To this effect, the current study aims to investigate the differences between native and non-native speakers of English in performing identity during teacher job interviews (i.e., as forms of gatekeeping encounters) through a conversation analysis of two teacher job interviews with one native and one non-native speaker of English paying particular attention to the way candidates performed their identities through talk-in-interaction. In order to achieve this goal, the following questions were addressed:

1. How is the identity of a non-native speaker of English performed through job interviews?
2. How is the identity of a native speaker of English performed through job interviews?
3. What are the differences in identity performance through job interviews between native and nonnative speakers of English?

Background

The term “social identity” was first formulated by Henri Tajfel and John Turner between the 1970s and 1980s (Turner & Reynolds, 2010). It can be defined as “that part of the individuals’ self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership” (Tajfel, 1981, 255). The above definition related social identity to two key factors. while the first factor is personal (i.e., self-concept) and tries to answer the question on who we are, the second factor includes the social context in which “self-concept” is performed, and answers the broader question on who we are with respect to the world that surrounds us. This makes it clear that social identities vary from one context to another. Therefore, members in the context of an educational institution carry a distinctive identity through which they perform their self-concept with respect to the context of a particular educational institution. This type of identity is referred to as institutional identity; seems to be misleading because institutional identity is not shaped solely by the institutional context, but it is also formed by other personal and social factors (Gee, 2000).

In a similar vein, Cohen (2008) conducted a study using interviews to investigate the identity talk of three teachers and to understand how teachers used linguistic features to accomplish their institutional identities. The analysis focused on teachers’ use of different discourse strategies including reported speech, mimicked speech, pronoun shifts, oppositional portraits, and juxtaposition of explicit claims to perform their institutional identities. Results showed that teachers positioned themselves in relation to others within the educational institution, and they also viewed themselves as active knowledge producers rather than information deliverers. Gee (2000, 100) proposed a framework in which he described four ways to view identity. The first identity descriptor suggested in his framework was “nature identity”, which referred to the natural state that individuals find themselves in. For example, the state of being a male or a female and the state of being a native speaker or a non-native speaker of English are determined by the forces of nature and humans are not usually able to alter that state. The second descriptor was “institution identity” and it referred to the position granted to an individual in an institution (e.g., a teacher or a student). In contrast to the nature identity, institution identity can be changed and is not as permanent as nature identity. The third identity descriptor suggested by Gee (2000) was “discourse identity”, it referred to the distinguishing quality that is recognized by other individuals through interaction and was used to characterize a particular individual. In other words, through interaction, we sometimes categorize people according to certain traits (e.g., charismatic, serious, or funny) that characterize their personality and hence, become part of it. This descriptor reflects the judgments made by other interlocutors.
in order to perceive the identity of an individual. Finally, the fourth descriptor was “Affinity identity” and it referred to the shared experiences and/or practices through which an individual affiliates himself/herself to a given group. For example, going regularly to the same cafe with a group of individuals or even being a fan of the same football team reflects a shared affiliation to that practice with other individuals, and can result in feelings of solidarity among the members of that group which is reflected in their identities. Gee’s identity framework (2000) was used to analyze the performance of candidates’ identities during the two teacher job interviews investigated in the current study. Kerekes (2007) and Shea (1994) stressed the effect of the pretext which refers to the overall context of gatekeeping encounters including cultural, linguistic, and ethnic affiliations (Gumperz, 1992) as well as power relations and prejudice (Hinnenkamp, 1987). This broad context plays a key role in reflecting the identities of different interlocutors in gatekeeping encounters, and hence affects the degree of miscommunication and successfulness of these encounters. In a study investigating the different aspects affecting the successfulness of job interviews in gatekeeping encounters, Kerekes (2006) identified two main factors that foster the success of job interviews. The first one was co-membership and it referred to the shared features between two or more interlocutors (e.g., graduating from the same university, going to the same gym, knowing the same individual, etc.). This factor overlaps with the “affinity identity” from Gee’s (2000) framework of identity representation and indicates that co-membership and performing affinity identity can lead to successful job interviews. The second factor was trustworthiness. Kerekes (2006) listed five factors that can influence trustworthiness as identified by Weber and Carter (2003) including interlocutors’ inclinations (i.e., having a tendency towards trusting), their appearance, their personality (i.e., how friendly they are), their references, and their manners during the conversation. The third factor (i.e., personality) and the fifth factor (i.e., manners during the conversation) are related to Gee’s (2000) third identity descriptor (i.e., discourse identity), which refers to the listener’s impressions and judgments based on the ongoing interaction. Therefore, one can claim that trustworthiness and performing discourse identity can lead to successful job interviews. Overall, the two factors provided by Kerekes (2006) are very much related to Gee’s (2000) identity framework, and this proves that success in performing identity can lead to successful job interviews. Campbell and Roberts (2007) conducted a study comparing success in job interviews between British, British minority ethnic, and born abroad candidates. They found out that non-native speakers of English, even when having a university degree, were judged by recruiters “as inconsistent, untrustworthy, and non-belongers to the organization” (p. 243). The findings of Campbell and Roberts (2007) illustrated the notion of miscommunication and proved that it could be affected by linguistic, ethnic, and cultural differences (Gumperz, 1992) as well as power relations and prejudice (Hinnenkamp, 1987). Jensen (2005) also conducted a case study investigating intercultural communication in a job interview. The interview took place between a Danish interviewer and a Chinese candidate. Jensen concluded that miscommunication could occur in job interviews due to cultural and ethnic differences between interlocutors, which further supports the early views of Gumperz (1992) and Hinnenkamp (1987).

From the literature discussed above, it is evident that most scholars have focused on either success in job interviews or revealing teacher identities. Performing teachers’ identities in job interviews has not been directly investigated in the literature. Therefore, the current study will strive to examine and shed more light on teachers’ identity performance in job interviews.
Methodology

Participants

The current study took place at a major Saudi Arabian university located in an urban setting. The participants included two male candidates applying for the post of an English language instructor and three male interviewers. The first candidate was a 25 year-old non-native speaker of English holding an MA in English language from a Moroccan university, and he was from Morocco. At the time of the interview, he was working as an English language instructor at another university located in Saudi Arabia. The second candidate was a 32 year-old native speaker of English holding an MA in Classics from the UK where he originally came from. He was working as an English language instructor at a Saudi Arabian university at the time of the interview. The interview panel interviewing the first candidate (i.e., the non-native speaker) consisted of two interviewers. The first interviewer was a 62 year-old native speaker of English from the United Kingdom holding a BA in English language from the UK. The second interviewer was a 32 year-old non-native speaker of English from Syria, and he obtained an MA in applied linguistics from a British university. The interview panel for the second candidate (i.e., the native speaker) consisted of the same first interviewer who interviewed the first candidate and a 58 year-old native speaker of English from the United States of America holding a BA in English language and literature from a US university. The three interviewers taught English to foundation year students at a Saudi university and also participated in some administrative duties.

Procedures

Two job interviews were conducted through Skype (i.e., a software for making voice and video calls over the internet) with two candidates applying for the position of an English language instructor. The interviews were audio recorded with the interviewers’ camera tuned off and the interviewee’s camera turned on (i.e., interviewers could see the candidates, but candidates could not see the interviewers). The interviews were conducted in a quiet room located at a university building. The first interview lasted about 24 minutes and the second interview lasted about 15 minutes. The two job interviews were then transcribed in order to be ready for analysis (see Appendix A for transcription notations). Ethical measures were taken to protect the rights of the participants. The original names of the participants were changed, the university they were applying to, the universities where they worked previously and universities where they were working at the time of the interview were not mentioned. Also, informed consent was taken from all participants.

Data analysis

The current study used conversation analysis as an analytical tool to analyze job interviews. Lazaraton (2004) defined conversation analysis as “a rigorous empirical approach to the analysis of oral discourse, with its disciplinary roots in sociology, which employs inductive methods to search for recurring patterns across many cases without appeal to intuitive judgments of what speakers think or mean” (pp. 51-52). Over the last few decades, applied linguists became interested in using conversation analysis in analyzing talk-in-interaction especially in educational settings (Schegloff et al., 2002). Pomerantz and Fehr (1997, 71-74) provided a useful analytical framework that contained five analytical “tools” for conducting conversation analysis; these included:

1- Selecting a sequence.
2- Characterizing the actions in the sequence.
3- Considering how speakers’ packaging of actions, including their selection of reference terms, provide for certain understandings of the actions performed and the matters talked about.

4- Considering how the timing and taking of turns provide for certain understandings of actions and the matters talked about.

5- Considering how the ways the actions were accomplished implicate certain identities, roles, and/or relationships for the inter-actants.

This analytical framework was used to conduct a conversation analysis of the two job interviews investigated in the current study.

In order to investigate both candidates’ identities during job interviews, the current study used Gee’s (2000) identity framework along with Pomerantz and Fehr’s (1997) framework. Gee’s identity framework (2000: 100) included four identity descriptors including “nature identity” (i.e., the natural state that individuals find themselves in), “institution identity” (i.e., the position granted to an individual in an institution, “discourse identity” (i.e., others’ judgments based on interaction), and “affinity identity” (i.e., shared experiences or practices that result in belonging to a particular group). Gee’s identity framework was explained in more detail in the background section above.

Results

The first question that the current study aimed to answer was: How did the identity of the non-native speaker of English perform through the job interview? This could be answered through an analysis of the job interview with the Moroccan candidate using Pomerantz and Fehr’s (1997) framework for conversation analysis as well as Gee’s (2000) identity framework.

If we look at excerpt (1), it would be clear that it represented a sequence including a question in which interviewer (1) was requesting a piece of information from the candidate and the candidate tried to provide the required information before the interviewer moved to a different question.

Excerpt (1)

72 Int.1: when would you be able to: leave that job? because you must be on 73 contract.
74 Cand.: ↑ya no I don't want to leave it right now.
75 Int.1: [aha=
76 Cand.: =but I think its my right to look you know for a better kind of 77 chance and a better salary if I find because I have you know in 78 some other contract I mean contracts with other universities.
79 Int.1: uhm=
80 Cand.: =and of course I will just do a kind of comparison and I will 81 choose the best one.
82 Int.1: <ya but> when would you be- be available to join us there’s a 83 spot on the form we have to write down when you'd be available.
84 Cand.: er of course for the next- for the next year.
85 Int.1: it will be the next academic year.
86 Cand.: [sure ya.
87 Int.1: so I'll put here September.
88 Cand.: September.
89 Int.1: [two thousand four- thirteen.
90 Cand.: uhm (3.5) because of course it is not 91 academic to leave without finishing the contract (.) I have 92 signed one year annual contract of course by
the year I consider 93 they will not er:: I will not for example I don't wish for example 94 to re- to renew the contract °you know° 95 Int.1: °okay° that is clear (.) AND at the university in er ((name of 96 city)) and at your workplace in Morocco how would you describe your teaching methodology ( )? The actions in excerpt (1) above can be characterized as follows: Lines 72-73, question requesting information (Q1). Line 74, (unexpected) incorrect answer to (Q1). Line 75, continuer indicating incomplete information. Lines 76-78, (unnecessary) supplementary information. Line 79, continuer indicating incomplete information. Lines 80-81, completing (unnecessary) supplementary information. Lines 82-83, rephrasing (Q1). Line 84, imprecise answer (A1). Line 85, repetition confirming (A1). Line 86, confirmation to (A1). Line 87, suggesting a precise (A1). Line 88, confirming precise (A1). Line 89, completing precise answer. Lines 90-94, unnecessary justification of (A1). Lines 95-97, confirming (A1) and asking a new question (Q2) to start another sequence. The packaging of actions in excerpt (1) shows that the sequence started with interviewer (1) asking a question (Q1) requesting a precise piece of information in lines (72-73) concerning the time (i.e., expected date) in which the candidate will be able to join the institution he is applying to. The wording of the question targeted the time when the candidate can leave his present job but the intended meaning was on the time in which the candidate will be available to join the institution he is applying to. As a result, in line (74), the candidate provided an unexpected and incorrect answer indicating that he could not leave the institution he was working for at the time of the interview. He clearly misinterpreted the interviewer’s question as a request to leave his current job immediately. In line (75), the interviewer gave a continuation signal to the candidate waiting for the required piece of information to follow (i.e., expected date of joining the institution). However, the candidate also provided additional and unnecessary information in lines (76-81) in which he explained the reasons for which he could not leave his current job immediately. In lines (82-83), the interviewer rephrased the wording of (Q1) in order to clear the misunderstanding. In line (84), the candidate provided an imprecise answer (i.e., next year); and the interviewer therefore suggested a precise answer (i.e., September) to end the sequence and to move on to a new sequence in lines (87-97).

Timing and turn taking in the above sequence were largely affected by the nature of conversation in interviews. Interviews can be viewed as a unique form of conversation in which interaction is governed by the institutional roles of the participants as well as the predetermined interview agenda (Lazaraton, 1992). In lines (75) and (79), even though the candidate was providing unexpected incorrect responses to the interviewer’s questions, the interviewer did not stop him and rather allowed him to complete the turn. After the candidate completely failed to answer the interviewer’s questions, the interviewer rephrased the question providing the candidate with a further clarification.

The actions accomplished in excerpt (1) clearly reflected the institutional role of the participant and the performance of his identities. In performing his institutional identity, the
candidate expressed his right to shop for jobs and to select the best one for himself in line (76). The candidate also showed trustworthiness through his being loyal to the institution he worked for at the time of the interview in lines (90-91), where he said: “it is not academic to leave without finishing the contract” (i.e., I speculate that he meant “professional” by “academic”). Last but not least, the candidate misunderstood (Q1). This miscommunication can be explained by the fact that the candidate misinterpreted the wording of (Q1).

With respect to Gee’s identity framework (2000), the candidate’s nature identity was characterized by his being a male nonnative speaker of English from Morocco. His institutional identity was shaped by the fact that he is a teacher of English applying for an English teaching position in an Arab speaking country. These identity descriptors affected the candidate’s identity performance during the job interview. This became evident in excerpt (2) below:

Excerpt (2)
184 Int.1: um (1.5) how do you (. ) see yourself in terms of future 185 professional development Ali.
186 Cand.: er: of course er concerning the future (. ) er: (. ) development (. ) 187 er professional development of course I mean western experience 188 (. ) okay so for example if I stay here er:: as long as I can for 189 example three years four years (. ) maximum I will be obliged to go 190 to England or America or Australia (. ) in the same area of 191 teaching.
192 Int.1: to live? or to study? or=
193 Cand.: =↑no to study.
194 Int.1: to study=
195 Cand.: =ya to study and then: I will choose it depends because its not 196 easy to get nationalities.
197 Int.1: ya=
198 Cand.:=ya.

In this excerpt, the interviewer asked the candidate about his plans for professional development. The candidate referred to the “western experience” as a source of professional development. This connection essentially came from his nature identity as a nonnative speaker of English. In lines (189-190), the candidate indicated that he was intending to “go to England, America, or Australia” without explaining the reason for that. In lines (192-193), the interviewer tried to enquire about the reason for which the candidate wanted to go to one of those countries and the participant indicated that he was planning to study there. Pursuing a graduate degree in an English speaking country was a reflection of the candidate’s institutional identity as an English language teacher and at the same time it reflected his nature identity as a nonnative speaker of English viewing westerners as experts. One can deduce, moreover, in line (196), the candidate unconsciously insinuated that he was not only intending to study in a western country, but that he was also intending to obtain a western nationality and live in a western country. This further supported his view of westerners as experts in line (187) and showed how his nature identity and institution identity affected his overall identity performance.

Based on the concept of interaction (Gee,2000), it is important to note that discourse identity is shaped by the judgment of others. Yet, and given the scope of the present study, no interviews were conducted with the interviewers to discover how discourse identity was performed.

Affinity identity refers to the shared experiences and/or practices that result in belonging to a particular group (e.g., acquaintance with an individual) (Gee, 2000). The interviewer tried to
show co-membership with the candidate by trying to confirm a shared acquaintance with an individual; however, the candidate was not familiar with that person as it appears in the excerpt below:

Excerpt (3)
513 Int.1: ((cough)) ya you did a CELTA I saw that which is very good at certain (centers) of the British Council lately.  
515 Cand.: yes British Council ( ).
516 Int.1: did you meet someone called Mark Brown there?  
517 Cand.: sorry↑
518 Int.1: did you know a teacher there called Mark Brown?  
519 Cand.: Mark no.  
520 Int.1: okay  
521 Cand.: uhm  
522 Int.1: thank you you Ali (1:0) he's not in Morocco ↑I think he might be in Casablanca though.  
524 Cand.: because I'm not (there) °I've no idea doctor Ben.°  

The identity descriptors identified by Gee (2000) do not have clear boundaries as they usually overlap with one another. Therefore, the affinity identity of the candidate was shaped by the fact that he shared a number of experiences and practices with the interviewers including being an English teacher, living in Saudi Arabia, and teaching the same level of students. Overall the identity performance of the first candidate was affected by miscommunication, unsuccessful co-membership, and feelings of a lack of experience compared to candidate from western communities.

The second question that the current study aimed to answer was: How did the identity of the native speaker of English perform through the job interview? This could be answered by analyzing the job interview with the British candidate using Pomerantz and Fehr’s framework for conversation analysis (1997) as well as Gee’s identity framework (2000). A close look at excerpt (4) below shows that the interview started with two questions from interviewer (1) requesting information. The candidate provided the required information and then the interviewer moved to the next question (i.e., sequence) in the interview.

Excerpt (4)
96 Int.1: ya erm ↑CAN I ask you (.) a question I usually ask all our candidates David why are you applying to the ((name of department)) in particular? (.) and what do you know about us?  
99 Cand.: erm well I think that'll be ((name of city))I mean the initial attraction is ((name of city)) in itself that (before coming) to [101 Saudi Arabia I have ( ) some family in ((name of city)) so ( ) an attraction (. ) the university erm and your department has a good reputation (. ) so I'd like to be apart of that.  
104 Int.1: well thanks for your honesty about wanting to come to ((name of city)) that's honest of you to say that.  
106 Cand.: [(thank you)  
107 Int.1: ↑have you looked at the website David?  
108 Cand.: I have yes erm possibly a month or so ago.  
109 Int.1: okay.  
110 Cand.: It was very good it had lots of resources and lots of information on it.  
112 Int.1: so you found it helpful and useful and (. ) beneficial.
113 Cand.: absolutely yes.
114 Int.1: o:kay.
115 Cand.: [(   ) it was very useful.
116 Int.1: ↑ when you
117 Cand.: [as opposed to many universities they don't have any (   ).
118 Int.1: no we we do we have put a lot of work in the last year or two in 119 developing the website its not by no means its perfect yet but we 120 are hoping (.) its gonna be at least presentable and ( ) to 121 develop itself.
122 Cand.: [we are developing (ours) as we speak at the moment here for 123 this university and that's difficult to ( )]
124 Int.1: ↑ in your two years at the university of ((name of university)) 125 when you're in the classroom with the students (.) how would you 126 describe your methodology David?

The actions in the above sequence can be characterized as follows:
Lines 96-98, two questions requesting information (Q1) and (Q2).
Lines 99-103, Answer (A1) to (Q1).
Lines 104-105, confirmation accepting (A1).
Line 106, accepting confirmation to (A1), thanking.
Line 107, question (Q3) requesting information related to (Q2).
Line 108, short answer (A3) to (Q3).
Line 109, confirmation accepting (A3).
Line 110-111, continuation (1) of (A3).
Line 112, confirming continuation (1) of (A3).
Line 113, accepting confirmation for continuation (1) of (A3).
Line 114, accepting confirmation for continuation (1) of (A3).
Line 115, continuation (2) to (A3).
Line 116, interrupted incomplete utterance.
Line 117, continuation (3) to (A3).
Lines 118-121, providing additional information supporting continuation (3) to (A3).
Lines 122-123, answering (Q3) about a different sitting.
Lines 124-126, asking a new question (Q4) to start another sequence.

The packaging of actions in excerpt (4) shows that the sequence started with interviewer (1) asking two questions in lines (96-98) about the reasons why the candidate applied to the institution and what he knew about it. The candidate answered (Q1) but neglected (Q2). The interviewer asked (Q3) which was related to (Q2) in line (107) asking about the website of the institution in order to elicit a response to (Q2). The candidate answered (Q3); however, this did not fully answer (Q2). In lines (110-121), the candidate extended his response to (Q3) with three continuations and the interviewer confirmed all of them. The candidate answered (Q3) again but this time about the institution that he worked for at the time of the interview in lines (122-123). Finally, the interviewer closed the sequence by asking a different question (Q4) to mark the beginning of a new sequence leaving (Q2) unanswered. I speculate that the candidate’s avoidance to answer (Q2) can go back to his unfamiliarity with the answer. Therefore, he chose to avoid answering (Q2) and even though the interviewer made an effort towards eliciting an answer to (Q2), the candidate continued to avoid answering that question which made the interviewer ignore (Q2) and move on to a new sequence. Therefore, not answering (Q2) was the result of the candidate’s avoidance technique and cannot be viewed as miscommunication.
Timing and turn taking in the previous sequence were simultaneous with several short turns between the lines (107) to (116). The candidate interrupted the interviewer twice once in line (117) and one in line (122). Overall, timing and turn taking was typical for a job interview.

The actions accomplished in excerpt (4) characterized participants’ institutional roles. The interviewer asked all of the four questions above, and the candidate’s role was to answer those questions. Each answer to a question by the candidate was followed by a confirmation from the interviewer, which is followed by another question.

With respect to Gee’s identity framework (2000), the nature identity of the candidate showed that he was a male native speaker of English from the United Kingdom. His institution identity included that he was an English language teacher applying for the position of an English language instructor at a Saudi Arabian university. The candidate’s identity performance during the job interview can be examined by looking at excerpt (5) below:

Excerpt (5)

26 Int.1: o:kay er you you studied in in I have a sort of slight personal interest on this part of the interview you studies at the university of Wales at Lampeter (. ) I'm actually from the village of ((name of village)) which is about eight miles from Lampeter did you have a go there?
27 Cand.: sorry where where?
28 Int.1: ↑((name of village))
29 Cand.: I I played rugby there.
30 Int.1: oh okay o:kay
31 Cand.: [once ( ) yes.
32 Int.1: [okay just on the outside of Tregaron there.
33 Cand.: yes.
34 Int.1: I was there last week in the snow very lovely part of the world.
35 Cand.: ((laughs)) great.

The fact that the candidate was a male native speaker of English from the United Kingdom (i.e., nature identity) was shared by interviewer (1). In excerpt (5) above, the interviewer was sharing a personal interest with the candidate which was characterized by the acquaintance with the village where the interviewer originally came from. The candidate showed familiarity with that village which established a shared experience between them (i.e., affinity identity). The fact that the interviewer and the candidate belonged to approximately the same geographical origin and the fact that they were both working as English language teachers in Saudi Arabia represented a unique shared experience by which nature, institution, and affinity identities were shaped.

This brings us to the conclusion that the identity of the native speaker was characterized by the absence of miscommunication and the successful co-membership with interviewer (1).

The third question investigated in the current study was: What are the differences in identity performance through the job interview between native and the non-native speakers of English? From the above analysis of the first two research questions, it is evident that the native speaker of English showed more signs of successful identity performance in his job interview compared to the non-native speaking candidate. This was clear through his successful co-membership with interviewer (1) illustrated by acquaintance with his home village and sharing similar linguistic, cultural, and ethnic background. The native speaker also showed no signs of miscommunication during the job interview, which can be explained by his successful co-membership with the interviewer. In contrast, the nonnative speaking candidate showed a lack of
co-membership as he viewed the culture of his interviewer (i.e., the western culture) to be superior in knowledge and showed lack of experience compared to the members of that culture. The fact that the nonnative speaking candidate did not share the same linguistic, cultural, and ethnic background with interviewer (1) resulted not only in unsuccessful co-membership, but also cased miscommunication as illustrated in excerpt (1).

**Discussion**

The aim of the current study was to investigate how native and nonnative speakers of English performed their identities in teacher job interviews. The results indicated that performing the identity of the nonnative speaker of English was negatively affected by miscommunication, which led him to provide unexpected and undesirable responses (e.g., shopping for jobs) for the interviewer’s questions. This finding is in agreement with Gumperz’s (1992) principle, which stresses the effect of miscommunication on the success of job interviews. The non-native speaker’s identity performance was also affected by the way he positioned himself with respect to western societies. He viewed westerners as experts and viewed himself as someone lacking experience and even wanting to identify himself as a member of a western society (i.e., obtaining a western nationality). In contrast, the native speaker’s identity performance was not affected by miscommunication as it did not occur during the interview. The only instance that occurred was avoiding to answer one question asked by the interviewer which can be explained by the candidate’s unfamiliarity with the answer to that question. His identity performance was positively affected by the different factors he shared with interviewer (1). This included the fact that both of them were male native speakers of English sharing the same geographical origin and working as English language teachers in Saudi Arabia. This co-membership positively affected the way in which the candidate performed his identity and hence increased his chances of successful identity performance during the job interview. This supports the claims of Kerekes (2006), which views co-membership as a major determiner of success in job interviews.

Based on the above findings, the researcher suggests to expose non-native speakers applying for teaching positions to the pragmatics of interviews through teacher preparation and teacher professional training programs. This, in my view, will equip non-native speakers of English with the basic skills to avoid miscommunication and to perform their identities in a desirable way and therefore, will increase their chances of successful identity performance in job interviews. As Li (2000), Louw, Derwing, and Abbot (2010) have maintained, direct instruction to the pragmatics of interviews increased nonnative speaker’s chances of success in job interviews.

The limitations of the current study include that the findings are context-specific. Therefore, it would be unwise to generalize them to other situations. Also, the data investigated in the study was limited to two job interviews, which makes it difficult to generalize the results.

Thus, further research should be conducted to investigate identity performance in a wider set of teacher job interviews and other forms of gatekeeping encounters. This can provide valuable insights for teacher preparation and teacher professional development programs training nonnative speakers of English applying for English language teaching positions.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate identity performance by native and nonnative speakers of English in gatekeeping encounters, teacher job interviews in this case. Results indicated that miscommunication, exhibiting a lack of experience compared native
speakers, and unsuccessful co-membership were the major factors characterizing the nonnative speaker’s identity performance. The absence of miscommunication and successful co-membership shaped the identity performance of the native speaker of English during the job interview. Direct exposure to the pragmatics of interviews was suggested for nonnative speakers of English applying for English language teaching positions. Further research was suggested to explore teachers’ identity performance in a wider set of data.

About the Author:

Hassan Mohammad-Taher Qutub is a full-time graduate student at the doctor of Education program, (EdD) in TESOL/Applied Linguistics at the University of Bristol, UK. He holds an MA in TESL from Northern Arizona University, USA. He taught English in Saudi Arabia for 14 years, and then moved to work as a lecturer at King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia.

References


**Appendix A**
The transcription notation system employed for the data segments was adapted from Gail Jefferson's work (see Atkinson & Heritage (Eds.), 1984, pp.ix-xvi).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Notation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>:</td>
<td>Colon (s): Extended or stretched sound, syllable, or word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_</td>
<td>Underline: Emphasis point (s) by the speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.)</td>
<td>Micro-pause: Brie pause of less than (0.2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.2)</td>
<td>Timed pause: intervals occurring within and /or between speakers’ utterances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(( ))</td>
<td>Double parentheses: Scenic details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( )</td>
<td>Single parentheses: Transcription doubt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>Period: Falling vocal pitch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Question mark: Rising vocal pitch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↑↓</td>
<td>Arrows: Mark rising and falling intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>° °</td>
<td>Degree signs: Indicates whisper, reduced volume, or quiet speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• •</td>
<td>High dots: Audible inhalation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Equal signs: Latching, the break and subsequent continuation of a single utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>Brackets: Speech overlap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_</td>
<td>Hyphens: Abrupt cut of sound or word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>Less than / Greater than signs: utterances delivered quicker or slower than surrounding speech.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AND Caps: loudness compared to surrounding speech.
Major Problems Encountered by Third Level English Students at Hudhramout University when Translating Arabic Emotive and Culture-bound Expressions into English

Najla'a Abdullah Ateeg
English Department, Women's College
Hudhramout University, Yemen

Abstract

The present study aims at investigating the major problems encountered by the third level English students/Faculty of Women and Faculty of Arts at Hudhramout University when translating Arabic-English culture-bound and emotive expressions into English. The study also aims at making a comparison between the third level English students in the above-mentioned two faculties with regard to translating these expressions. The study is carried out in the academic year (2012-2013). A translation test is designed to achieve the purpose of this study. To analyze the study findings, the frequencies and percentages of students' responses to the instrument of the study (Translation Test) were counted and tabled. The findings have revealed that most of the students face problems when translating culture-bound and emotive expressions and that translating emotive expressions is more difficult for them than translating culture-bound expressions. Besides, Women's College students show better performance in translating the expressions in question than the Faculty of Arts' students. The study comes up with some conclusions and recommendations for further researches.

Keywords: Arabic Emotive expressions, Culture-bound Expressions, English Students, Hudhramout University, Translating.
Introduction

When discussing the issue of translation between languages belong to different language families a gap might be brought due to differences between the two languages in terms of semantics, syntax, and pragmatics. Therefore, translation is regarded as a matter of approximation and no identical transference could be achieved (Nida, 2000). Consequently, the translation between Arabic and English is not exception in this regard. The thing that makes it somehow difficult for the students to translate sentences between the two languages adequately. However, translation scholars like Farghal and Shunnaq (1999) have been suggesting solutions for some translation difficulties such as incongruence in emotiveness. Therefore, students should be fully aware of translation strategies, and procedures to overcome translation problems. This study will try to shed light on some problems that face students in translation and suggest some solutions for students to tackle those problems.

Culture, by all means, plays a major role in translation studies due to the fact that it is inseparable from language. Newmark (1988:94) defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression". Culture-bound expressions may pose one big problem when translating them from the source language (SL) into the target language (TL). This problem emerged from the fact that there are some differences in the culture specific (verbal) habits, expectations, norms, and conventions verbal and other behaviors between the two languages (i.e., Arabic and English here) involved in the translation act. For example, the Arabic expressions حلالٔحزاو، لاحلٕلٔلالِٕ إلا بالله، سكرة، صلاة انتٓدذ، بزلع and يرقع are cultural words/expressions specific for Arabic Language. The translator cannot easily translate the previous expressions into English due to the lack of equivalence in the TL. According to Newmark (1988: 95), literal translation is not suitable for translating such cultural words but rather descriptive-functional equivalent. For example, when translating the English collocation alive and kicking into, the translator should seek a non-corresponding but functionally equivalent term. This collocation should be translated into an ordinary Arabic collocation to avoid ambiguity of a direct and literal translation of words, which would seem funny and strange to Arabic readers. Therefore, the adequate translation for it is حي يزسق. Furthermore, Newmark (1988: 96) asserts that there are two translation procedures for translating Cultural-bound expressions which are transference and a componential analysis. The first emphasizes the culture and excludes the message, while the second excludes the culture and highlights the message. Newmark (1988) clarifies that a componential analysis is the most accurate translation procedure and is based on a component common in the SL and the TL. A componential analysis is to give brief details of the SL word or phrase in order to make it clear for the TL readers. For example: يرقع veil

Another salient problem, a translator may face when translating Arabic texts into English is emotive expressions. The problem in translating emotive expressions comes due to the fact that what might be considered a highly emotive expression in a text in Arabic is not always a highly emotive one in English. Thus, the translator should be fully aware of the procedures that can help him/her affect the TL readership by transferring almost a similar impact in the translation. When discussing the translation of emotive expressions, two types of meaning can be introduced: denotative and connotative meaning. The denotative meaning is the meaning of a word as stated in a dictionary, whereas the connotative meaning is an added meaning that suggests something either positive or negative. In other words, connotative meaning indicates the emotional associations of a word. The present study deals with connotative meaning. Nida (1964: 91) defines connotative meaning as "an aspect of meaning which concerns the emotional attitudes of
the author and the emotional response of a receptor. It can be good or bad, strong or weak, for instance, the word أبيض أبيض has a denotative meaning as in لًيص أبيض 'a white shirt' but it also has a connotative one as in ثورة أبيضاء 'a peaceful revolution'. According to Nida (1964), when translating emotive expressions, cultural translation is the most adequate one.

Al-Hamad and Al-Shunnaq (2011) conducted a study on Emotive expressions in President Bashar Al-Assad’s political speeches with reference to translation. Their study aims at examining the figures of speech used in Arabic political speeches as a tool of communication to gain political advantages. The researchers, in their analysis of the data, focused on four emotive figures of speech: simile, metaphor, personification, and euphemism. The research also investigated how emotive expressions are translated from Arabic into English. Ali (2007) conducted a study in the MA Program of Applied Linguistics and Translation at An-Najah National University in Nablus. This study aimed at exploring the implications and applications of two text-linguistic notions: "managing" and "emotiveness, and their effect on reporting the news. The study also shows how Israeli media writers affected the public opinion by using various manipulative strategies in reporting the news about the Israeli incursion into Gaza Strip in 2006. A Study was conducted by Thawabthe (2007) to shed some light on the problems Arabic-English translators may encounter in translating Arabic cultural terms. The study aimed at investigating translation strategies to overcome these problems. The study asserts that culture-bound expressions pose a translation problem in translating texts from Arabic into English. The study discussed the culture differences between Arabic and English in three categories: material culture (e.g., adornment, moon); social culture (e.g., habits and customs, eating and drinking habits, gestures etc.); and ideological culture (e.g., politics, religion etc.). Moreover, the study affirmed that the more two cultures are in contact, the fewer translation problems are expected and the reverse is not true.

Shunnaq (1993) conducted a study on the lexical incongruence in Arabic-English translation of emotive expressions. This study shows that one type of lexical incongruence in Arabic-English translation is due to emotiveness in Arabic. He asserts that many words in Arabic arouse emotional effect in a native speaker of Arabic and that is due to their linguistic settings, cultural roots, and circumstances of speech, among others. Therefore when translating from Arabic into English, the translator should take extra care to such emotive words and he has to exert all efforts to transfer the feelings from the SL into the TL. Shunnaq (1993) provides some strategies to tackle the translation of emotive expressions such as paraphrasing, footnoting, and exemplification, among others. He also suggests that the translator has to give precedence to emotive expressions if the context requires that.

Statement of the Problem
Cultural and emotive expressions seem to be most difficult to translate by students of English due to many factors such as the lack of the TL culture, and the unfamiliarity with the strategies of translation used to tackle such expressions. This study investigates the problems faced by students of English at Hudhramout University when translating culture-bound and emotive expressions.

The Objectives of the Study
This study aims at investigating the extent to which the third level students in the English Department / Faculty of Women and Faculty of Arts, Hudhramout University are efficient to give adequate and appropriate translation of culture-bound and emotive expressions.
The Questions of the Study
This study attempts to answer the following questions:
1- To what extent can students give an adequate and appropriate translation of culture-bound expressions?
2- To what extent can students give an adequate and appropriate translation of emotive expressions?
3- What are the problems faced by students when translating these expressions?

The Significance of the Study
This study attempts to help the students of third level, English department, to improve their skill in translating Arabic-English sentences and to identify the problems encountered by them. Moreover, it attempts to obtain information on common difficulties in translation as an aid to translation teaching or in developing teaching materials.

Limitation of the Study
The study deals with the difficulties and problems that face English students in translating culture-bound and emotive expressions from Arabic into English. It is limited to the third level English students who study at English department, Faculty of Women and Faculty of Arts at Hudhramout University in the second semester 2013. The findings of the study are limited to the third level English students at the Faculty of Women and Faculty of Arts in Hudhramout University.

Methodology
To conduct the present study, the researchers carried out the following procedures:

Participants in the Study
The population includes 130 third level English students who study at the English departments in the second semester 2013. The participants in this study were 44 students who have been selected according to the systematic random sample (by selecting odd numbers from the list of their names). The researchers used the list that adopted by the department for taking the attendance. They chose the students according to their odd numbers, (i.e.1,3,5,7,9,11,13,15,17, …..47). All of the participants were informed of the purpose of the study. The selected participants represented the sample of this study.

The Procedures of the study
To construct the instrument of the study, i.e., the translation test, the researchers collected data from three resources: a book entitled How to translate by Yusuf (2006), an article entitled Hindrances in Arabic-English Intercultural Translation by Bahameed (2007) and an M.A thesis entitled Dilemmas in Translating Al-Baradduni' Poetry into English by Ateeg (2009). The purpose of this test is to find out to what extent translation difficulties are encountered by the students, particularly in translating some Arabic expressions into English and also to show the differences between the Faculty of Women's College students and the students of the Faculty of Arts. The test consists of two sections according to the problems of translation the study investigated: culture-bound and emotive expressions. Each section consists of five items. Every item in every section is given three translation choices. The adequate translation is spotted from the previous-mentioned references. In addition, a space is left for the students to provide their
own translation for every item in the test if they do not agree with the choices given. The researchers distributed twenty four copies of the test to the students and ignored four copies due to some errors made by students such as leaving some questions without an answer or giving more than one answer to the same question.

Validity and Reliability of the Translation Test
To validate the instrument of the study, the test was shown to three English University professors in addition to the head of English Department at Faculty of Women who is specialized in translation in order to edit and give a model answer for the test. The professors provided their recommendations and suggestions about the items of the test. The researchers modified the test upon the suggestions and recommendations of the professors. To get reliable results of the findings, the researchers piloted the translation test among ten B.A English students so as to clarify if there is any vagueness or unclear items that may need modification.

Data Analysis
After counting the frequencies of students' answers, the researchers analyzed the students' answers and put the frequencies and percentages in tables and charts in order to be shown easily. They analyzed the tabled numbers through a written analysis to make the tabled data easily understood by the readers.

Findings of the Study
Faculty of Women English Students' Difficulties of Translating Culture-bound Expressions
Students' difficulties in translating culture-bound expressions from Arabic into English are shown in Table (1) below. The table presents the final results of the adequate and the inadequate translation of the culture-bound expressions from Arabic into English. Besides, it presents the percentages and the frequencies of the adequate and inadequate translation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Translation Choices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ans.a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 5</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Frequencies and percentages of Women's College students' responses to translating culture-bound expressions
Major Problems Encountered by Third Level English Students

Chart (1) Ratio of Women's College Students' Answers Concerning Culture-bound Expressions

Item 1: Four students only chose the answer (a) while the majority (16) of the students’ answers matches the model translation (c) with 80%. None of the students has chosen the answer (b) nor did they give another suggested translation.

Item 2: Most of the students (11) chose the adequate translation (a) with 55% while 6 students chose the answer (b). Only two students chose the answer (c) and there is a suggested translation given by one of the students.

Item 3: Seven students chose the answer (a) and the majority of them (13) chose the adequate translation (b) with 65%. None of the students chose the answer (c) and none gave his own answer of this item.

Item 4: The majority of the students (12) chose to translate it according to the answer (c) with 60% and the other eight students chose the answer (b). None of the students picked the answer (a) and none wrote a suggested translation.

Item 5: The majority of the students (18) chose the model answer (a) with 90% and only two students chose the answer (b). None of the students chose the answer (c) and there is no suggested translation.

Second: Faculty of Women Students' Difficulty in Translating Emotive Expressions

The difficulties encountered students in translating emotive expressions from Arabic into English are shown in Table (2) below. The table presents the frequencies and percentages of students' answers and the errors that students made in translating emotive expressions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Translation Choices</th>
<th>ans.a</th>
<th>ans.b</th>
<th>ans.c</th>
<th>ans.d</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart (2) Ratio of Women's College Students' Answers Concerning Emotive Expressions

Item1: Six students translated this item and chose answer (a) and another six chose answer (b). Eight students translated it adequately with 40%. None of the student suggested a translation.
Item2: Most of the students (17) chose the answer (c) with 85% while only three of them chose the answer (b). None of the students chose the model answer (a) and there is no suggested translation.
Item3: Only two students picked up the answer (a) while the majority (14) chose the adequate translation (b) with 70%. Four students chose the answer (c) and none suggested another translation.
Item4: The majority (15) of the students' answers match the model answer (c) with 75%. The other five chose the answer (b). No student chose answer (a) and none suggested alternative translation.
Item5: Four students chose the answer (a) and the majority (16) chose the adequate translation (b) with 80%. None chose answer (c) and there is no suggested translation.

Third: Faculty of Arts Students' Difficulty in Translating Culture-bound Expressions

Students' difficulties in translating culture-bound expressions from Arabic into English are shown in Table (3) below. The table presents the final results of the adequate and the inadequate translation of the culture-bound expressions from Arabic into English. Besides, it presents the percentage of the adequate and the inadequate translation in addition to the frequencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Translation Choices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ans.a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table. 3 Frequencies and percentages of Arts students' responses to translating culture-bound expressions
Major Problems Encountered by Third Level English Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>2 1 17 0 20</td>
<td>10 5 85 0 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>11 2 7 0 20</td>
<td>55 10 35 0 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>5 12 2 1 20</td>
<td>25 60 10 5 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4</td>
<td>2 10 8 0 20</td>
<td>10 50 40 0 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 5</td>
<td>15 4 1 0 20</td>
<td>75 20 5 0 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart (3) Ratio of Arts Students' Answers Concerning Culture-bound Expression

Item 1: Two students chose answer (a) and only one student chose answer (b). The majority of the students (17) chose the adequate translation (c) with 85%. There is no suggested translation.
Item 2: The majority (16) of the students' answers match the adequate translation (a) with 55%. Only two students chose answer (b) while seven students chose the third answer (c). None of the students gave his own translation for this item.
Item 3: Five students chose answer (a) while the majority (12) of them chose the adequate translation with 60%. Only two students chose answer (c) and there is a suggested translation given by one of the students for this item.
Item 4: Two students only translated this item according to answer (a) while the majority of them (10) chose the adequate translation (b) with 50%. Eight students chose answer (c) and there is no suggested translation.
Item 5: The majority (15) of the students' answer match the model translation (a) with 75% while four students chose answer (b). Only one student chose answer (c) and none suggested another translation.

Fourth: Faculty of Arts Students' Difficulty in Translating Emotive Expressions
Students' difficulties in translating emotive expressions from Arabic into English are shown in Table (4) below. The table presents the final results and the adequate answer of students and the inadequate translation that students gave when translating emotive expressions. Also it presents the percentage of the adequate, inadequate translations, in addition to their frequencies.
## Table: Frequencies and percentages of Arts students' responses to translating emotive expressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Translation Choices</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ans.a</td>
<td>Ans.b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item1</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item2</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item3</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item4</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item5</td>
<td>Frequencies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart (4) Ratio of Students' Answers Concerning Emotive Expressions**

Item1: Two students only translated this item according to answer (a) while the majority (11) of them chose answer (b) with 55%. Seven students translated this item adequately and chose the answer (c). None suggested another translation.

Item2: Only one student chose the adequate translation (a) and two students chose the answer (b) while the majority of them chose the third option (c). None of the students wrote their own translation.

Item3: Only two students chose answer (a) and ten students chose the adequate translation (b) with 50%. Eight students chose the third option (c) while none suggested another translation.

Item4: None of the students chose the first answer (a). Five students chose answer (b) while the majority (14) of the students chose the adequate answer with 70%. There is a suggested translation by one of the students.
Item 5: Only two students chose answer (a) while the majority (14) chose the adequate translation (b) with 70%. Four students chose answer (c) and none suggested another translation.

Discussion of the Findings

The discussion of the findings regarding Faculty of Women and Faculty of Arts students' difficulties in translating culture-bound and emotive expressions are illustrated below.

First: Culture-bound Expressions, the Students of the Faculty of Women:

Here are the test items and the students' translations of them. The students' translations is compared to the adequate translation which is taken from the literature review. Further, some implication are given in the discussion of each item.

1. ﺛﻴﻤﻡ (Tayammum)

Every language has a cultural aspect which might be different from any other language. The word ﺛﻴﻤﻡ (Tayammum) is a cultural expression and precisely a religious term. It does not exist in any other language but Arabic. To translate this expression into English, one needs to deliver the message and highlight the cultural concept by using the strategy of transference and the functional equivalent added in brackets as Newmark (1988) suggested. So the translator should transcribe the Arabic cultural expression ﺛﻴﻤﻡ (Tayammum) in English to show respect for this cultural concept and give an explanation for it in brackets. Four students translated this cultural item as washing with clean sand for ablution while the majority (16) students translated it adequately as Tayammum (the use of sand for ablution when water is unavailable). None of the students chose the second choice and none gave his/her own translation. It sounds that most students are fully aware of the strategy of translating cultural concepts.

2. ٔكاَت نيلاِ ْذِ انًزة فتاة يٍ انبذٔ

Lila is a culture name in Arabic literature. There was a well-known love story between Lila and her beloved Qaiys. Therefore, Lila has become a famous name which refers to someone's beloved.

The majority of the students (11) chose the adequate translation that captures almost the intended meaning of the name (Lila), his Lila, this time, was a young girl from among the Bedouin. (Lila is a cultural name in Arabic literature used to refer to someone's beloved). They delivered the message and highlighted the culture value. Six students chose the second option His Juliet, this time, was a young girl from among the Bedouin which presents the culture equivalent. Cultural equivalent means replacing a cultural word in the SL with a TL one (Newmark, 1988, p:83). Thus, they ignored the Arabic cultural name and replaced it with a similar one in English. Two students chose the ideational translation his beloved this time was a young girl from among the Bedouin, (i.e. they deliver the message without paying attention to the cultural value). Only one student gave his own translation; his Lila, this time, was a young girl from among the Countryside.

3. سحٕر

Sahuur is a religious concept in Islam which refers to a meal Muslims eat before the dawn for fasting. Thus, to avoid the problem of translating such terms and to bridge the gap between Arabic and English. Yusuf (2006) suggests to transliterate and then give an explanation for it. Thirteen students translated this item adequately, according to the aforementioned strategy, as Sahuur (a meal eaten before the dawn for fasting). The other seven students translated it as a special meal for Muslims before fasting. The students, here, translated it according to communicative translation method (see Newmark, 1988: 41) and so, they just explained the
meaning and missed the cultural value of the Arabic concept. None of the students has chosen
the third choice Sahuur and none attempted his/her own translation.

4. لقد أتجلت الصدر.
   This expression is used in some Arabic areas and has positive connotations of joy and delight. The word coldness is used in some Arab countries and has positive connotation while it is neutral or normal in English language. This might be due to the weather, for Arabic belongs to an area of hot and dry climate, whereas English belongs to an area of cold and wet climate. This expression is a cultural expression and when translating it into English, one should consider the English culture and look for an equivalent which has an appositive connotation to fulfill the meaning and the message. English people usually associate warmth with positive connotation such as: 'He is a warm-hearted' i.e. kind and friendly. Thus, the adequate translation for this Arabic expression is you warm my heart and it has been chosen by eight students only. Twelve students chose to translate it as you make me very happy (ideational equivalent) while none of them chose the first choice you freeze the chest.

5. صياديت
   Meals are considered culture-bound items. Some meals are specific for some areas. Some Arab meals, for example, are different from that of English. In order to overcome the difficulty of translating such terms, the translator should resort to the componential analysis. Newmark (1988: 114) defines the componential analysis as: "comparing an SL word with a TL word which has a similar meaning but is not an obvious one-to-one equivalent, by demonstrating first their common and then their differing sense components". This means to mention the components that constitute the cultural concept. The majority (18) of the students translated it adequately (giving the intended meaning encapsulated in this term) as Sayiaadiah (Arabian, especially Yemeni and Gulf, famous dish which is prepared by using rice and tuna fish and a sauce that consists of onions, garlic, tomatoes and some spices). Two students only translated it as a meal made of rice and tuna fish while none has chosen the third choice Sayiaadiah and none provided a suggested translation.
   It is clear that most of the Faculty of Women's students have chosen the adequate translation of all the culture-expressions, except the expression, خبر يُتلج الصدر. This reflects their good level and awareness of culture translation strategies.

Second: Culture-bound Expressions, Students of the Faculty of Art
1. تيمم
   Two students translated this concept as washing with clean sand for ablution. They focused on the meaning and neglected the cultural religious meaning. Only one student chose the second choice Tayammum and so he just transliterated this term into English pronunciation without giving an explanation for it and hence, it is considered inadequate translation. The majority of students (17) translated it as Tayammum (the use of sand for ablution when water is unavailable). The students of the Faculty of Arts are more accurate in translating this item with (17) answers compared to (16) in the Faculty of Women.

2. وكانت لي ليلة هذه المرة فتاة من البدو.
   Eleven students translated this expression adequately as his Lila, this time, was a young girl from among the Bedouin. (Lila is a cultural name in Arabic literature used to refer to someone's beloved) while two students translated it as his Juliet, this time, was a young girl from among the Bedouin. Seven students chose the ideational translation His beloved this time was a young girl
from among the Bedouin. It seems that the students of both the Faculty of Women and Art are the same with (11) adequate answers for each group of them.

سحٕر

Five students translated this concept ideationally as *a special meal for Muslims before fasting*; i.e. they aimed at conveying the meaning independently of function and form (Farghal and Shunnaq, 1999, p.5). The majority of students (12) translated it adequately as *Sahuur (a meal eaten before the dawn for fasting)*. Two students translated it inadequately as *Sahuur*. One student suggested another translation; *pre-dawn meal*. There is no big difference between the Faculty of Women and the Faculty of Arts' students concerning the adequate translation of this item. Thirteen students of the Faculty of Women translated this culture term and twelve students of the Faculty of Art chose the adequate translation as well.

نمذ أثهدت انصذر

Two students translated this culture expression literally as *you freezes the chest* while ten students translated it as *you warmth my heart*. This second translation seems to be the functional and most idiomatic one as it is used by the TL people to express almost the intended meaning of the Arabic expression " لقد أثهدت الصدر". Eight students translated this cultural expression ideationally as *you make me very happy* which is an ideational equivalent of the Arabic expression in question. Thus, Faculty of Arts' students are better in translating this culture expression with 50% compared to 40% for the students of the Faculty of Women.

صياديت

The majority of students (15) translated this cultural item adequately as *Sayiaadiah (Arabian, especially Yemeni and Gulf, famous dish which is prepared by using rice and tuna fish and a sauce that consists of onions, garlic, tomatoes and some spices.)*. Four students translated this item as *a meal made of rice and tuna fish* while only one student chose to translate it inadequately as *Sayiaadiah*. The Faculty of Women's students are better than the Faculty of Arts' students concerning the adequate translation of this cultural item with 90% for the Faculty of Women's students and 75% for the Faculty of Art's students.

Though most of the students' answers match the adequate answer, the problem of translating culture-bound expressions still exists. The students of the Faculty of Women have chosen the adequate translation for all the cultural items with a percentage of 66% while the students of the Faculty of Arts have a percentage of 65% for their choice of the adequate translation. However, the final percentages which all the students (of both faculties) have for their choice of the adequate answer are not encouraging, especially that they are studying at the third level as English majors.

**Third: Emotive Expressions, Faculty of Women's students**

-six- 1

Six students translated this emotive expression as *full of desire* and another six students translated it as *full of yearning*. Eight students translated it as *flame with a yearning* and none of the students gave their own translation for this item. The word *يمستَفَقَ* according to Al-Wasseet Dictionary (196:1060), means *to flame*, and it is used to refer to a very bright fire. The word *full* according to Longman Dictionary (2006: 653) means to *feel, express, or show a lot of a particular emotion or quality*. The word *full* lacks two semantic features which the word *يمستَفَقَ* has, i.e. *heat* and *brightness* while the word *flame* has these two semantic components. The word *حنين* in Al-Wasseet Dictionary (196:203) means *الشوق* (longing) and according to Longman
Dictionary (2006:424) the word *desire* means: *a strong hope* or *wish*. The word *yearning* is more emotive than the word *desire* as the latter indicates, according to Longman Dictionary (2006:1916), not just a desire but *a strong desire for something*, Consequently, the most adequate translation of this expression is *full of yearning*.

None of the students has chosen the first choice and none suggested his own translation. The majority (17) of the students translated it as *to love in a crazy way*. Three students translated it successfully but not adequately as *to melt away in love*. The word ُيفُى فيّ عشما means *passed away* and the word عشقم means *ardor of love*. Though the word ُيفُى فيّ عشما means *melt away*, but the word عشقم does not mean just *love*, but *love with ardour*. The word عشقم is a highly emotive word in Arabic which has no equivalent in English language. So, the students here should add an intensifier (adverb, adjective, a phrase) to the word *love* in order to capture some connotative features of the word عشقم.

Two students gave an inadequate literal translation for this item; *a white revolution*. Fourteen students translated this emotive expression adequately as *a peaceful revolution* while four students translated it as *a bloodless revolution*, and thus it is acceptable. The word ُيفُى فيّ عشما here denotatively means *white* but it associates with another meaning which is *peace* for the color *white* is a symbol of peace. Thus, ُيفُى فيّ عشما should not be translated as *a white revolution*, but as *a peaceful or bloodless revolution*.

None of the students chose the first choice *Salsabieel* while five students translated this item as *pure water*. The majority (15) of the students translated it adequately as *Salsabil* (*it is very pure, sweet water that makes you no longer thirsty when drinking it*). The word ُيفُى فيّ عشما associates with the water of paradise as Allah says in the Holly Qura'an " **أَن نَعَى فيٓا تسًى سهسبيم**". The prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) says that who drinks this water will no longer be thirsty. Therefore, the first choice *Salsabieel* is only known to Muslims and the non-Muslims will not know the meaning of it if it is just transliterated. The second choice *pure water* can be translated into ماء سالم and not ماء سمايلي. The best way to translate this emotive expression is to transliterate it and provide a footnote to make it clear for the TL readership as in the third choice *Salsabil* (*it is very pure, sweet water that makes you no longer thirsty when drinking it*).

Fourth: Emotive Expressions, Faculty of Art's Students

Two students translated this emotive expression as *full of desire* while eleven students translated it as *full of yearning*. Only seven students translated this item adequately as *flame with a yearning*. The Faculty of Women's students are better in translating this emotive expression adequately with 40% compared to 35% for the Faculty of Arts' students.
Only one student translated this emotive expression as *to melt in it adoringly* while two students translated it as *to melt away in love*. The majority (17) translated it inadequately as *to love in a crazy way*. The students of both faculties, Women and Arts, have mistranslated this expression. The First choice *to melt in it adoringly* lacks the word love before the adverb adoringly. The second choice *to melt away in love* lacks an intensifier to capture some semantic features of the word عشما, while the third choice *to love in a crazy way* goes far away from the adequate translation of this item, though has some semantic components of the Arabic emotive expression. Here, the students of both faculties failed to give a suggested translation for this expression. Besides, the majority of them chose the inadequate translation, *to love in a crazy way*. This expression might be translated adequately as *to melt away in his love adoringly*.

Two students translated this expression as *a white revolution* while ten students translated it adequately as *a peaceful revolution*. Eight students chose the translation *a bloodless revolution* and thus, it is acceptable. The students of the Faculty of Women are better in translating this expression adequately with 70% compared to 50% for the students of the Faculty of Arts.

None translated this item as *Salsabeel* while five students translated it as *pure water*. The majority (14) of the students translated it adequately as *Salsabil (it is very pure, sweet water that makes you no longer thirsty when drinking it)*. One student suggested another translation; *fresh water*. The answers of the Faculty of Women's students match the adequate answer with 75% while the percentage of the adequate translation of the Faculty of Arts' students is 70%.

Two students translated this expression as *the news has broken her heart* while fourteen students translated it adequately as *the news has shocked her in the depth*. Four students translated this item as *the news frightened her* and none suggested another translation. The Faculty of Women's students are better in translating this item with 80% than the students of the Faculty of Arts who have got 70%.

Translating emotive expressions poses a problem for the students of both, the Faculty of Women and Arts when translating them from Arabic into English. Translating such expressions poses more problems for the students than translating culture-bound expressions. The percentage which the Faculty of Women's students have got for their choice of the adequate translation of the culture-bound expressions is 66% while that which they have got for their choice of the adequate translation of emotive expressions is 53%. Furthermore, the percentage which the Faculty of Arts' students have got for their choice of the adequate translation of the culture-bound expressions is 65% while that which they have got for their choice of the adequate translation of emotive expressions is 45%.

In conclusion, the students of the Faculty of Women outperform the students of the Faculty of Arts. The final results of translating culture-bound expressions show that the Faculty of Women's students have got 66% for their good choice of the adequate translation compared to 65% for the Faculty of Arts' students. Moreover, the final results of translating emotive expressions show that the Faculty of Women's students have got 53% for their good choice of the adequate translation compared to 45% for the Faculty of Arts' students.

**Conclusions of the Study**
The present study aims at investigating the difficulties of translating culture-bound and emotive expressions from Arabic into English among third level students, English department, Faculty of Women and Arts at Hudramout University. The study also compares the level of the Faculty of Women's students with the Faculty of Arts' students. A translation test is used to collect data from the study sample.

The results showed that the students of both; the Faculty of Women and Faculty of Arts face some problems when translating culture-bound and emotive expressions. Besides, the study has revealed that translating emotive expressions is more difficult for the students (in both faculties) than translating culture-bound expressions. The difficulties the students encounter in translating such expressions might emerge from the following reasons:

1. There is no fixed syllabus at the English department for the translation subject.
2. The translation course which has been taught to the students at the University is not enough to qualify them to the expected level to become good translators.
3. The students are only taught the basic rules of translation which does not enable them to improve their skills in translation.
4. The university lacks professors whose main major is translation.
5. The students do not know much about translation strategies.
6. The students have poor level of language proficiency in both Arabic and English.
7. The students lack the knowledge of the TL culture.

The results also showed that the Faculty of Women's students translated the test items more adequately than the Faculty of Art's students. This difference in the students' performance on the translation test might be attributed to the following reasons:

1. It seems that the students of the Faculty of Women pay more attention to the translation subject than the Faculty of Arts' students.
2. The translation book which has been taught to the students at the Faculty of Women is *Translation with reference into English and Arabic* by Shunnaq and Farghal (1999) is a good source for building translation basics and strategies.
3. The materials of translation which has been taught to the Faculty of Arts' students do not enable them to translate culture-bound and emotive expressions for they do not explicate these two major subjects in a thorough way.

**Recommendations of the Study**

The researchers recommend the following:

1. Translation professors are recommended to apply a variety of translation materials such as books, articles, and clips that can help students to overcome translation problems.
2. Translation professors are recommended to focus on the practical side when teaching the translation subject.
3. Translation professors are recommended to teach students the strategies of translation.
4. Translation professors should make students familiar with the role of culture in translation.
5. Translation professors should pay more attention to solve the problem of translating emotive expressions.
6. Students are recommended to practice translation and try to improve themselves in both languages; English and Arabic.
7. It is recommended to design special classes for translation lectures that allow students to practice and participate more effectively, i.e., classes that allow to teach translation as a discussion.
8. People in charge at Hudhramout University are recommended to send some students abroad in order to study at postgraduate level and specialize in translation. As for doing future researches on the issue this study tackles, the researchers suggest the followings:
1. Carrying out researches on comparative studies between English/Arabic and Arabic /English translation regarding difficulties, problems and solutions.
2. Conducting studies on the difficulties of translating culture-bound and emotive expressions from English into Arabic.
3. Carrying out researches about the interference of Arabic language when translating from English into Arabic.

About the Author:
Dr. Najla'a Abdullah Ateeg currently works at Hudhramout University, Women's College, Yemen. She was appointed the head of English Department in Women's College. She obtained her M.A in Translation from Yarmouk University at 2009. and the Ph.D. from the same university in TEFL in 2011.

References

Dictionaries:
Lifting Motivation Level of English Learners in Saudi Arabia

Ahmed Al shlowiy
University of New Mexico, USA

Abstract
Teaching processes differ across place, and generation. Language teaching, in particular, has more differences as a result of different teaching contexts. Teaching English as a second language in a native English-speaking country is not the same as teaching English as a foreign language in a non-native English-speaking country. English teaching in Saudi Arabia encounters many difficulties. One of the huge issues that faced the teachers of English is the learners’ low motivation that depends on their psychological, social, and attitudinal states. Motivation is a result of the intersection of many factors such as personality, socialization, behavior, school context, and interaction. This paper aims at creating a supportive environment for both teachers and students to succeed in this context. It is twofold. The first part, which leads to the second, displays the importance of motivation in language learning and teaching. The second explains how to lift motivation levels between learners in Saudi Arabia by suggesting some steps to raise the motivation level in the Saudi context.

Keywords: Motivation, EFL, ESL, Context, English Saudi Arabia
Introduction
Teaching processes differ from place to place and generation to generation. Language teaching, in particular, has more differences as a result of different teaching contexts. There is a difference between teaching a language in its context and out of its contexts. For example, teaching English as a second language (ESL) in a native English-speaking country is not the same as teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in a non-native English-speaking country. EFL teaching in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) encounters many difficulties. One of the huge issues is the learners’ low motivation that depends on their psychological, social, and attitudinal states. Motivation is a result of the intersection of many factors such as personality, socialization, behavior, school context, and interaction. As a professional, I must always consider how to face the low-level of motivation that may exist amongst students. Beside extensive teaching experience and linguistic knowledge, I argue that EFL teachers need more to address this challenge.

This paper aims at creating a supportive environment for both teachers and students to succeed in the EFL context in the KSA. It is a letter to myself and my colleagues in that context. It is twofold. The first part, which leads to the second, displays the importance of motivation in language learning and teaching. The second explains how to lift motivation levels in EFL learners in the KSA. In other words, I utilize the importance of motivation in the first part as a foundation to demonstrate how to boost motivation level. In this second half, which is the main argument, I suggest specific required steps to raise the motivation level in the Saudi context although there are lots of steps which could be taken to do this.

My suggestions mainly attend to EFL teachers in the KSA by including the parents and students’ attitude, teacher's abilities and preparation, teaching methods and tasks, teacher-learners relationship, mass media and the Internet, and learner's self-confidence and autonomy. Since language learning is the result of interacting variables, my steps move from general to specific, from outside the classroom to inside it, from before the lesson to in it and to after it. These steps are “external, introjected, identified, and integrated” (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p. 113).

Importance of motivation in EFL context
I could define motivation as a reason that inspires a behavior of willingness and volition. Motivation involves beliefs, values, interests, perceptions, and, actions. Yule (2006) states that "motivation may be as much a result of success as a cause" (p. 168). Volition, according to Eccles and Wigfield (2002) refers to “both the strength of will needed to complete a task and the diligence of pursuit” (p. 126).

Educational psychologists recognize the importance of motivation to support student learning in general and language acquisition in particular. They concentrate on using it as a very important cause to involve the affective goals in order to influence the degree of effort that learner makes to learn English. Affective goals are concerned with the students’ attitudes toward themselves, learning, and English language as a subject at school in the EFL context.

Motivation is not only a major factor but also has a powerful influence on English learning and acquisition. This is true whether intrinsic or extrinsic or instrumental and integrative motivation. For example, Gardner and Lambert (1972) show that success in a foreign language is likely to be lower if the underlying motivational orientation is instrumental rather than integrative. They think that an integrative orientation would sustain better the long-term motivation needed for the very demanding task of language learning.
It is a matter of fact that motivation is seen as an effective element in both teaching and learning English. It contributes to language achievement and linguistic products that usually embrace the structure of the language such as vocabulary, spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and the four skills of the language, including listening, understanding, writing, and reading. Gardner (1985) considers motivation as a goal directed and defines it as “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language” (p. 10).

In EFL contexts, there is neither enough English input outside the classroom nor opportunities for interaction with native English speakers. Most of the circumstances to successful English language acquisition are lacking. Therefore, motivation in EFL settings is the center of language teaching. This is precisely as Eccles and Wigfield (2002) state that “it is difficult, if not impossible, to understand students’ motivation without understanding the contexts they are experiencing.” (p.128). Zhou (2008) argues that motivation is affected by the learning setting in China, as an EFL context, and if the learners are well guided, they will attain high levels of proficiency in English and progress greatly. Saudi students study English as a compulsory subject. They do not choose to study it, and do not find real-life objectives and uses for it in their society. Therefore, Saudi EFL learners lack the internal force and desire for learning it and have to depend on other external drivers, as I shall soon discuss.

In order to increase and maintain students’ motivation in Saudi Arabia, consequently, my colleagues and I need to create a supportive context. We have to understand that the role of context becomes increasingly essential to motivation theories as well as in many areas of psychology. Recent research shows that the kinds of classroom and school situation are students exposed to greatly influence their motivation and achievement in complex ways (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Some proposals in language acquisition research clarify teachers’ understanding of motivation and the specific psychological and behavioral components of motivation that we can influence.

It is unworkable here to include the enormous role of motivation in EFL teaching and learning or to review its large body of literature. However, my previous concise description of the importance of motivation is enough to move into the second phase of the paper where I recommend some practical implications for EFL teachers in the KSA. Based on my experience in this context, these steps support the teachers in their work, enhance the learners’ motivation, and create a new EFL context rather than the traditional environments and approaches.

**Increasing Motivation level in EFL Learners in the KSA**

1. **before the classroom**

I briefly propose two main steps to be taken outside the classroom or before classes to lift the learners’ motivation:

A. **Prepare and be updated.**

Teachers must have a wide knowledge of education in general and English language in particular to be able to make adjustments in response to new generations, theories, and technologies as well as changeable learners’ needs and teachers’ roles. I do not agree with many colleagues who think the university’s years are enough to be successful in teaching and those who see teaching as routine work. It is a changeable and developing practice. EFL teachers, thus, should continue their own readings and findings which do not stop at university graduation. Their teaching approaches must be developed according to their experiences (Brown, 2007)
because students can judge any pattern, seriousness, or preparation in the classroom which, in turn, reflects, positively or negatively, on their motivation.

The teacher is a model for students to use language to communicate with others. The teacher's behavior and organization demonstrate the seriousness of his or her teaching. The teacher's knowledge, experience, and preparation will make the students feel that the teacher is sufficiently equipped and updated to support them. This suggestion will facilitate doing other suggestions, catching the students' attention to the lesson, and increasing their motivation. In other words, the teacher shows the students his or her care for their learning by being well prepared and expecting their achievement (Dornyei, 2001).

B. Develop positive attitudes toward English.

Outside the classroom, there are different attitudes toward the English language. The attitude of the family, parents, or peers to English will affect the student's attitude to learning English. In other words, students' attitudes towards English will be seriously influenced by the people who are around them. The nature and strength of this attitude will have a profound effect on the degree of motivation and whether or not that motivation continues (Harmer, 2007). Most psycholinguists believe that the learner's attitudes plays a major role both in a language learning situation, which is in the classroom, and in a language acquisition context, which is outside the classroom. This step aims to develop a positive and confident attitude toward oneself as a learner, learning to take risks, and to learn from one’s mistakes.

In my country, students regard English as a worthless subject because they do not use it in their lives. A lot of parents do not care about their children’s progress in the English subject. Since parents are partners in the learning process and play a vital role in the academic life of the students, teachers should work with parents to make sure that English learning is valued at home. Parent-teacher conferences, parents' visits to the school, and teachers’ letters to parents are ways to increase the home involvement in the class learning and to develop a collaborative relationship with the learners' parents (Brown, 2007). This cooperation creates social contexts that influence the learners’ cognition, perceptions, and involvement with their learning and achievement outcomes (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Moreover, students will benefit from this context by developing more positive attitudes and behavior which will drive them forward in their English learning.

2. Inside the classroom

Now, I move my suggestions into the classroom. There are three macro-steps to lift the learners' motivation within the classroom, and to sustain it permanently:

A. Build a good teacher-student relationship.

Building respectful relationships with learners shows teachers the way to make provision for students’ needs and expectations. This relationship plays a serious role in the classroom and influences the students' attitudes and behavior toward the activities. If they like the teacher, they will like the lesson and vice versa. The teacher's behavior and manners in the class are responsible for producing a tense or safe classroom. A tense classroom environment is harmful because it will undermine learning and de-motivate learners. On the other hand, learners' motivation will reach its peak in the accommodating classroom atmosphere (Brown, 2007, p. 74) in which students engage in the lesson rather than avoid it.

According to brain research, the learning environment must be safe, supportive, non-threatening, and free from fear (Violand-Sanchez, 1998). Cooperative learning is a natural
extension of these features because it will reduce the learners' fears and anxieties. Teachers have to avoid threats, public criticisms, and punishments, even in their tone of voice because these have shocking effects. Teachers must take care of how to criticize, correct, and give a feedback because it has some influences on students’ performance. I recognize how harmful and painful an awful correction can be. There are many strategies for treating the mistakes as an indicator of aspects of a new language that are still being learned. Teachers, for example, can activate self-correct or peer correction and feedback as positive techniques because they are less threatening and more effective than the teacher's. The teacher does not have to be the source of all information about the language. Such a relationship will decrease the language anxiety and increase the impetus for learning.

I think it is not difficult for us to listen actively to what students are saying, let them know that we value their thoughts and contributions to the class, talk with them on a personal level, offer help and support, sit close to them, or walk around the class. This warm and supportive relationship will lead them to achieve “a more positive sense of their control over outcomes” (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002, p. 112). Such emotional mood and friendly behavior is a helpful feature to distinguish the target material from interfering material (Bower, 1991), to fulfill the students’ needs, and to enable the EFL teacher to fully engage the learners.

B. Vary your teaching methods.

It is worth mentioning that I use the term 'method' as an umbrella term to refer to approaches, principles, techniques, ways, and styles of teaching. Because there is no one best way to teach and because no method is without shortcomings, English teachers must vary their teaching methods. Each method has advantages over others for teaching specific aspects of the language. Therefore, there is no method that suits all learners and all contexts. According to Brown (2007), EFL teaching is based on "an enlightened eclectic approach" (p. 42), which is formed by contributions from all theories and research.

Varying teaching methods proves the teacher's abilities to direct the students' attention toward the lesson and creates motivating classes which cater to individual differences and different learning styles. These are cognitive styles for learning efficiently and effectively. Students find the manner of such a teacher unexpected because he or she varies his or her techniques. The students will be attracted to the lesson and enjoy its parts as a result of these motivating tactics. In contrast, teaching lessons with the same routine is boring and will destroy the pupils’ desire to learn. If the teacher is boring and does not make the lesson exciting, the students often do not like the class. For this reason, teachers need to take into consideration that varying teaching methods contributes effectively to the learners' motivation.

C. Use a variety of activities and materials.

Every class has different students, goals, and components. We, thus, must employ a set of activities in the classroom and use different resources and materials from the classroom or elsewhere. Activities involving moving, thinking, passing things, exchanging information, and so on offer a helpful diversity in the activities of any lesson. It also constructs the students' schema in relation to English learning because it will activate the various elements of language they have stored in their long-term memories in the brains. EFL learners will link their existing linguistics knowledge with the new facts in a meaningful learning process. This process provides what Loftus and Loftus (1980) state as “a high incentive for accurate retrieval” (p. 417).
Using a variety of activities will achieve many goals that cater to different learning styles. Informing the students about the objectives of the activities makes learning interesting and relevant (Nunan, 1999). In addition, it builds some challenging and competitive elements into the lesson, particularly if it moves from “simple to complex learning” (van Merrienboer and Sweller, 2005, p. 155) or from known to unknown. These goals prepare the learners to be motivated in the class and to participate more enthusiastically in different activities.

It is also essential to understand that some students will be motivated by specific activities while other students will be not motivated. Varying the activities maintains the class time for optimal authentic language input and interaction (Brown, 2007; van Merrienboer and Sweller, 2005). It will limit the teacher's talk and increase the learners' talk. This will give the teacher more opportunities to focus attention on particular students. It is beneficial for shy students because it will liberate them to feel that they are not under scrutiny. In addition, it will promote the students' desire for cooperative learning and meaningful negotiation.

3. After the classroom

Let us address what is supposed to happen outside the classroom:

A. Encourage the use of media and the Internet.

The Internet has become an educational standard resource and has undergone explosive growth recently. It supports people interactions with many forms of computer-mediated communications. As the English language is the language of technology, mass media, and the Internet, using technology and accessing the Internet are helpful ways of learning it (Nunan, 1999). This will be more effective in teaching English in the Saudi context. This phenomenon helps to alleviate the difficulties of English learning and compensate for the lack of English use outside the classroom. Teachers have to encourage their students to learn how to use media and the Internet in their education because their own steps taken to learn English are, as Brown (2007, p. 68) states, “as important as teacher's methods or more so.”

Mass communication materials engage learners’ metacognitive processes and improve their skills and abilities to use English in different situations. Movies, emails, chatting rooms, and games are examples for activating this idea. These activities are the favorite hobbies of Saudis when they have free time. Thus, teachers can use them for stimulating students to learn English during their leisure. Harmer (2007) argues that students' motivation is "far more likely to remain healthy if they are doing things they enjoy doing" (p. 102). This is exactly the case when students come to class with a belief that English is the only key to watch the Spanish soccer league or the Olympics Games. They are driven to English in order to satisfy their needs and interests, both “feeling-related and value-related interests” (Schiefele, 1999, p.260). It will help the teacher to generate the principles of self-study and autonomy, which is the next step.

B. Support student's self-learning and autonomy.

There is no doubt that the student's role in learning is very effective as said above. Modern teaching sees learners as participants in the learning process and expects them to take some degree of responsibility for their own learning. EFL learners are supposed to use English creatively depending on their beliefs about their competence and efficacy, expectancies for success or failure, and sense of control over outcomes (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Brown (2007) emphasizes that the learner’s role starts in the classroom with the teacher and continues beyond the classroom and the teacher.
My previous steps are useful factors in building the pupil's self-learning, self-regulation, motivation, and autonomy. For example, using different group activities will build the learners' interpersonal skills or how to learn with others. Interpersonal skills will build the learner's self-confidence and self-efficacy. These skills will enable the learner to take the initiative to use English to interact with his or her classmates or with other people outside the classroom. This will give the learners more confidence to use English to develop their communication skills. On the other hand, teachers could consider communication as a motivation for English learning (Hoff, 2005) and learners' autonomy as a means for raising and maintaining this motivation.

The learners, accordingly, will seek opportunities to put their knowledge and skills of English into practice because they are independent in their studies, can create their language competence, progress in their ability, and develop confidence and motivation to carry on learning (Hedge 2003). By the same token, this will promote the learners' curiosity that leads them to use English to explore the surrounding world. Thus, they are likely to find the learning experience enjoyable. Curiosity works better with self-learning and free choices in safe and supportive contexts. Learners, at this stage, are willing to take chances, or well-calculated risks, in trying out their English or satisfying their curiosity.

**Conclusion**

Motivation, in the context of learning English, is the student’s intent to learn. It is the combination of attempt and desire to accomplish the goal of learning it plus positive attitudes toward learning it. Many goals are related to students’ performance and reactions to their school achievement. These goals, according to Eccles and Wigfield (2002), “include seeing oneself as successful, dependable, wanting to learn new things, and wanting to get things done” (p. 110). Therefore, EFL teachers need to be aware of motivation as an essential factor to achieve these goals and how to raise it on the one side and how to maintain it on the other side.

This paper is an outline that has suggested some macro-steps to raise the motivation of students to learn English. My steps start from the learners' attitudes, teacher's office, and move on to the learners themselves, their relationships with the teacher and their efforts in the classroom, and outside it by the uses of media and the Internet. I view these suggestions as main ideas which include sub-steps in their details. These steps are inclusive of other steps particularly when I explain them in details. In other words, many other steps affecting motivation contribute to these main steps. All of these steps lead to each other and work in concert to increase the motivation level of EFL students in the KSA. By following these creative steps I have mentioned, teachers will be able to improve EFL learners’ motivation, beliefs, reactions, self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-regulation.

**About the Author**

**Ahmed Al shlowiy** Bachelor's degree in English language with a minor degree in Education from Umm Al Qura University in Saudi Arabia (1999), Master's degree in TESL from Flinders University in Australia (2008), and currently PhD student at the university of New Mexico in the USA. Teacher of English as a foreign language, English for general purposes and English for specific purposes, since 1999.
References

Enhancing Writing Skills within EFL University Contexts: Case Study in the United Arab Emirates

Suhair E. Al Alami
Al Ghurair University, Dubai, UAE

Abstract
Upon graduation, undergraduate students in the United Arab Emirates are required to acquire a repertoire of writing skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Emphasizing the role literature can play in terms of enhancing students’ writing skills, the present research introduces a literature-based course: LEARN AND GAIN. Adopting an experimental design, the research project involved two groups: experimental and control. The students of the experimental group were exposed to the literature course whilst the students of the control group were exposed to a General English language course. Examining the effectiveness of the proposed treatment, the author set and administered a pre-posttest. The pre-posttest aimed to measure subjects’ communicative critical writing competence in the English language. Based on the statistical findings, the performance of the experimental group students on the pre-posttest was significantly better than that of their counterparts of the control group students. In the light of findings and conclusions, recommendations have been discussed.

Keywords: Communicative critical writing competence, EFL contexts
1. Introduction

Upon graduation, undergraduate students in the United Arab Emirates specializing in majors other than English are required to have gained a repertoire of writing skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Despite the efforts EFL practitioners make whilst teaching, the outcome in relation to mastering writing skills is not yet satisfactory enough (Al Alami: 2013). The main concern of the current paper, as such, is to propose an appropriate course of action.

Seeking an effective course of action, the author believes that using literature within EFL contexts could be helpful in relation to some crucial points. This argument is in support of a number of professionals’ suggestions for using literature to enhance language proficiency within EFL contexts. In his book, for instance, McRae (2008) argues that utilizing stories for pedagogical purposes yields some positive effects such as encouraging students to read for pleasure. Interested in knowing what may happen next, maintains students’ interest and enriches their experience. Emotionally evocative and true to life settings as well as characters, Shaw (2007) believes that a novel has the power to engage learners in the content whilst enhancing imagination and visualizing characters and settings. According to De Naples (2002), while students try to grasp fiction in the form of drama and poetry, depicting characters’ life as well as asking questions about what sort of life the author creates, they very often ask questions about their own lives and issues they encounter. Sentence structure, forms of organization and vocabulary provide learners with genuine language input to learn from.

It could be logical as such to state that, literature can contribute to enhancing students’ writing skills in English. The present research therefore seeks to examine the reliability of this viewpoint by introducing a novels and short stories course, set and taught by the author. The course adopts the idea that literature can be used as a means rather than an object in itself, hence highlighting the importance of literature as a major resource in EFL/ESL learning (Baba 2008).

As well as Section One, the current paper includes the following sections: literature review, research questions, research hypotheses, study variables, research setting; population and sample, research implementation, data collection, the proposed course at a glance, statistical treatment, study findings, suggestions and recommendations, concluding word, and references. It is worthwhile mentioning in this context that, even though the current research project has been conducted in Dubai, the research topic, methodology, conclusions and recommendations can still be of use and interest to foreign language researchers and practitioners working in different parts of the world.

2. Literature Review: Writing Skills within EFL Contexts

The current research recognizes the profound value of writing to both English language development and to higher education in general. Section Two of the current paper is allotted to discussing writing skills in the EFL classroom. A number of pedagogical approaches as well as related studies are presented and discussed, all within EFL contexts.

2.1. Writing Skills within EFL Contexts: Strategies, Activities, and Procedures

Foreign language writing is usually a challenging process whereby a number of factors are involved, affecting the learner either positively or negatively. Amongst the most prominent factors is the quality of instruction offered to learners. This part of the current paper aims to present a number of strategies; activities and procedures within the field of EFL writing.

According to Burke (2010), there are three main stages to producing a stylistics paper. These are: investigation and selection, analysis, and writing. The first stage should take up a considerable time of thorough readings, considering both a stylistics perspective and an
interpretive perspective. The second stage requires deep analyses of the text being dealt with. As far as the interpretive task of the analyses is concerned, the analyses could be either the learner’s or an already existing one to which learners can refer for enrichment purposes. The third stage is normally the writing-up stage whereby learners are expected to have finalized their writing.

Technology, O’Brien (2004) believes, may be utilized in the classroom using a variety of means. The methods new technologies are employed for pedagogical purposes have been affected by the particular beliefs of each individual teacher as well as by the general institutional context. As far as word processing is concerned, it is common to assert that it is one of the optimal tools for a process approach to writing, providing users with various types of corrections prior to or following saving; deleting and inserting, for example. Network-based language teaching is also another area where technology has been implemented.

Interested in developing summary writing skills, Mishriki (2002) explains that when teaching summary writing, a teacher should make sure that students are able to recognize the outline, the organization, the main ideas, the main supporting ideas as well as how they are related to each other. Moreover, students should be able to analyze the passage in an attempt to gain a better understanding of it, which will give them a clearer insight into what to include, exclude, focus on, marginalize, or even omit when writing their summaries.

Advocating the idea that co-operative learning is of genuine support, Hirvela (2000) recommends adopting writing groups-small groups of students working together on a writing task which normally occurs in the form of peer review where students working in groups, offer authentic audience feedback from which they learn to revise their papers. Whilst working in groups, learners have the opportunity to improve their writing skills by means of exchanging ideas, sharing experiences, as well as enriching knowledge.

To summarize, this part of the current paper presents a number of strategies, activities and procedures which practitioners can implement in the EFL writing class. There is no single right way, neither is there one best activity through which writing skills can always be taught. Each of the strategies, activities and procedures outlined above has its own intrinsic value as a stimulus for eliciting some good responses.

2.2. Writing Skills within EFL Contexts: Related Studies

For EFL students, learning to write effective essays is an immense challenge, because the student has to obey linguistic conventions, write for unfamiliar audience, and employ rhetorical strategies that the audience expects. This part of Section Two deals with a number of studies and researches within the contexts of EFL writing.

Abdel-Latif (2009) conducted a study with the main aim of examining the pausing of Egyptian university students while composing their texts, and the reasons for such pauses. Thirty students took part in the study, all of whom were attending a four-year pre-service English language teaching program at an Egyptian university. The study revealed that both text quality and linguistic knowledge correlated positively with inter-sentential pausing, and negatively with intra-sentential pauses. One major implication for EFL instructors is the need to consider the linguistic knowledge levels of their students, and the need to vary instructional methods depending on students’ language proficiency and/or linguistic knowledge.

Chen (2006), on the other hand, conducted a project with the aim of utilizing children’s literature to enhance EFL university students’ narrative thinking as well as their writing ability, through a task of story reading and writing. The project was conducted in a required composition course for English majors. The task of reading and writing stories in the project was one of the course requirements. The task was arranged to develop students’ narrative thinking, and inspire
their creativity as well as imagination. It lasted for four weeks: the first week focused on reading stories; the second, drafting stories; the third, peer review and revising; and the fourth, conference and revising. To help students perceive the characters’ voice, the researcher asked the participants to read out the dialogue to their peers, or role-play the characters. The project has the following implications for today’s practitioners. Firstly, sharing and publication with the assistance of computer technology can empower student writers. Secondly, children’s literature, if carefully chosen, can be a useful resource for integrative EFL learning. Thirdly, time; support; and practice can provide scaffolds for low self-esteem writers. Fourthly, narrative genre knowledge gained through explicit instruction can promote students’ narrative thinking, as well as facilitate the task of reading and writing stories.

With co-operative learning in mind, Storch (2005) investigated the effectiveness of collaborative writing in ESL settings. The study involved twenty three participants who were offered the choice of working either in pairs or individually. The research examined texts written in pairs as well as individually, eliciting subjects’ reflections on cooperative learning as opposed to individual work. The findings revealed that texts written in pairs were shorter yet better in relation to accuracy of grammar, complexity of language as well as performance of task. Cooperative learning provided study subjects with a chance to generate ideas as well as to offer each other adequate feedback. The majority of study subjects conveyed their satisfaction with collaborative writing.

Interested in dialogue journal writing, Kim (2003) examined its implementation in a South Korean literature-based EFL classroom. The study was mainly concerned with what would happen in terms of the learners’ language development and literary responses, when a teacher responded to the students through dialogue journal writing in an EFL literature based classroom. Data collection included interviews, a survey, analysis of written samples from dialogue journals, teachers’ journal and field notes, along with other classroom documents. Data analysis showed that subjects viewed dialogue journal writing as a good way to improve English writing skills. In addition, dialogue journal writing served as a way of maintaining ongoing communication between the teacher and each subject, and of extending subjects’ experience of the world through responding to the teacher as well as the literary texts they read. With the impact of dialogue journal writing through a literature based approach as proposed by the study-the researcher recommended further implementation of dialogue journal writing.

Using portfolios for teaching the writing skill has been examined by a number of researchers and specialists. Yang (2003), for example, examined the extent to which integrating portfolios into a strategy of learning could be helpful, as well as investigated the outcome of using portfolios in terms of supporting EFL college students to be better autonomous learners. After two semesters of learning strategy-based instruction, proficiency tests revealed that participants made progress to a success percentage of over eighty, which could be seen as a significant improvement once compared to the fifty percent prior to training. The study recommends integrating portfolios into English language courses, familiarizing the learners with the concept of autonomy, implementing frequent portfolio’s checking and sharing, and developing guidelines and mini-lessons to enhance students’ writing.

Lemmm (1999) carried out a study investigating the use of dialogue journals in senior high schools as a central feature of literature studies. The study was conducted to shed light on the nature of secondary students’ responses to literary texts, the degree of development dialogue journals showed in secondary students’ responses to literary texts, and what dimensions that development could reveal. The responses to the literary texts—both early and late—were separated
into thematic units and then analyzed in terms of the guidelines outlined in the resource book, which the researcher provided. It was found that students’ responses generally followed the categories outlined in the handbook; personal reaction was the most common as well as the most diverse of all the responses. In addition, students rarely used categories of response such as asking questions of the text or using quotes. Moreover, the average length-in words-of students’ responses increased over the period of the study. Students seemed to become more accustomed to using literary terminology as an integral part of their responses. They, however, did not seem to judge the merits of a literary text until they had had a chance to the meaning of the literary work. The conclusion drawn was that, while the dialogue journal might be of use in senior high school English studies, there ought to be established criteria to determine the value of journals.

In conclusion, learning writing skills might be a demanding requirement, especially within EFL contexts where exposure to English could be limited. Students learning writing within EFL contexts have to handle issues like those of choosing appropriate words and phrases, applying correct grammatical rules, discussing relevant ideas, as well as generating sufficient ideas about the writing topic. Most importantly, students have to have adequate knowledge of how to use functional language in a variety of contexts. Hence, it is essential to be fully aware of the directions undertaken by EFL practitioners, in an aim to seek a less compartmentalized world.

With previous studies and recommendations in mind, the current research sought to equip EFL university students in the United Arab Emirates with a repertoire of writing skills, which would ensure the mastering of writing skills for life-long learning.

3. Research Questions

The present research sought appropriate answers to the following questions.
1. What could constitute a novels and short stories course, proposed for promoting writing skills on the part of EFL university students, studying in the United Arab Emirates?
2. Could the suggested literature course be of significant influence in terms of enhancing writing skills on the part of EFL university students, studying in the United Arab Emirates?

To adequately investigate the main issue, four sub-questions were formulated. These are:
I. Are there any significant differences between the two groups’ performance, on the pre-posttest conducted for the purpose of the current study?
II. Are there any significant differences between the performance of female and that of male students belonging to the experimental group, on the post-test conducted for the purpose of the current study?
III. Are there any significant differences between the performance of science and non-science colleges’ students belonging to the experimental group, on the post-test conducted for the purpose of the current study?

4. Research Hypotheses

In accordance with the three questions mentioned above, three hypotheses were formulated as follows:
1. There are no significant differences between the two groups’ performances on pre-posttest, conducted for the purpose of the current study.
2. There are no significant differences between the performance of female and that of male students belonging to the experimental group, on the post-test conducted for the purpose of the current study.
3. There are no significant differences between the performance of science and non-science colleges’ students belonging to the experimental group, on the post-test conducted for the purpose of the current study.

5. Study Variables
   The study involved two groups: control and experimental. The two groups had males and females; majoring in science and non-science subjects. The research variables are stated below.
   - Independent variable: The suggested literature course set by the researcher: Learn and Gain.
   - Dependent variable: Experimental and control groups’ performance on the pre-posttest conducted for the current study purposes.
   - Moderator variables: Major; namely, science versus non-science colleges’ students, and gender; female versus male.

6. Research Setting, Population and Sample
   The research covers undergraduate learners studying in the United Arab Emirates and specializing in subjects other than English. Students whose major is English are not included as this category of learners is normally expected to acquire adequate communicative competence in English throughout their four-year study program. As far as the study sample is concerned, it includes thirty four learners studying at a private university in the United Arab Emirates. The piloting of the study was conducted in the academic year 2008-2009 for one month, re-piloting the study was conducted in the academic year 2009-2010 for four months, and implementing the study was conducted throughout the academic year 2011-2012 for four months. Piloting, re-piloting and implementing the study were all conducted at the same university in Dubai.

7. Research Implementation
   The first on-site implementation stage was piloting the proposed course, which took place in class with two different groups during the academic year 2008-2009. Two short stories were selected for implementation purposes. The implementation was carried out during the first semester with a group of students who were having the Upper Intermediate English course and the TOEFL course successively, and during the second semester with another group of students who were also having the Upper Intermediate English course and the TOEFL course successively. Implementing the pilot study twice was intended to ensure valid, reliable as well as credible results. With reference to the students’ comments then, both groups expressed satisfaction with the literary texts as well as language tasks and activities provided. However, the majority expressed concern about the high number of new words used in the two texts.

   Involving two different experimental and two different control groups, the second on-site implementation stage of the course was a re-piloting study which took place during the academic year 2009-2010. Prior to and following implementation, the students involved were exposed to a pre-posttest set and conducted by the researcher. The two experimental groups were taught the proposed course along with the Upper Intermediate English course and the TOEFL course during the first and second academic semesters, while the two control groups were only taught the Upper Intermediate English course and the TOEFL course during the same period. The duration of implementation was three hours a week, lasting for fifteen weeks each.

   In the light of three English language specialists’ recommendations in the UK, the researcher decided to re-conduct the research project introducing a number of modifications; the
pre-post test conducted earlier was felt to be in favor of the experimental group as it has a touch of literature. Accordingly, the researcher set and administered another pre-posttest which can be seen as a neutral general English language proficiency test in favor of no specific group. Speaking in general terms, EFL tests can gain status in a number of ways, including being based on established tests such as TOEFL, by being trialed extensively, and by analysis of the items and weeding out poor ones. The researcher, therefore, based her pre-posttest on TOEFL for its being internationally recognized. Soon after trialing the pre-posttest extensively throughout the fall academic semester 2011-2012, the researcher made slight modifications and then administered the test twice prior to and following implementation throughout the winter academic semester 2012. The researcher implemented the proposed course involving the students who registered for the course Communication Skills throughout the winter academic semester 2012. In other words, the students who registered for the Communication Skills course were two sections, one of which was experimental and as such was taught the proposed course, while the other was control, hence was taught the general English course used for teaching Communication Skills at the university where the researcher works. The implementation process lasted for one academic semester, that is to say, forty five hours distributed over fifteen weeks.

8. Data Collection: The Pre-Posttest

Going through many books and magazines within the related areas, the researcher came to realize that, for her to employ the data collection method of using language tests would be appropriate. To ensure optimal test conduct, the researcher herself set as well as administered the pre-posttest. The pre-posttest was administered to the experimental and control groups with the aim of measuring the two groups’ writing skills, prior to and following research conduct. Table One below highlights the pre-posttest specifications, and Table Two presents the evaluation criteria.

Table 1. Test Specifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Question Type</th>
<th>Abilities Measured</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Mark Allotment</th>
<th>Allocation of Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Essay writing: argumentative (300 words)</td>
<td>Producing coherent pieces of written discourse. Employing cohesion devices in a written piece appropriately.</td>
<td>See Evaluation Criteria.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Essay writing: descriptive (300 words)</td>
<td>Producing coherent pieces of written discourse. Employing cohesion devices in a written piece appropriately.</td>
<td>See Evaluation Criteria.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Essay writing: process (300 words)</td>
<td>Producing coherent pieces of written discourse. Employing cohesion devices in a written piece appropriately.</td>
<td>See Evaluation Criteria.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>One hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Evaluation Criteria
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Topic development</th>
<th>Language use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Effectively addresses the topic.</td>
<td>Well organized. Effective and adequate use of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Wide range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Minor errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-30</td>
<td>Effectively addresses the topic. Displays unity and coherence. Well developed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>Fairly addresses the topic, as appropriate.</td>
<td>Fairly well-organized. Relatively limited control of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Relatively limited range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Some inaccurate use of structures, grammar and vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-18</td>
<td>Does not address the topic adequately.</td>
<td>Lacks organization in places. Limited control of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Limited range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Frequent inaccuracy of structures, grammar and vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>Mostly irrelevant.</td>
<td>Serious disorganization. Severely limited control of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Severely limited range of structures, grammar and vocabulary. Mostly inaccurate structures, grammar and vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited connection of ideas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited development in response to the topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lacks unity and coherence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Serious underdevelopment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. The Proposed Course at a Glance
The literature course Learn and Gain is comprised of two novels and fifteen short stories, selected carefully to provoke discussion on a variety of themes. The current section depicts the course briefly, presenting attainment targets and main aims, and content organization.

9.1. Main Targets and General Aims
Upon the completion of the proposed course, learners are expected to:
- Read to find and handle information for a range of purposes, as well as read to enjoy and respond to a variety of texts.
- Write for a range of purposes, to convey meaning in language appropriate to purpose and audience.

Learners are required to develop their abilities in reading critically. Hence, they should:
- Distinguish facts, opinions and reasoned justifications.
- Grasp feelings, opinions and attitudes implied.
- Deduce meaning of unfamiliar lexical items from context.
- Make judgments based upon personal knowledge and experience.
- Recognize the effectiveness of employing literary devices for appreciation.

Moreover, learners are required to improve their abilities in writing critically. They should
- Write coherent pieces of written discourse.
- Utilize cohesive devices in a written piece appropriately.
- Employ literary techniques in writing effectively. (Al Alami 2013, 106-107)

9.2. Organization
Learn and Gain includes seven major sections. These are:
Section one: Warm up including two activities—brainstorming and advanced organizers.
Section two: Reading in action including five sub stages.
Section three: Language practice including vocabulary, grammar, and literary qualities.
Section four: Oral production including a variety of oral language activities.
Section five: Writer’s workshop including four sub-stages.
Section six: Self-evaluation including self-assessment checklists.
Section seven: Building up your portfolio. (Al Alami 2013, 107)
10. Statistical Treatment

To test the first research hypothesis, both paired samples t-test and Mann-Whitney test were conducted. Tables Three, Four, and Five below reveal the statistical results.

Table 3. T-Test Experimental Group-Communicative Critical Writing Competence Pre-Post Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>13.0588</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.16715</td>
<td>1.25322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>16.7794</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.58659</td>
<td>1.35495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paired Samples Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest &amp; Post test</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.864</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>Std. Error Mean</td>
<td>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>3.72059</td>
<td>2.83516</td>
<td>.68763</td>
<td>-5.17829</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. T-Test Control Group-Communicative Critical Writing Competence Pre-Post Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>5.2647</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.90846</td>
<td>1.43301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>7.5000</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.69097</td>
<td>.41012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Paired Samples Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest &amp; Post test</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.376</td>
<td>.137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the statistical findings, both groups could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their performance findings. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress. As the p-value for the experimental group (Sig. = .000) is less than 0.05, while the p-value for the control group (Sig. = 0.113) is more than 0.05, then it is evident that there is a significant difference between the performance of the two groups on the pre-posttest, in favor of the experimental group students.

To test the second research hypothesis, Mann Whitney U test was conducted. Table Six below reveals the results.

Table 6. Mann-Whitney Test for Hypothesis Two (Hypotheses Test Summary)
Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
--- | --- | --- | --- |
The medians of prewriting are the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Median Test | 1.000<sup>1,2</sup> | Retain the null hypothesis. |
The distribution of prewriting is the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Mann Whitney U Test | .961<sup>1</sup> | Retain the null hypothesis. |
The medians of post-writing are the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Median Test | 1.000<sup>1,2</sup> | Retain the null hypothesis. |
The distribution of post-writing is the same across categories of gender. | Independent-Samples Mann Whitney U Test | .301<sup>1</sup> | Retain the null hypothesis. |

Asymptotic Significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

<sup>1</sup>Exact significance is displayed for this test.

<sup>2</sup>Fisher Exact Sig.

Examining the p-value (Sig.) from the table, we cannot reject the null hypothesis. In other words, we have insufficient evidence to conclude that the performance of male subjects is significantly different from female subjects<sup>1</sup>, on the post-test.

To test the third hypothesis, Mann Whitney U test was conducted. Table Seven below reveals the results.

**Table7. Mann-Whitney Test for Hypothesis Three (Hypothesis Test Summary)**

Null Hypothesis | Test | Sig. | Decision |
--- | --- | --- | --- |
The medians of prewriting are the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Median Test | 1.000<sup>1,2</sup> | Retain the null hypothesis. |
The distribution of prewriting is the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Mann Whitney U Test | .442<sup>1</sup> | Retain the null hypothesis. |
The medians of post-writing are the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Median Test | .294<sup>1,2</sup> | Retain the null hypothesis. |
The distribution of post-writing is the same across categories of college. | Independent-Samples Mann Whitney U | .104<sup>1</sup> | Retain the null hypothesis. |
Test

Asymptotic Significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

 Exact significance is displayed for this test.

 As Table Seven reveals, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that the performance of science colleges’ students is significantly different from that of non-science colleges’ students, on the post-test.

 11. Study Findings

 Based on the statistical treatment conducted for the purpose of the current study, the researcher could conclude the following.

 - Both the experimental and control groups’ students could achieve progress towards the end of the academic semester, as indicated by their performance findings. However, the experimental group students could achieve a significant progress in the writing skill.
 - There are no significant differences between the performances of female and male subjects, on the post-test conducted for the purpose of the current study.
 - There are no significant differences between the subjects belonging to science colleges and subjects belonging to non-science colleges, on the post-test conducted for the purpose of the current study.

 As proved by the findings of the current study, therefore, utilizing literature to enhance writing skills on the part of EFL university students studying in the United Arab Emirates has been significantly effective. What is more, no significant differences have been located between the writing performance of male and female students or between the colleges of science and colleges of non-science students, as a result of utilizing the proposed literature course to promote writing skills within EFL university contexts.

 12. Writing in the EFL Classroom: Suggestions and Recommendations

 Based on the findings of the current research, using literature within EFL contexts could be of genuine support in relation to some essential points like those of enhancing writing, developing communication skills, enhancing critical thinking and so on. As far as enhancing writing skills is concerned, the first suggestion emphasizes the contribution literature can make within EFL contexts. To enable EFL learners to develop their writing skills, the second suggestion highlights instructors’ roles in the EFL classroom. Instructors are coordinators, facilitators and catalysts rather than dominators and directors. Speaking of the selection of appropriate instructional approaches, the third suggestion is in support of adopting an eclectic approach. Pedagogical approaches should testify to eclecticism when it comes to choosing an appropriate methodological approach to take with a group of students. As Carter (2010:117) argues: ‘the appropriate method is very much a hands-on approach taking each text on its own merits, using what the reader knows, what the reader is aiming for in his or her learning context,..’ An optimal method for the teaching of writing is therefore process-based, encouraging students to be positive explorers of cultural as well as linguistic processes.

 13. Concluding Word

 In conclusion, it could be reliable to consider literature an appropriate means which EFL practitioners may utilize, for the enhancement of writing skills on the part of EFL learners. A
literary text, therefore, should be approached as a valuable resource and a fruitful opportunity for an EFL student’s personal growth on his/her own. To maximize effectiveness, the employment of effective approaches and procedures will, for certain, contribute to an exciting and productive learning experience for EFL learners to gain, wherever they study and whatever they specialize in.

About the Author:
Suhair Al Alami holds a PhD in Linguistics from Ain Shams University, Egypt, and another PhD in Applied Linguistics from Aston University, UK. Currently, Dr. Al Alami works at Al Ghurair University, Dubai. Dr. Al Alami has contributed a wide range of papers to various journals, and serves as a coeditor of Perspectives as well as a member of the board of reviewers at two journals: Arab World English Journal, and US-China Foreign Language Journal.

14. References
Subjectivity in Discourse: A CDA Approach to the Study of Adjectives in Two Political Speeches

Hela Ajmi
English Department, Faculty of Human and Social Sciences of Tunis
University of Tunis I, Tunisia

Abstract
This paper studies the use of adjectives as subjectivity markers in one of former U.S. President George W. Bush's political speeches and another of the current U.S. President Barack H. Obama. Combining both quantitative as well as qualitative methods, the paper argues, from a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, that the use of adjectives as subjectivity markers can be better explained as reflecting their users' world views and bias. Having in essence a rhetorical function, these linguistic triggers namely possessive and descriptive adjectives help polarize representation, reconstruct identities and enhance the power relations of their users. Differences and similarities in use are investigated in both speeches. The analysis of possessive and descriptive adjectives in these two different speeches has revealed that there is a high level of similarity in their occurrence and frequency distribution. More importantly, the analysis has also revealed that most instances of similarity in use reflect similar ideological frames projected by both speakers in their discourse. More specifically, it is found that both speakers are most likely to echo the voice of one single political agenda over different periods of time in dealing with the same topic.

Keywords: subjectivity, possessive and descriptive adjectives, CDA, political speech, the Iraq war
Introduction

Subjectivity in discourse is widely believed to be an index to the speakers' world view(s) and/or version(s) of reality (e.g. Althusser, 1971). It is typically a characteristic of human language which reflects most often bias. In Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), subjectivity in discourse has to do with the way speakers produce and exploit discourse ideologically to achieve certain gains namely in the political sphere. More specifically, certain linguistic triggers such as possessive and descriptive adjectives, among many more, are exploited ideologically in production and perception. Thereafter, in an attempt to unveil the ideological underpinnings of these linguistic triggers, the research paper aims at showing that discourse is not immune of being subjective and biased. As such, the speeches of two key political figures that are known worldwide are selected to be investigated for the subjective use of the aforementioned adjectives. One speech belongs to the former American President George W. Bush; the other to the current American President Barack H. Obama in dealing with the issue of the Gulf War (2003). Combining both quantitative and qualitative methods, the paper raises, from a CDA perspective, the question of political power as central to the study of struggle for status. Given that language use either written or spoken has a rhetorical function, both speakers are found to polarize representation, enhance power relations, and reconstruct identities to justify the war against Iraq. Notably, the analysis of these adjectives in an intertextual chaining associated with the history of terrorism has revealed the extent to which discourse users can be crafted in veiling their subjectivity and bias by assimilating intertextual cues within discourse as member resources (MRs). Both speakers are found to hold similar assumptions about the world around them. Consequently, both of them are found to construct a discourse that goes hand in hand with the goals of their political agenda in dealing with the same topic.

Study Background

The notion of subjectivity as opposed to objectivity has been a major preoccupation in the field of semantics at least since Bréal (1964[1900]). It has been identified with the way humans perceive the world around them, and how they differ from one another in this respect. Unlike objectivity which is based on facts, subjectivity is based on one's own experience of life. Saying it differently, subjectivity is based on one's attitudes toward others hence one's evaluation of them. In fact, the notion of subjectivity has been well-investigated by Althusser (1971) who locates the study of ideology within the scope of the former. The term Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) emerged in Althusser's work to refer to religious as well as political institutions, the media, for instance, and other subtle social practices such as handshaking, linguistic forms of greeting, and politeness codes. ISA(s) are constant and eternal performances which embody the individual as the subject who cannot exist outside of these material manifestations. This means that ideology forms the subject while ideological practices are by no means inseparable from personal beliefs that are projected in such material manifestations.

Like Althusser (1971), Foucault (1984) highlights the ideological underpinnings of science. More than that, he shifts from ideology to power/knowledge which he claims to be itself fictional and productive of subjects. That is to say, subject positions exist by virtue of certain co-ordinates of knowledge and discursive practices through which what he calls 'subjectification' is most likely to occur. Foucault (1984) links knowledge to power. For him, it is not the subject but discourse which is enmeshed with power in producing knowledge. In this line of thought, one would rather conclude that no 'Truth' of knowledge in the absolute sense exists, but there exists a regime of truth. Likewise, Fairclough (2001) assumes that the subject produces
and is produced by discourse. Similarly, Teo (2000, p. 11) states that "discourse does not merely reflect social processes and structures, but affirms, consolidates and...reproduces existing social structures". Teo's assumption goes hand in hand with Fairclough's view (2006) that social practices are networked in such away as to constitute social orders, while the semiotic element of a given social practice constitutes orders of discourse (Fairclough, 2006). The latter, first introduced by Foucault (1984), refers to the conventions underlying any discursive event.

Simply put, due to the mediating concept of orders of discourse the 'mapping' of connections between text and talk with their social order is realized. Nevertheless, social order is discursive and changing over time (Chiapello & Fairclough, 2002). In particular, power relations in any given society determine the way these orders of discourse function such as the power relations between men and women, for instance, or other social groups that are not confined to particular institutions (Fairclough 2001, p. 28). Moreover, drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Fairclough (1993, p. 134) states that "Language use is always simultaneously constitutive of (i) social identities, (ii) social relations and (iii) systems of knowledge and beliefs." He basically investigates, to borrow his words, the way language is "socially shaped and socially shaping."

For these theoretical considerations to be operational, Fairclough (2003) develops an analytical framework that attributes three dimensions to each discursive event. According to Fairclough (2003), a discursive event undergoes three levels of analysis. The first level of analysis is purely descriptive where the formal properties of the text need to be analyzed. At this level of analysis the verbalization of experiential, relational and expressive values in discourse need to be identified. The second level of analysis consists in analyzing the situational as well as the intertextual context in which the discourse event is situated and by which it is framed. The third level of analysis relates the textual and intertextual aspects of the discourse event under investigation with the wider socio-cultural context.

**Research Questions and Assumptions**

This research explores the use of certain types of adjectives as subjectivity markers. More specifically, it explores the way these linguistic phenomena can be exploited ideologically in production and perception (Fairclough, 2001). The present paper takes President Obama's words concerning the issue of the Iraq war (2003) as the starting point for analysis. He said:

(1) As we do, I am mindful that the Iraq War has been a contentious issue at home. Here, too, it is time to turn the page. This afternoon, I spoke to former President George W. Bush. It's well known that he and I disagreed about the war from its outset. Yet no one could doubt President Bush's support for our troops, or his love of country and commitment to our security. As I have said, there were patriots who supported this war, and patriots who opposed it. And all of us are united in appreciation for our servicemen and women, and our hope for Iraq's future. (L 25, 2010, emphasis added)

Hence, the argument raised in this research paper evolves round one focal point which highlights the ideological underpinnings of biased discourse. It sheds light on the role subjective discourse plays in the shaping of reality where power and control relations are enacted rather subtly. As such, three questions are raised as follows:

- Did President Obama manage to turn the page as he promised?
- What assumptions did both Presidents hold about the world around them?
- To what extent was subjectivity produced in, through and by their discourse?

**Methodology**
To answer the aforementioned research questions, Fairclough's approach to CDA is implemented. Implicit in this approach is the idea that "discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination, but is the thing for which and by which there is struggle, discourse is the power which is to be seized" (Foucault, 1984, p. 110). In brief, Fairclough's approach to CDA rests on three-dimensions for text analysis. Nevertheless, in the interest of space and time, not all steps in this approach are followed. After all, Fairclough (1989) asserts that there is no reason to treat the procedure as holy writ because it serves as a guide rather than a 'blueprint.'

For more clarification, Janks (1997) describes Fairclough's model in terms of 'boxes nesting one inside the other' representing three interrelated dimensions of discourse. The first dimension relates to the discourse fragment; the second refers to where struggles over power relations are taking place in discourse; and the third to the power behind discourse (Janks, 1997). All dimensions are interdependent and 'mutually explanatory' (Janks, 1997, p. 27) though they embark on different types of analysis such as described below:

1. **Description** is a matter of dealing with the formal properties of the text in the verbalization of three values; experiential (text production experience), relational (the way the text structures social relations) and expressive (the subjects' positions in discourse) (Fairclough, 1989; now in a revised second edition 2001). A linguistic formal feature may simultaneously have two or three of the values as stated in Table 1:

   **Table 1. Experiential, relational and expressive values of formal features (after Fairclough, 1989)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of meaning</th>
<th>Values of features</th>
<th>Structural effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>Experiential</td>
<td>Knowledge/beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations</td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Social relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>Social identities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Interpretation** is about discourse processes and their dependence on background assumptions (Faircough, 2001, p. 17).

3. **Explanation** is concerned with the analysis of the wider socio-cultural context in relation with the textual as well as the intertextual context.

In the analysis, data collection consists in a large number of possessive and descriptive adjectives collected from two political speeches. The speeches were downloaded from the Internet (see Appendix 1 for the links to the websites). The speeches were analyzed using concordance software for text analysis. A free version of this software can be downloaded from this site: [http://www.concordancesoftware.co.uk/](http://www.concordancesoftware.co.uk/)

The concordance served as a time-saving instrument to help sort out feasible and reliable figures that can be analyzed at a regular and systematic basis. In addition, it enabled to generate word lists from the speeches by frequency and by alphabet. Moreover, it enabled to count words and make word lists which can be printed or saved to files. Word frequency lists were sorted out along with *KWIC* and line-based concordances of each of the targeted features for storage. By way of illustration see the example below:
Subjectivity in Discourse: A CDA Approach to the Study of Adjectives

Heroic.............1

Of course, the soldiers left much behind. Some were teenagers when the war began. Many have served multiple tours of duty, far from their families who bore a heroic burden of their own, enduring the absence of a husband's embrace or a mother's kiss.

'I' refers to word frequency.

'47' refers to the line-based concordance of the word.

This process of data collection was necessary to provide a clear picture of the frequency of occurrence of each of these formal features. After that, a set of possessive and descriptive adjectives that function as subjectivity markers in discourse were identified for investigation. In other words, quantifying the number of occurrence and frequency distribution of these linguistic triggers constitute the primary step in the analysis. However, in complementing the quantitative part of analysis, the exploitation of possessive and descriptive adjectives subjectively and ideologically was done on grounds of a qualitative basis.

Results and Discussion

Describing the Results

Generally speaking, both speeches share a great deal of similarity in many respects mainly in terms of bias and subjectivity. In particular, the set of adjectives having the function of subjectivity markers are found to enable their users to construct an ideological discourse. They served to verbalize experiential, relational as well as expressive values. See Table 2. below for more details followed by diagrammatic representations:

Table 2. The number of occurrence of possessive adjectives per speech

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possessive adjectives</th>
<th>My</th>
<th>Your</th>
<th>His</th>
<th>Her</th>
<th>Its</th>
<th>Our</th>
<th>Their</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of occurrence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. A diagrammatic representation of the frequency distribution of possessive adjectives
The findings show that the number of occurrence of Our in Obama's discourse is high (85) followed by Their (23), then Its (8) and My (4). Your has no occurrence while His is used twice and Her has one occurrence. Similarly, in Bush's discourse Our is remarkably used most (25 occurrences) followed by Your and Their. Her is not used at all while Its is used four times, His twice and My has one occurrence. In both speeches, Their is highly repetitive. This possessive adjective occupies the second position after Our in both speeches. However, its distribution is limited, compared to that of Our. This limited distribution seems to call for a nuanced account that both speakers were enabled to reproduce reality through an ideological investment of these linguistic triggers. Such ideological investments served as means of misrepresentation namely to draw boundaries of inclusion and exclusion concerning President Saddam Hussein and his regime.

These excerpts from both speeches have been selected to capture evidence from the data on how possessive adjectives are impregnated with ideology:

(2) The Americans who have served in Iraq completed every mission they were given. They defeated a regime that had terrorized its people. Together with Iraqis and coalition partners who made huge sacrifices of their own, our troops fought block by block to help Iraq seize the chance for a better future. They shifted tactics to protect the Iraqi people; trained Iraqi Security Forces; and took out terrorist leaders. Because of our troops and civilians -and because of the resilience of the Iraqi people - Iraq has the opportunity to embrace a new destiny, even though many challenges remain. (Obama, L10, 2010)

(3) It is too late for Saddam Hussein to remain in power. It is not too late for the Iraqi military to act with honor and protect your country by permitting the peaceful entry of coalition forces to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. Our forces will give Iraqi military units clear instructions on actions they can take to avoid being attacked and destroyed. I urge every member of the Iraqi military and intelligence services, if war comes, do not fight for a dying regime that is not worth your own life. (Bush, L15, 2003)

Remarkably, the subjective use of possessive adjectives in collocation with other text properties such as nominalization, passivization and over-lexicalization enhanced the verbalization of experiential, relational and expressive values. Consequently, A distorted picture of people, actions, events and states is projected (e.g. 'terrorist leaders' and a 'dying regime' etc…). The organization of the speakers' social world, for instance, is framed more on a
collective basis than on an individual one, enhancing relations of solidarity and power (e.g. 'Together with Iraqis and coalition partners'). Besides, despite the strong position they hold at the institutional level, speakers are found to struggle in discourse to construct identities namely national identity. They are found to identify themselves with the social group to which they belong (the American society as a whole) as well as with the audience and people around the world for the sake of promoting commonality.

As far as descriptive adjectives are concerned, it is found that despite some differences in use, they are predominantly used as subjectivity markers in both speeches (see Appendix 2 for the data collected of descriptive adjectives as a whole). It is remarkable that most descriptive adjectives are used as subjectivity markers. Both Presidents are found to engage in exploiting discourse subjectively in their use not only of possessive adjectives but also of descriptive adjectives in order to manage the process of dichotomization in representation. By way of illustration, President Saddam Hussein and his regime are portrayed along a negative stereotyped image (e.g. 'aggressive dictators'). As a subsequent result upon the fact that representation is being polarized, two conflicting worlds emerge within a wider frame characterized by a dichotomy of terms; one negative (e.g. 'they can attack the innocent and destroy peace'), the other positive (e.g. 'America tried to work with the United Nations to address this threat because we wanted to resolve the issue peacefully'). By way of illustration, see the following excerpts from the two speeches in which experiential, relational and expressive values are verbalized.

(4) This new approach reflects our long-term partnership with Iraq—one based upon mutual interests, and mutual respect. Of course, violence will not end with our combat mission. Extremists will continue to set off bombs, attack Iraqi civilians and try to spark sectarian strife. But ultimately, these terrorists will fail to achieve their goals. Iraqis are a proud people. They have rejected sectarian war, and they have no interest in endless destruction. They understand that, in the end, only Iraqis can resolve their differences and police their streets. Only Iraqis can build a democracy within their borders. What America can do, and will do, is provide support for the Iraqi people as both a friend and a partner. (Obama, L 22, 2010)

(5) Many Iraqis can hear me tonight in a translated radio broadcast, and I have a message for them. If we must begin a military campaign, it will be directed against the lawless men who rule your country and not against you. As our coalition takes away their power, we will deliver the food and medicine you need. We will tear down the apparatus of terror and we will help you to build a new Iraq that is prosperous and free. In a free Iraq, there will be no more wars of aggression against your neighbors, no more poison factories, no more executions of dissidents, no more torture chambers and rape rooms. The tyrant will soon be gone. The day of your liberation is near. (Bush, L 14, 2003, emphasis added)

It is obvious that similar versions of reality and/ or ideologies are projected. These findings are also emphasized through the use of an intertextual chaining associated with the history of wars and terrorism as revealed in the interpretation section below.

**Interpreting the Results**

In this part of analysis, the interpretation of the results will consider only certain forms of intertextuality practices that are cited in Fairclough' work (1996). Among the intertextual cues used in discourse Fairclough (1996) identifies many forms of intertextuality including citations, quotations or references. However, in the interest of space and time, only references to past events will be considered partly because among the merits of exploring intertextuality in discourse is the ability to highlight the historicity of events in connection with the discursivity of discourse practices. Accordingly, all intertextual cues based on references to past events are investigated for ideological investments. The most striking excerpts depicted from the speeches concerning the use of an intertextual chaining based on past events are the following:
(6) Part of that responsibility is making sure that we honor our commitments to those who have served our country with such valor. **As long as I am President, we will maintain the finest fighting force that the world has ever known**, and do whatever it takes to serve our veterans as well as they have served us. This is a **sacred** trust. That is why we have already made one of the largest increases in funding for veterans in decades. We are treating the signature wounds of today's wars **post-traumatic stress and traumatic** brain injury, while providing the health care and benefits that all of our veterans have earned. And we are funding a **post-9/11 GI Bill** that helps our veterans and their families pursue the dream of a college education. Just as the GI Bill helped those who fought **World War II**- including my grandfather- become the backbone of our middle class, so today's servicemen and women must have the chance to apply their gifts to expand the American economy. **Because part of ending a war responsibly is standing by those who have fought it.** (Obama, L 44, 2010, emphasis added)

(7) The regime has a **history of reckless aggression in** the Middle East. It has a deep hatred of America and our friends. And it has aided, trained and harbored terrorists, including operatives of al Qaeda. (Bush, L 5, 2003, emphasis added)

Being aware of the significant effects of discourse on public reaction and attitudes, both Presidents feature to texture events associated with the history of terrorism into the original event (e.g. 'The regime has a history of reckless aggression in the Middle East'). Consequently, the topical chaining of terrorist attacks is conceptualized in terms of a dichotomous representation (e.g. reference to Osama bin Laden). On the one hand, President Bush is reported on many occasions, prior to the speech under investigation, to portray President Saddam Hussein as a criminal who has already committed genocide by means of Weapons of Mass Destruction (abbreviated WMD). On the other hand, the same image is projected in President Obama's discourse who manages to reinforce the underlying belief that Bush's commitment to the Iraq war though costly, was based on moral duty and obligation (e.g. 'This is a sacred trust').

Strikingly, the prevailing ideology imparted by the linguistic triggers under investigation is one that favors the **self** and condemns the **other**. This can be largely indicated by reference to other events that have historical associations with the notion of war and terrorism. More specifically, reference to the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington of September 11, 2001 is highly repetitive in their discourse.

Generally speaking, in imparting an ideological discourse which is overloaded with assumptions, the chief objectives of these speakers is to control the hearer's mind and justify unjustifiable actions through persuasion rather than force. In coloring discourse with subjectivity markers, which Fowler (1991) calls 'over-lexicalization,' they are but struggling in discourse to manage the projection of the image of the democratic leader. Needless to say, in their struggle for identity construction and self image protection, they are justifying the American influence around the world which necessitates the use of all sorts of power including an effective diplomacy and a strong economy.

**Explaining the Results**

After interpreting the results one needs to explain them. To this end, three aspects are essential at the explanatory level. These are, as stated by Fairclough, the social determinants of discourse, the manifestation of MR(s) as ideologies and the social effects of discourse. Firstly, according to Fairclough (2001, 2003) the connection of discourse to power relations represents its social determinants. Therefore, it could be said that the rhetoric used by both Presidents to control people's minds on the basis of rightness was much guided by their powerful institutional positions and as the leaders of the free world. Secondly, by means of the subjective use of the linguistic triggers under investigation both Presidents are found to exploit discourse ideologically
to project their world views and assumptions so as to justify unjustifiable actions on the basis of shared values and religious grounds (e.g. 'rightness', 'justice', 'brotherhood'…), to name but a few. Thirdly, both Presidents while underlying their authority/right to speak to others, they managed the role of the information provider effectively. In the following excerpts, for instance, both of them are found to reinforce the underlying belief that commitment to the war though costly, is based on moral duty and obligation.

(8) Today, old adversaries are at peace, and emerging democracies are potential partners. New markets for our goods stretch from Asia to the Americas. A new push for peace in the Middle East will begin here tomorrow. Billions of young people want to move beyond the shackles of poverty and conflict. As the leader of the free world, America will do more than just defeat on the battlefield those who offer hatred and destruction -we will also lead among those who are willing to work together to expand freedom and opportunity for all people. (Obama, L35, 2010)

(9) In the case of Iraq, the Security Council did act, in the early 1990s. Under Resolutions 678 and 687 - both still in effect - the United States and our allies are authorized to use force in ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. This is not a question of authority, it is a question of will. (Bush, L 10, 2003)

In these two speeches, adjectives are functioning as subjectivity markers enabling their users to polarize representation, formulate and attenuate claims to redefine the American identity not only for the American nation but also for the outside world (Rampton & Stauber, 2003). It is as asserted by Rampton and Stauber in their book Weapons of mass deception (2003) the reproductive effects of ideological/subjective discourse has to do with contestation and struggle. In this respect, it could be said that both Presidents seem to be aware that the U.S. propaganda 'blitz' may be 'destined to fail' namely in the Muslim world (Rampton & Stauber, 2003, p. 13). It could be said also that this 'guerrilla war' and/ or 'propaganda war' as widely described was the drop that made the cup overflow.

Validating and Discussing the Results
Validating the results is an important step in carrying out this investigation. Therefore, a validation test was designed for each speech. A randomly selected list of items from the data collected was tested including two multiple-choice questions and a final open-ended question (see Appendix 3 for the statement of the validation test questions and sample items from the speeches used for validation). Most of the respondents to the tests were MA students of Linguistics from the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences of Tunis and the Faculty of Letters, Arts and Humanities, Manouba. The total number of respondents to the tests was 33 (12 males and 21 females). The results obtained from their answers were compared with the results obtained in this investigation. After that, two values were extracted; one refers to the number of valid answers; the other to the number of invalid answers. The difference between the two values was checked for significance. It was found that there is no significant difference between both values. This indicates that the results were valid.

Below is a diagrammatic representation for the two values one looked for in the validation test:
After validating the results it is noteworthy to discuss and conclude the findings in light of the research questions asked in the methodology section. The questions raised were about whether President Obama managed 'to turn the page' or not; did both Presidents hold similar assumptions about the natural world around them and to what extent subjectivity was reflected in, by and through their discourse.

In brief, it seems that President Obama did not manage 'to turn the page' as he promised. He appeared to continue President Bush's policy in dealing with the issue of the Gulf War (2003). Moreover, the assumptions about the natural world of the Ex US President and his successor are found to be similar. The adjectives investigated in this study were used subjectively to include various assumptions serving particular ideological ends; one of these aims is to maintain power namely on countries of the Middle East. By way of illustration, see the following excerpt from the data collected:

(10) Today, old adversaries are at peace, and emerging democracies are potential partners. New markets for our goods stretch from Asia to the Americas. A new push for peace in the Middle East will begin here tomorrow. Billions of young people want to move beyond the shackles of poverty and conflict. As the leader of the free world, America will do more than just defeat on the battlefield those who offer hatred and destruction -we will also lead among those who are willing to work together to expand freedom and opportunity for all people. (Obama, L35, 2010, emphasis added)

Noteworthy though, instances of struggle in, over and through discourse are prevailing not only promoting a strong nationalistic sentiment during the war time period and after but also signaling their involvement in positioning, stereotyping and evaluating people and events.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research paper has revealed the extent to which politicians can be skilled in using language as a weapon. It has shown that, like any piece of discourse, political speech is overloaded with assumptions and world views. Most often these world views are biased and subjective because as stated by Bolinger (1980) language is a 'loaded weapon'. It is also political in the broadest sense of the word in so far it serves its users' goals (Burton, 1982). Namely, struggle in, over and through discourse for control and manipulation (Fairclough, 1992) can serve as an evidence of how and why discourse users veil their intents and mystify their discourse objectives. Nevertheless, much can be said on other discourse strategies that help
politicians gain political skill through language skill. Among these strategies is the use of hedging in discourse which is absolutely subordinate to the study of subjectivity and bias, though little research has been done on it. The issue of Hedges and/or hedging is a highly sophisticated object of enquiry. Furthermore, being defined as metadiscursive operators; hedges play an optimal role in the enactment of power and control relations in discourse metadiscursively.

About the author
Hela Ajmi currently teaches Language Skills at the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences of Tunis, Tunisia. She holds an M.A. in Applied Linguistics, and she is completing her PhD in Political and Media Studies. She is a member of Tunisia TESOL, and a member of TESOL International Association. Her areas of interest include ESP, Language Pedagogy, Pragmatics, and Critical Discourse Analysis.

References
Appendices

Appendix A. Links to the websites for the speeches
(President Obama’s Address to the Nation)
http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2003/mar/18/usa.iraq
(President George Bush’s war ultimatum speech from the Cross Hall in the White House)

Appendix B. The data collected from both speeches of descriptive adjectives including their number of occurrence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive adjectives in the speech delivered by President Obama</th>
<th>Number of occurrence</th>
<th>Descriptive adjectives in the speech delivered by President Obama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abroad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accountable</td>
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<td>good</td>
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<td>1 Iraqi-led</td>
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<td>largest</td>
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<td>2 necessary</td>
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<td>1 Potential</td>
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<td>1 real</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1 remarkable</td>
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### Descriptive Adjectives in the Speech Delivered by President Bush

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<th>Descriptive Adjectives in the speech delivered by President Bush</th>
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<td>material</td>
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- **representative**: 1
- **enormous**: 1 2
- **rough**: 2
- **essential**: 1 1
- **sacred**: 1
- **extremist**: 1 3
- **secure**: 2
- **faraway**: 1 1
- **strained**: 1
- **final**: 1 2
- **strong**: 2
- **financed**: 1 1
- **sure**: 1
- **finest**: 1 1
- **targeted**: 1
- **fired**: 1 2
- **terrorist**: 2
- **foreign**: 1 1
- **tested**: 1
- **former**: 1 1
- **tight**: 1
- **free**: 1 2
- **tough**: 2
- **general**: 1 1
- **transitional**: 1
- **given**: 1 1
- **traumatic**: 1
- **global**: 1 1
- **true**: 1
- **great**: 1 1
- **ultimate**: 1
- **grounded**: 1 1
- **unbroken**: 1
- **growing**: 1 6
- **united**: 1
- **harder**: 1 1
- **urgent**: 1
- **heroic**: 1 1
- **vast**: 1
- **historic**: 1 3
- **willing**: 1
- **huge**: 2 1
- **wounded**: 1
- **human**: 2 3
- **young**: 1
- **inclusive**: 1

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Descriptive adjectives in the speech delivered by President Bush

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<th>Descriptive Adjectives in the speech delivered by President Bush</th>
<th>Number of Occurrence</th>
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**Subjectivity in Discourse: A CDA Approach to the Study of Adjectives**

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**Arab World English Journal**

ISSN: 2229-9327
Appendix C. Statement of the validation test questions

The aim of this validation test is to validate the data I collected from the speeches investigated for the analysis of the subjective use of possessive and descriptive adjectives in political discourse. It is my duty to keep your responses confidential and restricted in use to this investigation. Thank you very much for your collaboration.

1. Say whether the highlighted adjective is used subjectively in discourse or not (circle the right alternative).
   a. Subjective
   b. Objective
   c. Other

2. Which prevailing value does this adjective convey (circle the right alternative)?
a. Solidarity  
b. Distance  
c. Power  
d. dichotomization  

3. Which lexical items in collocation with this adjective helped you guess the right answer?  
(Questions 2 and 3 do not apply to adjectives which are used objectively)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpts from the speeches</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ending this war is not only in Iraq's interest- it is in our own. The United States has paid a huge price to put the future of Iraq in the hands of its people. We have sent our young men and women to make enormous sacrifices in Iraq, and spent vast resources abroad at a time of tight budgets at home. We have persevered because of a belief we share with the Iraqi people -a belief that out of the ashes of war, a new beginning could be born in this cradle of civilization. Through this remarkable chapter in the history of the United States and Iraq, we have met our responsibility. Now, it is time to turn the page. (line 23, Obama, 2010) | 1. a, b, c  
2. a, b, c, d  
3. Selected lexical items:  
..................................................  
..................................................  
.................................................. |
| Americans across the political spectrum supported the use of force against those who attacked us on 9/11. Now, as we approach our 10th year of combat in Afghanistan, there are those who are understandably asking tough questions about our mission there. But we must never lose sight of what's at stake. As we speak, al Qaeda continues to plot against us, and its leadership remains anchored in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan. We will disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda, while preventing Afghanistan from again serving as a base for terrorists. And because of our drawdown in Iraq, we are now able to apply the resources necessary to go on offense. In fact, over the last 19 months, nearly a dozen al Qaeda leaders -and hundreds of Al Qaeda's extremist allies- have been killed or captured around the world. (line 29, Obama, 2010) | 1. a, b, c  
2. a, b, c, d  
3. Selected lexical items:  
..................................................  
..................................................  
.................................................. |
| Those Americans gave their lives for the values that have lived in the hearts of our people for over two centuries. Along with nearly 1.5 million Americans who have served in Iraq, they fought in a faraway place for people they never knew. They stared into the darkest of human creations -war- and helped the Iraqi people seek the light of peace. (line 49, Obama, 2010) | 1. a, b, c  
2. a, b, c, d  
3. Selected lexical items:  
..................................................  
..................................................  
.................................................. |
| Two weeks ago, America's final combat brigade in Iraq -the Army's Fourth Stryker Brigade- journeyed home in the pre-dawn darkness. Thousands of soldiers and hundreds of vehicles made the trip from Baghdad, the last of them passing into Kuwait in the early morning hours. Over seven years before, American troops and coalition partners had fought their way across similar highways, but this time no shots were fired. It was just a convoy of brave Americans, making their way home. (line 46, Obama, 2010) | 1. a, b, c  
2. a, b, c, d  
3. Selected lexical items:  
..................................................  
..................................................  
.................................................. |
The Iraqi regime has used diplomacy as a ploy to gain time and advantage. It has uniformly defied Security Council resolutions demanding full disarmament. Over the years, U.N. weapon inspectors have been threatened by Iraqi officials, electronically bugged, and systematically deceived. **Peaceful** efforts to disarm the Iraqi regime have failed again and again -- because we are not dealing with peaceful men. (line 3, Bush, 2003)

Many Iraqis can hear me tonight in a translated radio broadcast, and I have a message for them. If we must begin a military campaign, it will be directed against the lawless men who rule your country and not against you. As our coalition takes away their power, we will deliver the food and medicine you need. We will tear down the apparatus of terror and we will help you to build a new Iraq that is **prosperous** and free. In a free Iraq, there will be no more wars of aggression against your neighbors, no more poison factories, no more executions of dissidents, no more torture chambers and rape rooms. The tyrant will soon be gone. The day of your liberation is near. (line 14, Bush, 2003)

The cause of peace requires all free nations to recognize new and **undeniable** realities. In the 20th century, some chose to appease murderous dictators, whose threats were allowed to grow into genocide and global war. In this century, when evil men plot chemical, biological and nuclear terror, a policy of appeasement could bring destruction of a kind never before seen on this earth. (line 22, Bush, 2003)

As we enforce the just demands of the world, we will also honor the deepest commitments of our country. Unlike Saddam Hussein, we believe the Iraqi people are deserving and capable of human liberty. And when the dictator has departed, they can set an example to all the Middle East of a **vital** and peaceful and self-governing nation. (line 24, Bush, 2003)

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Thank you very much for your time and consideration

Full Name: ..................

Signature: ..................
The Teaching of English Culture in Algerian Secondary Schools: The Case of Second Year Classes

MESSEREHI Mahbouba
Department of English
University of Khenchela, Algeria

Abstract:
The present study aims to get insight into the current ways culture is introduced in teaching English as foreign language (TEFL) to Algerian secondary school learners. This issue is investigated with reference to the relevant theoretical background, the teachers’ opinions and the second year secondary school textbook “Getting Through”. The results obtained from the teachers’ questionnaire demonstrate that the teaching of culture is rather limited. The majority of teachers stated that the only source used is ‘Getting Through’ textbook; however, they assumed that most of the topics included are general and offer little opportunities to discuss culture related topics. Consequently, students have few and in some cases have no opportunities to learn about culture related activities especially discussions on cultural differences and similarities concerning social habits, values, use of idioms and slang, non-verbal communication, and the importance of appropriate choices for conversations in English. Based on the theoretical ground and empirical research findings, a set of suggestions are provided to offer useful ways for teachers to focus more on cultural content in English lessons, as well as to supply textbooks with cultural elements.

Key words: culture, EFL classes, culture related activities, EFL textbooks, intercultural communicative competence.
Introduction

Recently, language research increasingly acknowledges the cultural and intercultural dimensions of language teaching, it is now broadly accepted among language educators that to be able to interact appropriately in a language, learners have to learn the rules of language use and the cultural context within which the language is spoken (Scollon, 1999). Culture learning can; therefore, be considered one of the central aims of second and foreign language education in the 21st century (see Kramsch, 1993; Fantini, 1997; Byram and Fleming, 1998; Hinkel, 1999; Lazar, 2001). Unfortunately, despite the recognition of the importance of culture for successful communication, there is still a gap between academics and practitioners in the sense that foreign language teachers and teacher educators seem hesitant to integrate these theories into pedagogical practice; only few empirical studies have implemented intercultural learning in classrooms (Lazar et al., 2007).

Taking into account the importance of culture in communication and in foreign language teaching; the secondary school English syllabus issued by the Ministry of Education (2006) underlines the importance of encouraging positive attitudes towards other cultures, and puts emphasis on making students open their minds for discovering the values of English speaking countries.

While the recognition of the importance of teaching culture in EEL classes, is quite noticeable in both influential publications and actual official documents such as the national syllabus, it is quite apparent, form the researcher’s experience as an EFL teacher at the secondary school, that English teaching is extremely exam-centred, and since exams do not usually test cultural knowledge, teachers mostly focus on skills needed for taking exams. Thus, only linguistic competence is taken into account; culture related activities are often relegated to the end of language teaching unit, or taught implicitly. Therefore, students lack the basic knowledge of English speaking countries such as the names, the location on the map, main towns and even forms of greetings and farewells. Thus, there tends to be a gap between declared objectives in the syllabus, on the one hand, and classroom practice on the other. This, in fact, raises the following questions:

1- How much importance do EFL teachers at secondary schools attribute to the teaching of English culture?
2- How often are activities for teaching culture included in English lessons at secondary schools?
3- Which role does the textbook play in the amount of cultural content conveyed to secondary school EFL learners?

I. Review of Literature

I.1. Definition of Culture in Foreign Language Teaching

As a matter of fact, coming out with a workable definition for culture, as far as foreign language education is concerned, is a necessity for the present study. Accordingly, Richards and Schmidt (2002) in their dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics offer the following definition:

The set of practices, codes, and values that mark a particular nation or group: the sum of a nation or group’s most highly thought of works of literature, art, music etc. A difference is sometimes made between ‘high’ culture of literature and arts, and small ‘c’ culture of attitudes, values, beliefs, and everyday lifestyles. Culture and language combine to form
what is sometimes called ‘discourse’, i.e. ways of talking, thinking, and behaving that reflect one’s social identity. (p. 138).

Two main aspects of culture are highlighted by the above definition: one is referred to as “high culture” which is synonymous with knowledge of literature, history, and art; and the other as “small c culture” which is synonymous to everyday lifestyle including knowledge of social habits, values, attitudes, beliefs, ways of behaving, use of idioms and slang, and non-verbal communication.

The different levels and aspects of culture outlined from various perspectives, here, show that our understanding of what culture means in FL education is varied. This provides the possibility for language teachers and learners to stress various dimensions of culture at different levels of language proficiency.

I.2. The Importance of Culture in Communication

Language as means of communication makes it possible for individuals to interact with each other in a society. Conversation between people do not take place in a vacuum, but at a particular time and place, and their behaviour is indicated by that particular situation. Communication behaviour is essentially a matter of convention, the thing that makes it specific to a given culture, and what proves effective is one culture may be ineffective in another. (Corder, 1993).

On her perspective Hall (2002) claims that language is used to indicate the individual identities, their interpersonal relationship and membership in their social groups and communities. Seelye, (1997) shares both opinions by highlighting that the way people speak indicates their sex, age, social class, and place of residence, and often conveys information concerning their religion, occupation, and interest. In other words, since any linguistic communication occurs in context, it must be appropriate to the context in which it is used.

According to Devito (2006), culture influences communications of all types, and cultural differences exist across communication from the way of using eye contact to the way to develop or dissolve a relationship.

Consequently, many cultural differences may prevent understanding, or may develop negative opinions between native and non-native speakers. Bennet (1997) claims that a fluent fool is someone who speaks a foreign language well, but doesn’t understand the social and cultural content of that language; the thing that can be avoided by understanding the cultural dimension of language.

As far as Foreign Language Teaching is concerned, these perspectives reflect the growing interest on the importance of culture in teaching methodologies presented in recent works in the field (See for example Byram 1997; Byram & Fleming 1998; Kramsch 1993; Seelye 1997; Cortazzi & Jin 1999, etc.), who all agree that learning a foreign language for whatever purposes cannot take place without introducing the culture of the community where it is used.

I.3. Objectives of Teaching Culture

Integrating culture in English lessons can always be in the benefit of the learner, Kramsch (1993) stresses that cultural awareness and the learning of a second culture can only aid the attaining of second language proficiency (cited in Hinkel, 1999, p.6).

In a foreign language setting, objectives should be clearly set; Seelye (1997) has suggested six instructional goals for teaching culture based communicative competence, he sees that culture teaching should have the following goals:
Goal 1 - Interest: the student shows curiosity about another culture and empathy toward its members.

Goal 2 - Who: the student recognizes that role expectations and other social variables such as age, sex, social class, religion, ethnicity, and place of residence affect the way people speak and behave.

Goal 3 - What: the student realizes that effective communication requires discovering the culturally conditioned images that are evoked in the minds of people when they think, act, and react to the world around them.

Goal 4 – Where and when: the student realizes that situational variables and conventions shape behaviour in important ways.

Goal 5 - Why: the student understands that people generally act the way they do because they are using options their society allows for satisfying basic physical and psychological needs.

Goal 6 – Exploration: the student can evaluate a generalization about a given culture in terms of the amount of evidence substantiating it, and have the skills needed to locate and organize information about a culture from the library, the mass media, people, and personal information. (Seelye, 1997, p.25)

I.4. The Most Common Approaches to Teaching Culture

Including culture in English lessons requires the choice of an approach that would help in the selection of adequate material, techniques, and activities to achieve the set of objectives. Risager (1998, p.242-252) describes four different approaches to teaching culture:

The foreign cultural approach, is based on the concept of the single culture associated with a specific people and a specific language. It focuses on target countries where the language is spoken and does not deal with the learners' own country, nor with relation between the two. This approach was dominant until the 1980's and is criticized nowadays because of the lack of comparison between cultures.

- The intercultural approach is based on the concept of comparison. The intercultural approach deals with both the target culture and the learners' one. The aim is to develop an intercultural and communicative competence, a competence that enables the learner to function as a mediator between the two cultures. Since 1980's, language teaching has become increasingly influenced by the intercultural perspective.

- The multicultural approach, is based on the idea that several cultures may coexist within the same society. It focuses on the cultural and linguistic diversity of the target country or countries as well as learners’ own, and the relation between the two. The aim here also is to develop intercultural communicative competence, but at a partly different level; it is a competence enabling learners to use the target language as a lingua franca, speaking with people who belong to the society where the target language is spoken e.g France, but belong to another culture, e.g. Moroccan culture, and who may speak another language as their first language, e.g. Moroccan Arabic. (Risager, 1998, p.247). This approach is increasingly gaining popularity.

- Trans cultural approach, it views that cultures in the modern world are interwoven by virtue of globalization. It is also reflected by the fact that many people speak foreign languages as lingua franca (i.e. used in situations where none of the speakers has the language in question as his or her first language). Its main aim is to teach learners to use it for international communication.
Depending on their course objectives, course designers and teachers are going to select the most appropriate approach that can serve as a framework that guides them to achieve better results.

I.5. Material for Teaching Culture

Many sources such as textbooks, stories, interviews, maps, songs, music, are used in foreign language teaching, these materials are primary designed to facilitate language teaching. Moreover, Corttazi and Jin (1999) maintain that EFL textbooks are expected to reflect a range of cultural contexts and to include intercultural elements, besides materials are expected to enable learners to communicate effectively and appropriately in a variety of communicative contexts. Surprisingly, none of these are necessarily what happens. In most textbooks, the focus is still on developing the four language skills, and cultural elements are often given as background or supplementary information.

I.5.1. The Cultural Content in EFL Textbooks

Although, there is usually a cultural content within textbooks (via photographs, texts, biographies etc.), these latter vary in their approach to culture. Depending on their cultural content, textbooks can be classified according to how language and culture are related to each other.

On their view, Corttazi and Jin (1999, p.204.210) distinguish between three types of textbooks depending on the cultural information presented:

- **Textbooks based on the source culture**: are produced at a national level for particular countries, that focus on the learners’ own culture, rather than target cultures. Students are expected to learn English to talk to visitors to their country, rather than prepared to encounter other cultures. In such textbooks, learners see members of their own culture, in their own context, who are not different from themselves, except that they all speak English. Such textbooks help students to become aware of their own cultural identity. However, they do not develop students’ intercultural awareness.

- **Textbooks based on the target culture**: focus on target cultures (e.g., the United Kingdom, the United States …). It is easy to assume that textbooks should reflect the target culture, however, such textbooks are considered to be commercial.

- **Textbooks aimed at international target cultures**: include a wide variety of cultures set in English speaking countries, or in other countries where English is not a first or second language, but is used as an international language. The rational for such international target cultures is that English is frequently used in international situations by speakers who do not speak it as a first language.

  Broadly speaking, the cultural information included in textbooks should be correct, recent, and reflect background cultures of the target countries, it should also include visual aids to help students understand the cultural information. However, if textbooks fail in providing material for teaching culture, educators have proposed a varied range of resources and activities for both inside and outside the classroom which can support culture learning.

I.5.2. Other Sources and Activities for Teaching Culture

In order to get a comprehensive picture of the target culture from many angles, teachers should vary their sources; they need to present students with different kinds of information.

Peterson and Coltrane (2003) provide some useful ideas for presenting culture:
-**Authentic Material:** sources from the native speech community can include films, news broadcasts, television shows, websites, photographs, magazines, newspapers, and travel brochure. Teachers can adapt the use of these materials to suit the age and language proficiency level of the students. The teacher might supply students with a detailed translation or give them a chart to complete. After viewing the segments, the teacher can engage the students in discussion of the cultural topics that might include non-verbal behaviour (e.g., the physical distance between speakers, gestures, eye contact, societal roles, and how people in different social roles relate to each other.

-**Proverbs:** discussions of common proverbs in the target language could focus on how the proverbs are different from or similar to proverbs in the students’ native language. Using proverbs as a way to expose culture provides a way to analyse the stereotypes and misperceptions of the culture represented in the proverbs of their native culture.

-**Literature** (drama, fiction, poetry): literary texts are often rich with cultural information and evoke memorable reactions for readers. Peterson and Coltrane (2003) claim that texts should be selected carefully for the given group of students and with specific goals in mind, so that they can be helpful to acquire insight into the target culture.

II. The Current Situation of Culture in Algerian EFL Secondary Schools

II.1 Research Methodology

The researcher conducted the study with EFL teachers at Kais secondary schools during the school year (2006/2007). Since the aim of the research is to examine the importance attributed to the teaching and learning of culture in relation to teachers and textbooks, the descriptive method seems to be the appropriate one. A total of ten teachers participated in the study. All the teachers have BA degree as their highest degree and their teaching experience varies from eighteen to five years. In order to achieve the previously stated objectives, the teachers were asked to fill in a questionnaire (see appendix 1) that is used to collect data concerning the activities used to teach culture, and their frequency in their classes, as well as the material used. The teachers were also asked to give their opinions about the cultural content within “Getting Through” textbook. The intention is to examine the extent to which “Getting Through” textbook includes a focus on each of the following areas:

- Cultural content: that is the inclusion of historical, geographical, and social information about the target language society.
- Cultural awareness: that is raising students’ awareness towards differences between the target culture and their own.

II.2. Findings and Discussion

Teachers’ questionnaire was designed with the purpose to collect as much information as possible about the current situation of teaching English culture in secondary schools, it was intended to investigate three main issues:

1. The teaching of English as a foreign language at Algerian secondary schools (TEFL).
2. The teaching of communicative competence, the importance attributed to culture, and the activities frequently included to teach culture.
3-Material for teaching culture: this section is intended to investigate teachers’ general view about the cultural content included in the students’ textbook “Getting Through”, as well as their opinions on the most useful materials for teaching culture.

After the analysis of the teachers’ responses to the questionnaire items, the researcher came with the following results:

**Section one**: this section is concerned with the TEFL at secondary schools in general. The results obtained show that teachers see developing the learners’ communicative competence as the overall aim of instruction, and this would be achieved according to them, through the communicative approach. Teachers’ unfamiliarity with the competency based approach led them to choose the communicative approach. However, teachers still focus mainly on written skills in their instructions since they are the only skills tested in tests and exams. They qualify current classroom activities as not offering enough opportunities to students for real-life communication.

Through the analysis of the teachers’ responses, it is quite clear that they consider their students as unaware of the social and cultural differences between their native language and the target one. Teachers also admit that some of the major difficulties they face are the unavailability of didactic aids, the difficulty to access to authentic material from one hand, and the students’ linguistic deficiency (grammar based needs and their limited range of vocabulary) on the other hand. This leads them to emphasize mainly on developing the learners’ linguistic competence.

**Section two**: This section was set to investigate the issue of culture teaching at the secondary school. From the data obtained, it seems that the majority of teachers 8/10 (80%) view communicative competence as mainly information exchange using correct grammatical statements.

As far as culture is concerned, for 9/10 (90%) of teachers, culture is defined by citing its different elements such as literature, art, believes, music, life-styles, history, religion and institutions.

Despite the fact that the majority of teachers consider integrating the teaching of culture into EFL classes as important, and in some cases as very important, they also admit that students will be more motivated to learn the language with some background knowledge about its culture; the results obtained from items concerning the integration of culture related activities in English lessons reveal that:

The only activity teachers incorporate most often in their lessons is based on short stories, poems or extracts from English literary works, in addition to songs, famous sights or posters from the target culture. Yet, these two activities are often incorporated in English lesson by just (5/10) and (4/10) respectively.

As far as the remaining activities are concerned, the findings demonstrate that these activities are rarely included:

Teachers chose dealing with activities based on teaching appropriate ways of conversations as well as ways of complaining, requesting, criticizing, and thanking in English as often included by (4/10) of them.

The majority of teachers (8/10) admit never incorporating activities based on discussions of cultural differences, as well as differences in rituals of greetings and leave taking.

Furthermore a total majority of teachers 100% assumes never including activities based
on discussions of differences in non-verbal communication such as differences in gestures, eye contact and personal space among cultures in their English lessons. From the data obtained, it is quite clear that:

- Teachers include very few culture related activities in their English lessons. Moreover, the activities frequently used are mainly based on literature this means that the focus is mainly put on capital “C” culture.
- Students have little opportunities and in some cases have no opportunities to learn about little “c” culture activities such as non–verbal communication and the importance of appropriate choices for conversation in English.
- Besides, the results obtained indicate that activities leading to intercultural communicative competence are less popular and less frequently incorporated by teachers in English lessons.

Section three: this section is mainly concerned with the cultural content of “Getting Through” textbook and the material used to teach culture. The data obtained from this section indicate that teachers rely completely on the students textbook “Getting Through” as the main source for classroom input. This fact was revealed by 100% of the teachers. This result confirms Hinkel’s (1999) notion that textbook are the main material used in language classes, they may be the teacher, the trainer, the authority, the resource, and the ideology in the foreign language classroom. However, the results obtained from the teachers’ opinions about the cultural content within this textbook indicate that teachers are dissatisfied with the cultural content included in this textbook since (7/10) revealed that “Getting Through” textbook offers little opportunities to discuss culture related topics.

- Nearly the majority of teachers (8/10) have agreed that the role of “Getting Through” textbook in preparing students to behave adequately when in contact with native speakers to be very limited as the most common answers to the questions was either “very little” or “to some extent”.
- None of the teachers was fully satisfied with the amount of the cultural content within “Getting Through” textbook.
- The majority of teachers (9/10) assumed that most of the topics included are general, they concern all humanity and are not specific to any particular culture. Teachers’ suggestions, as far as the topic is concerned, came to support the view that most of them are aware of the importance of including cultural elements into their lessons and argue that there will be always something missing in learners’ language proficiency and use, if culture is left out in their language learning. However, they often fail to do so due to reasons such as: lack of time, overloaded curriculum, fear of not knowing about the target culture, and shortage of material.

II.3. Suggestions and Recommendations

Since the ultimate goal for EFL teaching is developing learner’ communicative competence, EFL teachers and learners need to take steps to increase their cultural awareness; thus, culture should be integrated into the foreign language textbooks and classroom practices. Here are some suggestions for EFL teachers on how to incorporate culture into their lessons so as it will be taught systematically:

- Teachers should set clear objectives and successful instructional techniques to put culture teaching into practice and to establish an intercultural understanding in the classroom, this entails:
- Using cultural context for target language practice activities; teachers should try to create situational activities and through role playing explain and demonstrate the differences in language use between the students’ culture and the target one in similar situations to improve their communicative competence.

- Making good use of textbook illustrations and photos and have students analyse their cultural significance.

- Teaching students about the connotative meaning of new words when teaching vocabulary and including cultural elements in tests and exams.

- Teachers should use authentic material; this could be achieved through the availability of didactic aids such as tape recorders and videos.

- As far as the textbook is concerned, even if the textbook in most cases is represented as authoritative and definitive, teachers can start from the themes in the textbook and then encourage learners to ask further questions and make comparisons (Byram, et.al., 2002)

- Teachers should encourage students to do projects about the target culture topics. They may check the school library or the internet to look for interesting aspects of the target culture. This would develop their research skills and raise their cultural awareness.

- It is essential to mention that EFL teaching curricula at universities should include methodology of teaching culture. Besides, working teachers should benefit from in-service training.

**Conclusion**

This study was set to investigate the issue of English culture teaching in Algerian EFL classes at secondary schools. The literature review demonstrated that since the early 1970’s, the widely held belief among applied linguists is that it is essential to teach the foreign language with its culture in order to be successful in communication in real life situations. Therefore, EFL teachers and learners need to shift their focus in the process of EFL teaching and learning from linguistic competence to communicative competence. The analysis of the teachers responses revealed in the questionnaire indicated that the teaching of culture is rather limited. Nonetheless, teachers still consider integrating the teaching of culture into EFL classes as important. They also admit that students will be more motivated to learn English with some background Knowledge about its culture.

Although currently used textbooks may not include the target language culture, it is the teachers’ responsibility to find practical solutions to this problem. And it would not be reasonable to assume that EFL learners will later on be exposed to the target culture after they reach the mastery of linguistic features of the language. It is worth mentioning here that, teachers should have opportunities for adequate training in teaching culture methodology throughout pre-service as well as in-service training.

**About the Author:**
**Messerehi Mahbouba** is an assistant teacher at Khenchela University – Algeria, Got magister degree in 2008, and now Ph.D. student. The field of research is teaching English as a Foreign Language, teaching culture, and intercultural communicative competence.
References
Appendix A

Teachers’ Questionnaire
Dear colleagues,
This questionnaire aims at getting insight into the situation of English culture teaching in EFL classes at secondary schools. Please, choose the answer you find appropriate, or make full answers whenever necessary.

Background Information
1- Gender
   Male
   Female
2- Your qualification.
   License; BA or equivalent
   Study for MA
3- How many years have you been teaching English at the secondary school?

Section one: The Teaching of English as a Foreign Language at Secondary Schools (TEFL).
1- What do you think should be the overall aim of TEFL at secondary schools?
   - To enable students to use correct English structures.
   - To enable students to communicate using English in different real life situations.
   - To enable students to interact effectively and appropriately in English with members of its culture.
2- What method or approach do you think is the most appropriate to achieve this aim?
   - The audio-lingual method.
   - The communicative approach.
   - The competency based approach.
3- To what extent do you qualify current classroom activities as offering opportunities for students to use English in real life communication?
   - Not at all.
   - Very little.
   - To some extent.
   - Very much.

1. How do you rate the importance of developing the students’ communicative skills in English?
   - Very important.
   - Important.
   - Not important.

2. Do you think that the correct use of the formal systems of grammar and vocabulary only, ensures the effectiveness of communication?
   Yes. No.

If ‘no’ what do you think students need to be aware of in order to communicate effectively?

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327
3. To what extent are your students aware of the social and cultural differences between their language and English?
   - Not at all
   - Very little
   - Very much.

4. Please, mark some of the difficulties you meet in TEFL at secondary schools.

Section Two: Culture Teaching and Communicative Competence

1. How would you define culture?

2. How would you define communicative competence?

3. Do you think that communication can be developed out of its sociocultural context?
   - Yes.
   - No.

   If ‘no’ how do you rate the importance of integrating the teaching of culture into EFL classes at secondary schools is?
   - Very important.
   - Important.
   - Not important.

4. Do you think that students are more motivated to learn English with some background knowledge about its culture?
   - Not at all.
   - Very little.
   - Very much.

5. How often do you include the following activities in your English lessons:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of culture–related activities</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a-Discussions on cultural differences and similarities (social habits, values, idioms,)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b-Differences in rituals of greetings and leave taking between English and Arabic</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>c-Discussing the appropriate choices for conservation in English (formality/informality)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d-Appropriate ways of complaining, requesting, criticizing, thanking, in English.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-Variations of non-verbal behaviour in different cultures (gestures, eye contact....)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f-Differences of personal space among cultures</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g-Posters of famous sights and English people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>h-Songs with information about the singer and lyrics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i-Short stories, poems or extracts from English literature</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Section Three: Material for Teaching Culture

1. Does the textbook “Getting Through” help you teach the issues listed earlier?
   - Not at all
   - Very little.
The Teaching of English Culture in Algerian Secondary Schools

Mahbouba

1. How much do you agree with the following statements:

- To some extent.
- Very much.

2. Do you use other sources?

   Yes
   No

3. Please, answer the following questions about the cultural content within “Getting Through” textbook:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. To what extent does the content serve as a window into learning about</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the target language culture (way of life, families, schools, employment,</td>
<td>Very little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>religion, history, geography)?</td>
<td>To some extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. To what extent does “Getting Through” textbook teach students linguistic</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/paralinguistic means to express their communicative needs (formal/informal</td>
<td>Very little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language, non-verbal behaviour, slang, idioms…)?</td>
<td>To some extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Does “Getting Through” textbook prepare students to behave adequately</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when in contact with members of the target culture?</td>
<td>Very little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. To what extent are the texts and activities in “Getting Through”</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authentic?</td>
<td>Very little</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. What other sources do you think would be most useful for teaching the target culture?

........................................................................................................................................

5. With the current educational reform, do you think that the cultural dimension in language teaching is given more importance? Justify.

........................................................................................................................................  Further Suggestions

........................................................................................................................................

Thank you for your cooperation

The researcher
Teaching of Critical Reading Skills in ESL and EFL Context: A Proposal for Action Researchers

Jabreel Asghar
English Language Institute
King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

Abdullah Al-Bargi
English Language Institute
King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract:
‘How can we teach critical thinking skills to ESL/EFL learners?’ This paper answers this specific question with a proposed model of critical reading. The paper presents sample materials designed following Wallace’s (2003) three dimensional model of critical reading with linguistic, conceptual and cultural foci. The paper informs material developers and action researchers on how Wallace’s three dimensional approach to reading texts may enable readers to develop broader perspectives on various issues, and give critical insight into the texts. The sample material also demonstrates how Wallace’s three-dimensional approach to reading may help learners become critique of the outer world and allow them decode the texts in the light of their own schematic knowledge.

Keywords: Critical reading, critical thinking, functional grammar, material development, pedagogical change.
Introduction

Critical reading skills have been of vital significance in the higher education sector and are considered to be essentially acquired in academic discourse (Davidson, 1998; Connolly, 2000). Therefore, it is essential that critical reading and thinking skills should be taught in order to have them take the ownership of their learning, and form their ideologies independently in the context of their immediate experiences. In order to provide with a model of adapting material to encourage critical thinking skills, we have selected the texts from a textbook taught in Pakistani state colleges at higher secondary level. Evaluating the same textbook, Asghar (2013) asserts that conventional teaching of the texts from this textbook in question has failed to achieve the goals. Conventional reading of texts is most likely to restrict students’ response to the texts. Asghar infers that such a situation reflects the teachers’ unawareness of the potential of the textbook in terms of pedagogical treatment, which leads to disseminating incomplete and/or misperceived information to students, hence causing what Morgan (1997) calls false or naive consciousness. Morgan believes when students are in the state of false consciousness, teachers, through their strategies, may bring their students to the point where the students can “name their world” according to their experience of it and not according to the ideologies, institutions and discourses that declare it to be otherwise. In line with Morgan (1997) and Asghar (2013), and also following up the latter, the main objective of this qualitative research based paper is to inform teachers and material developers on how a slight, and still effective change in methodological approach may help to achieve a more qualitative and reliable comprehension of texts. In this perspective, this paper presents a cluster of newly designed and/or adapted materials to support how a critical approach in English language classroom could significantly contribute to achieving the learning goals.

Related literature

This section briefly reviews some of the main strategies that have been suggested by various scholars for teaching critical skills in English language classroom followed by a focus on the main approach we have used to design activities for critical reading training. Critical reading skills become more challenging as well as crucial for ESL and EFL learners who have to process a reading text within the conventional classroom (Davidson, 1998; Levines, Ferenz and Reves, 2000). Levines et al, therefore, emphasize that it is indispensable to develop critical literacy skills among them in order to train them reading in real life situation. Morgan (1997) also believes that at schools students are to be developed as fully conscious, rational individuals with a meta-level understanding of language and politics, and their roles as subjects. Incorporating critical literacy in curriculum could bring not only such kind of awareness, but could also develop a broader sense of tolerance towards multicultural and multi-ideological societies.

In their study on how students can be taught analysing and evaluating certain types of texts, Patching, Kameenui, Carnine, Gersten and Colvin (1983) agreed that in order to develop critical reading skills, a combination of the systematic instruction and use of workbook should be combined. By systematic instructions they mean converting cognitive processes into physical operations. For example, the teacher can explain and model the appropriate behaviours and their interrelationship and also provide precise feedback to the learners (Patching et al, 1983: 409). They also emphasized that instructions should be accompanied by independent practice for effective learning outcome. Content based instructions, which combine syllabus and teaching goals, have also been used for teaching of critical skills. In content based instructions, curriculum is more focused on the subject matter rather than the form, functions or situations (Leaver and
Stryker, 1989). The material proposed in this paper incorporates some elements of content based instructions by more considering the subject matter rather than the form or functions of the texts.

Halliday’s (1990) interpretation of decoding texts at ideational, interpersonal and textual levels is another means of developing in-depth understanding of texts among readers, which has been used in the proposed material in this paper. Such a critical discourse analysis of texts allows readers to understand and decode the meaning of texts in the perspective of their immediate experience, and more helpful to form their identities in line with their own perception of the world. Fairclough (1992 a) believes that discourses embody certain ideologies. The more invisible these ideologies are, the more they are effective. Critical discourse analysis of texts enables readers to expose hidden ideologies and warns them of becoming unconscious agents of hidden agendas of texts. In this perspective critical awareness into a text is even more essential for ESL and EFL learners in order to identify the hidden agendas of writers. The proposed activities in this paper help reader to uncover hidden ideologies embedded in the texts with practical strategies in a language classroom.

Research design
The research design of this study is comprised of a model of critical reading strategies devised by Wallace (2003) which is the basis of the model proposed in this paper. In order to develop critical reading skills among learners, Wallace suggests that critical reading should aim at linguistic, conceptual/critical and cultural understanding of a text. She believes that reading texts with these foci are likely to bring not only awareness of micro-interaction among readers, writers and texts, but also macro-understanding of what it means to be a reader in the contemporary world. She refers that linguistic purpose of critical reading includes “an understanding of the nature of ideological meanings embedded in texts” through the language used. The knowledge of grammar does take place for linguistic purposes but more to “facilitate reflection on the effect of language choice”. Wallace believes that the critical purpose is to enable learners to develop a cognitive as well as critical link between the text and their personal lives. The cultural purpose of critical reading is “to promote insight into cultural assumptions and practices, similarities and differences across national boundaries” (Wallace, 2003: 43). In the light of Wallace’s criteria to read a text critically, we designed a group of texts to provide linguistic, conceptual and cultural insight into the texts to demonstrate how such an approach is more likely to offer a deeper level comprehension of these texts.

The Textbook
The textbook in question consists of abridged versions of 11 English/American short stories, two abridged/translated short stories from Urdu literature, one from Persian literature, and one folk tale with no reference to its origin. Each story is followed by a series of activities which includes short (one sentence answer) and detailed (100-150-words answer) comprehensions questions in addition to true/false statements, matching corresponding information and some other grammar activities. Though the book is taught in a specific educational and cultural context, the textbook is mainly comprised of texts from English literature/fiction, which are generally used in state school and colleges in Asian, Middle-Eastern and African academics. Therefore, the nature of the texts and the types of the strategies suggested in this paper are universal and can be used in any context.

The proposed sample material is based on the texts taken from the textbook, and follows Wallace’s (2003) three dimensional critical pattern to explore the texts in a broader perspective.
with in-depth comprehension. The activities introduced in the following sections are not to be used necessarily in any particular sequence. All of these may not be used for each and every text either. Rather certain activities might be preferred or ignored in certain cases depending on the nature and requirements of texts as well as the objectives of learning outcome for each group of learners. We have also suggested some possible answers/responses/ideas for each activity in order to reflect how they might cater to the needs and objectives devised for these learners. These are some of the possible responses likely to be received from learners at this level. There is no right or wrong answer, and a large number of other answers are possible as well.

**Research methodology**

There is no research methodology, a research design or participants per se that could be ascribed to this paper in a conventional way. This paper is rather a proposal for material developers and action researchers to provide them with some innovative ideas to help their learners gain insight into the reading texts. For this purpose, different texts have been selected from the textbook to indicate the multi-dimensional nature of the activities and their potential to achieve a number of goals. The steps suggested in the following activities are flexible and can always be modified to suit the situation and the needs of learners. The questions used in the proposed sample materials gained inspiration from the guidelines for critical reading published with open access at the website of the Writing Resource Centre of Empire State College, New York. However, it does not affect the originality of the proposed model because unlike the Writing Resource Centre’s general guidelines for a critical reading of any text, the proposed materials in this paper generates specific questions related to the respective text in question in each case. Furthermore, the guidelines set by the Writing Resource Centre do not refer to Wallace’s Model of critical reading, and this paper developed a new model for critical reading by synthesizing both sources with practical classroom implications.

**The Proposed Materials**

The following section illustrates how texts could be taught with linguistic, cultural and conceptual dimensions. Contrary to usual practice, we present, illustrate and rationalise each dimension where it is described, rather than making a global discussion at the end of the presentation of the data. Thus, each dimension of critical reading model is explained followed by the actual demonstration of how it could be used to adapt texts for a language classroom. We find this practice useful in order to facilitate the reading of this paper. A global discussion to rationalise all the dimensions presented in the following section is likely to complicate the issues. As we have mentioned earlier, these activities do not have to be used in the order they appear in this paper. There is no logical sequence among the linguistic, cultural and conceptual dimensions of each text. Therefore, it was vital to logically keep all the strands separate in discussion to keep the tasks simple for teachers to use these and similar materials in classroom. Treating these dimensions in isolation, depending on the nature of the text, learning needs and learners’ language competence is more practical and effective.

**Linguistic Focus**

Fairclough (1992 b) asserts that systemic linguistic analysis of texts enables readers to expose power relations and disadvantageous position of the suppressed class. Analysis with linguistic focus helps readers to identify individual as well as institutional representation and to better understand the cultural content in the background of their own social context. Linguistic focus might be viewed as a complicated phenomenon because of its “technical” side. Learners as
well as teachers might find it challenging to analyse texts within the framework of Halliday’s (1985) functional grammar or any other framework for language analysis because of their unfamiliarity with the same. However, such a focus is recommended first because it does not require extensive analysis from a functional grammar viewpoint at this stage. Secondly, linguistic focus is worth considering in academic context for it offers deeper insight into texts from certain angles and hence is more likely to ensure comprehensive understanding of the texts.

**Linguistic Focus on Representation**

The following activity linguistically focuses on a text “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry. The discussion followed by the sample activity elaborates how linguistic focus can enhance the understanding of the text in a broader perspective. A reading with a linguistic focus brings those dimensions of the text to the surface which otherwise were obscure.

A superficial reading of the text portrays Della and Jim as loving couple with deep sense of sacrifice. However, certain elements of power relation between the two genders and attribution of typical characteristics to each gender remain hidden, and readers remain unaware how female gender has been portrayed disadvantageously unless analysed within the framework of functional grammar. For example, a glance at the table below shows that most of the adjectives for Della are related to physical beauty whereas the adjectives of Jim are more related to the personality traits. The second and the third column in Table 1 list the adjectives and the verbs attributed to two main characters i.e. Della and Jim. However, it is not an exhaustive list. The fourth column is the “Others” category that includes the words related to the respective noun in one way or the other.

**Table 1. Focus on readership as indicated by linguistic features (tabular model adapted from Wallace, 2003: 109).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Della</td>
<td>Beautiful hair</td>
<td>Tried to cover</td>
<td>Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shining hair</td>
<td>A tear ran down</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looked wonderfully</td>
<td>Moved quickly</td>
<td>Prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looked better</td>
<td>Sat near the door</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pretty</td>
<td>Heard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cried, said</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim</td>
<td>Jim’s gold watch</td>
<td>Was never late</td>
<td>Strange experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jim’s quietness &amp; value</td>
<td>Stepped in</td>
<td>Anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quiet</td>
<td>Asked</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor Fellow</td>
<td>Folded his arms</td>
<td>With a family to take care of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thin</td>
<td>Want</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>felt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sat down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>smiled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sold</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>said</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on Table 1 it is reasonable to interpret that the language of this text views female more as physical object and male as someone with a personality and idiosyncrasies. The use of verbs in both cases depicts the male character stronger and more independent than the female one. The verbs used for Della are more material and verbal than those of Jim which comprise of behavioural, mental and materials verbs denoting the male character as stronger and active despite the fact that most of the text is about Della and her feelings.

It might be useful to have learners contrast the representation of the two characters at certain moments. For example, the learners can explore how each of the character is introduced by the narrator; or how each of them reacts to their losses; or how each of them reacts when they find out each other’s sacrifice, or how they speculate about each other’s reaction. This would give learners a manageable amount of text to compare and comprehend the text at a deeper level.

The attributes in Table 1 do not appear in juxtaposition in the text, as they appear in the table, because the purpose of the text was not to compare the gender roles. However, even if we look at Jim’s and Della’s attribute vertically as shown in Table 2, these phrases, in the context, give insight into the portrait as depicted through the use of these words.

Table 2. Comparison of Jim and Della’s attributes/processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Della</th>
<th>Jim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“She started trying to remove” – as if she is covering a mistake.</td>
<td>He “was never late” – never done something undesirable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A tear ran down” – sign of weakness</td>
<td>He “folded his arms” – a gesture of aggression or at least that of an ability to have self-defence in contrast to showing weakness on Della’s part.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Moved quickly” – not prepared</td>
<td>“Stepped in” – confident and composed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Heard” – passive action</td>
<td>“Felt” – active and independent action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cried”</td>
<td>“Smiled”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sat near the door” – waiting for Jim</td>
<td>“Sat down” – to comfort himself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Said” – more submissive/explanatory</td>
<td>“Asked” – interrogatory, more authoritative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the text from this angle reveals how language empowers the male character over the female gender behind the veil of love and sacrifice. Under the category of “Other” in Table 1, all the words related to Della portray her as weak and humble person, full of emotional gestures whereas those of Jim depict him as a strong person with all human expressions. Especially his trait of being “with a family to take care of it” surpasses all the words used to describe Della and she emerges as someone feeble and dependant figure. Because of her tears, her emotions and loss of her hair, which were described in more detail than Jim’s watch, Della might gain sympathy of readers but the hidden ideology of the text, which puts Della at a disadvantageous position, is exposed only through the linguistic analysis.

The above analysis may lead to discussing the questions given in Table 3. These questions are likely to help readers to locate their own position and identity with reference to the text and associate their cultural knowledge and background with that of the text.

Table 3. Focus on readership as indicated by linguistic features (questions adapted from

Do you think that you are the “model reader” of this text?
Why? Why not?
I think I am a model reader of this text because its topic is very much interesting for me – love. I think everyone in the world comes across with this sentiment and it helps to understand the nature of human relations. The language is simple and the theme is clear which makes it an easy reading.

Is this a culturally familiar text to you?
Why? Why not?
In a way no. Buying Christmas gifts (or Eid gifts) is not that significant in my (in this case Pakistani) culture as shown in the story. I also find it unreal of a girl’s selling hair because I can’t see this type of arrangement for money in my society. I feel this bit is totally non-Pakistani in term of culture.
But their mutual love and affection for each other is very much familiar and I can find many examples of such loving relations around me, or opposite to such a loving relation.

Table 3 includes only one aspect of linguistic focus. There are many others which might be used to suit the type of the text in order to uncover the hidden ideologies as well language empowerment used to advantage or disadvantage a group/individual. The framework of field, tenor, mode might be another technique to explore a text below the surface which explores representation of the participants of a text and relation between the text and the reader.

**Linguistic Focus on Interaction**

For linguistic focus of texts on interaction the text “I have a Dream” has been selected. It is one of the texts which was not appreciated much partially because of its irrelevance to the lives of the intended readers of the textbook and partially because it was viewed as a boring text by the same group of students (Asghar, 2013). The data analysis showed that such a negative response was mainly due to inappropriate perception of the text. Otherwise, potentially this text could be more related to the participants’ social, economic, political and religious circumstances. Students should scan the text to complete the following table with verbs, nouns and adjectives associated with different participants of the text. However, it should be considered that students should not be asked to conduct an exhaustive analysis because at initial stage it might be wiser not to heavily analyse the texts owing to learners’ novice skills in functional grammar. Nevertheless even without going into extensive details, the following analysis gives a reasonably realistic and useful insight into the text. Keeping in view the focus of the analysis, the leftmost and the rightmost column may be emphasized in classroom.

**Table 4. Making use of the overall Halliday framework of analysis (Framework Structure borrowed from Wallace, 2003: 113)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal pronouns or ways the reader/writer or main participants are referred</th>
<th>Language items such as nouns which reflect writer attitude</th>
<th>How is information presented</th>
<th>What comes first</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Who are the participants?</td>
<td>• What attributes/nouns associated with respective participants?</td>
<td>• How is information presented</td>
<td>• What comes first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronoun</td>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Nouns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Am not unmindful, Say, Have a dream, Have faith,</td>
<td>The speaker</td>
<td>Dream, difficulties, frustration, American dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td>Have come, go back, Continue to work, struggle together, work together, jail together,</td>
<td>People</td>
<td>Trials, Jail cells, freedom, persecution, police brutality, veterans, sufferings, slums, ghettos, this nation, little children, governor, black boys and girls, white boys and girls, sisters, brothers, symphony of brotherhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We, our</td>
<td>Hold these truths, hope, faith, be able to transform, will be able to speed up, free</td>
<td>America</td>
<td>Alabama, South California, Georgia, Louisiana, Slums, ghettos, red hills, sweet land of liberty, New York, freedom, great nation, my country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first column in the table 4 shows the interpersonal meaning of the text. The speaker has used three pronouns i.e. I, you and we. With the first person singular, the speaker associates the words that reflect personal thoughts and ideas. Here, the tone is more contemplative as compared to the use of second person pronoun where the lexical choices reflect a clear tendency of action.

The words like “go, work, struggle, continue, together” urge to stand up and strive for what the speaker has contemplated. The use of first person plural indicates a mood reflecting consequences which, as a result of cooperation between the speaker’s thoughts and people’s actions may occur after the struggle. It seems to suggest a kind of fruit of the toil (be able to transform, free) as well as some guiding principles to assist in the struggle (hold these truths, faith, hope, speed up). This part of the activity guides how to suit the action to the use of pronoun...
for effective piece of speech or writing.

The textual meaning of the text may guide on planning a speech or structuring a piece of writing. In the above table, the third column on textual meaning sheds light on the structure of the text and informs reader of the logical construction of ideas in a piece of writing. Such an exercise might be very useful to teach learners about how to make an outline of a writing task. Furthermore, this text might guide the learners about how to organise an argument, by making appropriate and powerful lexical choices to persuade readers. Following the same analytical framework for other texts can help learners to understand how to identify and structure various genres of written texts.

If the same text is critically read and analysed along with conceptual and cultural dimension, it may not only familiarise learners with the movement once run in America but it will also help to identify their own social situation and problems in their own society. It may well bring awareness that slavery is not always physical but it is mental and intellectual as well. Discrimination does not relate to race or gender but it has many other forms, many of which still need to be explored in developing scarcities.

**Conceptual dimension – The Text**

This type of exercise provides learners with the concrete understanding of the text, instead of abstract comprehension in their mind. It not only allows learners to think of main ideas, but also those aspects of texts they might not be able to understand otherwise. Working individually, then in pairs or small group and finally in a large class group would help learners to perceive different aspects of texts. It also trains them to find out the crux of a piece of writing and personalise it with their own experience and schematic knowledge. The learners would find connections between their existing knowledge and what they are reading. This activity also serves as a kind of running commentary and a simple analysis of the text to build on more established opinion about the text later.

Table 5 gives some possible responses based on one of the texts “The Reward” from the textbook in question. This particular text has been selected because it did not get much attention from the participants, most probably because they did not have the opportunity to relate the text to their immediate experience (Asghar, 2013). The analysis aims to refer to the potential of the text and the way inappropriate treatment of the text in the classroom failed to leave a desirable impact on the learners’ minds. The left side column of Tables 5 gives various ideas in the text that might capture the interest of learners for various reasons whereas the right side column gives some possible responses that learners might give. To keep the analysis more realistic, the responses are very brief and at times vague and/or repetitive as teachers might anticipate such responses from learners at this level. If learners find it difficult to express their ideas in L2, the use of L1 might be encouraged at such point for richer, deeper and wider variety of ideas with the learners’ originality of thought.

**Table 5. Conceptual dimension of the text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exploring various ideas in the text</th>
<th>Possible Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. What is important for success? Opportunity or determination? | • Opportunity is important.  
• Determination is important.  
• Both. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Possible Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Is it worth becoming a skating champion?</td>
<td>- Its waste of time and resources to collect money to go to Sahara for skating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Only in west people can afford such hobbies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Skating is not a Pakistani sport at all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is a court acrobat?</td>
<td>- He is a kind of joker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- A gymnast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Someone belonging to lower class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- A profession which doesn’t require any qualification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Terbut, Jorkens, Georgio...where are they from?</td>
<td>- I don’t know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- England?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- America?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Australia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- May be from Europe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Georgio had to struggle not only to become an acrobat but also to create a post. Do you think it is practical in real life??</td>
<td>- Such ambition is fictional, not realistic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- How can one be blind by his ambition and ignore his parents’ happiness?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Struggling for 60 years to fulfil a dream requires strong determination. How would you comment?</td>
<td>- It is not practical.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- It is exceptional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- It is fictional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- It doesn’t make sense to spend whole life for one dream. It is not appreciable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- One cannot do so, at least never in Pakistan. It might happen only a care free society like that of America, England, Europe etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What do the last two lines of the text mean?</td>
<td>- They show that the story of Georgio was that of Jorkens’ own unfulfilled dream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- It means Jorkens strongly believe in determination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- It means Jorkens doesn’t believe in determination because he does not seem to have his dreams fulfilled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Why did Terbut not ask Jorkens the reason of his sigh?</td>
<td>- Terbut got to know that it was a story of Jorkens’ unfulfilled dream.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Terbut felt pity for Jorkens.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do I agree with Gergio’s concept of success? Various responses are possible for and against the question.

Exploring the conceptual dimension of this text could provide learners with opportunities to explore the message of the text, and consider their own ideas about success. The above activity allows learners to think independently and perceive the text in the context of their social knowledge of their immediate world and helps them to decide whether or not they agree to the author and to what extent. This activity does not force learners to accept “the moral of the story” as suggested by the editors of the textbook; rather than it invites them to negotiate the meaning as well as the route to success. Such a perspective on reading is likely to leave learners not only with a more thought-out idea of success, but also with other issues such as how to question the established norms, how to build bridges between their own understanding and that of the outer world. It also enhances their knowledge of geography and understanding of global culture by letting them identify their situations with others. This activity has also potential of clarifying their ambiguous conceptions about western/European culture as indicated above in questions 2, 3, 4 & 5.

**Conceptual Dimension – Authority of the writer**

This type of activity helps reader to understand the meaning between the lines and intentions of author. It also trains learners to question the authority and validity of the author by questioning and exploring the writer’s style, lexical choices and syntax structures. Such an exercise enables readers to analyse the language use and the validity as well as skills of the writer to portray things realistically.

The text “The Angel and the Author - and Others” is another text which was identified as an uninteresting text by the readers of the textbook (Asghar, 2013). As Table 6 reflects, reading the text critically and responding to the suggested questions could help readers to discover the hidden layers of meaning and hence making reading of the text more enjoyable with personalised interpretations.

**Table 6. Conceptual dimension – the authority of writer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does the writer think of people who give charity?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The writer humorously describes the way people give charity. He satirises them by pointing to himself how mean they are to give patty charities and expect a huge reward from the Heaven.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What things does the writer show knowledge of?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The writer seems to have good knowledge of social customs, people’s psychology and the social norms and values of his society. He is referring to details such as timely passion of charity on Christmas, giving charity miserly, charity as snobbery and doing acts in the name of charity which do not benefit the deserving people at all.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What biases or values appear to have a role in the writer’s argument?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If there is bias, it is very positive bias against the shallow acts of charity. From one angle, the writer seems to criticise the religious people and their philosophy of doing good for the sake of reward. First I thought he is advocating an un-Islamic concept but on second thought it revealed that actually this is what Islam and all other religions preach – doing good deed for the sake of humanity and not for any kind of reward. The text is in the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Christian context – the Christmas – but the thought behind the text is universal.

The possible responses shown above might be criticised for being too high above the existing level of learners as compared to the possible language input used in previous tasks. However, these responses indicate two factors: first they reflect the potential of critical reading exercise, denoting how it can dig out the meaning and the message from the text; secondly, these responses serve as kind of specimen of the target level to be achieved while reading these texts. The language and syntax structure in the above example might be different and of high level because the purpose of writing these responses is not to pretend the way a learner would write but the way a learner may/is expected to feel and respond. Obviously, learners would be able to do this type of exercise and other types too, only after practising how to critique a text. They may use L1 as well if expressing in L2 is somewhat difficult for them. The purpose of critical reading is not to change the existing set up, but to offer a change with improved performance in the long run.

**Conceptual dimension – Logic of the Writer's Argument**

This activity is based on the text “Overcoat”. This text has been selected because it is one of the least popular texts among one group of readers of the textbook (Asghar, 2013). Despite the text being closely related to the immediate culture of the selected group of readers, unpopularity of the text reflects that they could not understand the text through a superficial reading which might be done in a better way through critical reading as shown below. In the following activity each, box on the left gives possible responses from different learners and the corresponding box on the right side gives the possible reason/s for thinking so. Some of the responses are based on what the participants have said in the questionnaire or in the interview. No response or reason could be called as right/wrong or final answer. Explanation of some responses is also given in Table 7.

**Table 7. Conceptual dimension of the texts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does the writer want you to believe?</th>
<th>What reasons/supporting evidence does the writer provide? Do they seem credible?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. One must not show off.</td>
<td>• The young man pretended to be rich but actually he was not.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. The main character is rich and carefree. | • His dress.  
• The man’s stroll on the Mall.  
• His gestures, his interaction with others.  
• The way he does window shopping.  
• The way he addresses the shopkeepers.  
All this realistically portray the man well off and carefree unless he reaches the post-mortem table. |
| 3. Materialism                          | • Characters do not have human identity, rather professional ones.  
• The young man gets attention only because of his financial capacity. |
There are two different classes with high power relation:

- The working class is all submissive to the rich class – the young man.
- Both classes have as much distance as distant is the young man’s pretentious and actual condition.
- The young man’s refusing tonga wala by his can
- His refusing taxi driver, who is of higher status than that of tonga wala, by saying “No Thank you”.
- The young man’s blunt mistrust in the Pan wala.

It could be a useful if teachers provide students with ideas if the latter is stuck. In a critical reading exercise, readers are expected to show their responses supported by logic or evidence from the text. Such a stance enables readers to think more critically and analytically in order to support their argument which never happens in a non-critical reading activity. In the above case, the reader would look for other evidences to reach a pre-decided moral. Looking at the activities of the main characters, they would naturally, or critically, lead to the question why the young man behaved so; whether it was to impress people and to show off to the world or these actions are related to some of his psychological feelings. Consequently the group discussion may well lead to more realistic, intellectual and philosophical issues of society, its responsibilities towards its members and duties of other members of a society towards each other. The second point helps learners to know how language is used to delineate characters and images. The third and fourth points give insight into the deeper understanding of depicted social set up which can be used for comparison with learners’ own perception of their surrounding and/or with other cultural set ups they come across within the texts or in real life.

**Conceptual dimension – Ideology that Informs the Text**

Ideology informing the text is important to understand the layers of meanings in a text. Ideologies are not always visible and cannot be captured without making conscious efforts. The following activity based on the text *God be Praised* enables learners to probe into the text by asking questions focused on various ideas within the text. This activity has somewhat similar aim to the activities as suggested for *the Angel and the Author and Others*. By looking at them one after another may show how these are two samples of material which aim to get at ideology.

**Table 8. Conceptual dimension of the text**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What seems to be the ideology -- the system of beliefs, values, and ideas about the world--that underlies the text?</th>
<th>What words and ideas are valued in the text or represented by the author in a positive way?</th>
<th>What are the opposites of those words/ideas?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What words and ideas are valued in the text or represented by the author in a positive way?</td>
<td>Contentment: ‘What has He not blessed me with?’</td>
<td>desire for more; greediness; discontentment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2. Abdul’s helplessness and cutting down his needs than making efforts to desire for</td>
<td>To be more active to accommodate what are the needs, instead of cutting them down.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The responses within the boxes of Table 8 might be proposed by the teacher or could be explored in a guided group discussion at the initial stage. However, the corresponding box in each case to the opposite ideas can be easily done by learners in order to analyse the ideas under a sharp contrast.

The text “God be Praised” has rich implication for learners’ social life and contains references to certain aspect of their life. Having students aware of these aspects may well contribute to improve the plight of suppressed class as well as social values prevalent in the Pakistani society. In the interviews, the participants had rather misidentified this text as a religious story which teaches contentment and presents a picture of an “ideal Islamic couple” – Abdul and Mehr-un-Nisa more seems a result of superficial reading of the text rather than understanding the main theme of the text.

Regarding responses 1 & 2, reader may challenge the definition of contentment whether it means being passive and lethargic in life; whether striving for a better life means being greedy? Without questioning these values critically, one may mistakenly appreciate all his miseries in the name of contentment as Will of God. Likewise, Chaudhary’s helpfulness (Q3: Table 8) is easily recognisable and identifiable but the more important task of identifying the indifference of major portion of society comes to the surface only when Chaudhary’s attitude is contrasted. The indifferent attitude of the society towards their fellow beings might be a more significant aspect which this text may like its reader to perceive. In box 4, Shamim emerges as a contrast to Abdul, with his efforts to improve his life and hence not only raises his standards of living but also resolves Abdul’s miseries to some extent. In a superficial reading Abdul always gets the focal attention. Abdul is contrasted with Shamim only when the text is read critically and the latter seems to emerge as hero, or a more useful member of society than the main character - Abdul. Abdul’s weakness is also sharpened when attention is given to his hypocrisy on the issue of wedding customs. Thus as a result of reading the text critically, readers get entirely a different picture by discovering the hidden ideologies and the layers of meaning embedded in the text which a simple reading cannot offer.

**Cultural dimension – Examining Your Reactions**

Reflecting on own responses and reactions to a text helps “to promote insight into cultural assumptions and practices, similarities and differences across national boundaries” (Wallace, 2003: 43). This is an aspect of reading which enables reader to complete those gaps between his knowledge and the new knowledge. It may also help to develop a sense of global culture by understanding and giving space to other cultures, values and beliefs. It does not necessarily mean teaching the new culture but helping to understand it.
The following activity is based on the text “Dark they were and Golden-eyed”. Almost all the participants of the main research project seemed to “reject” this text because they thought that it is unrealistic and did not relate to their real life situations (Asghar, 2013). In order to create more realistic responses for the cultural analysis of this text, anticipated responses were created with a presumption that this is a boring text because it discusses a topic which is far from reality, though a popular theme with story writers. However, despite building a presumption about the text, if the text is read with critical questions suggested in Table 9, the development of thought from rejecting a text as being unrealistic to finding identification of the same “unreal” society in real life could be realised clearly.

Table 9. Cultural dimension of the text

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. WHAT DOES THE AUTHOR WANT ME TO BELIEVE IN OR AGREE WITH?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To introduce possibility of establishing colonies on other planets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To indicate scientific development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. WHAT WERE MY BELIEFS ABOUT THE SUBJECT BEFORE I READ THIS?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am convinced that science has made amazing development but it is just a myth and I never believed in it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. WHAT ARE MY BELIEFS ABOUT IT NOW?</td>
<td>The same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. WHAT HAS THE TEXT CONVINCED ME OF SPECIFICALLY?</td>
<td>The earth could have been destroyed as result of nuclear war. But I doubt that people could find another planet to move to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. WHAT DO I STILL HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT?</td>
<td>The same as mentioned above to questions 1, 2, 3 &amp; 4.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1. WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THIS TEXT RAISE FOR ME?**

- How did they grow food on the Mars and what kind of food it was?
- What kind of society was that? Same as earthly one or different? How it was different?
- What kind of government was there?
- Why did they become friendly and peaceful unrealistically contrary to the history of their ancestors?
- How could they have forgotten their native language if they have been communicating in the same language on the new planet? If it was a new language how did they evolve it so perfectly?

**2. WHAT INSIGHTS DO I HAVE NOW THAT I DIDN’T HAVE BEFORE I READ THIS?**

- What kind of a society it would be actually if all this happens in reality?
- How far it would be different than depicted in this story?
- What are the possibilities of such an incident?
- Why did the writer create this story? Is it just a fiction or there is some elements of truth that life exists on other planets?
What could have made those people friendlier on the Mars rather than rivals like they were on the earth? Complete freedom? Sense of loneliness?

Why does the writer think that the earthly people became better Martians

However, only after showing willingness to understand the depicted culture with an open mind and open eye, the text could be explored beneficially. It has been aimed to keep the anticipated responses simple in order to suit to the level of the actual learners. If learners could not follow the same development of thought, and consequently could not show development of thought in each and every case by any means, teachers might help them through brainstorming, guided group discussion and by providing students with ideas. If the same text is taught with critical dimension, including all the three linguistic, conceptual and cultural dimensions, learners are more likely to change their views about this as well as other texts by demonstrating a rich and deeper understanding of the texts.

**Final word**

The above discussion demonstrates that reading text with a linguistic, conceptual and cultural focus not only helps reader perceive the world in their schematic background, it also equips them with skills to become autonomous thinkers. Any text with Wallace’s three dimensional perspectives can be critically explored using the questions and tables presented in this paper. Kumaravadivelu (2006: 70) asserts that critical approach to language learning is “about connecting the word with the world. It is about recognizing language as ideology, not just system. It is about extending the educational space to the social, cultural, and political dynamics of language use”. In line with Kumaravadivelu, it can be asserted that reading text with a critical approach provides readers with in-depth analysis of the issues discussed in the text and help them develop critical and analytical thinking skills. Such skills eventually lead them to critically analyse the language, challenge the status quo and strive for change to benefit the affected groups and individuals. Morgan (1997) considers schools as key site for struggle. Therefore, it is logical to utilise this key stage to train learners about how to uncover the hidden ideologies which Fairclough (1992 a) believes are more effective when hidden. Such a critical approach is most likely to be useful in ESL and EFL context because it potentially enables learners to contextualise the newly acquired information within their own world of experience, and hence help them build bridges of learning between their own understanding and that of the outer world.

**About the Authors:**

**Dr Jabreel Asghar** earned his doctorate in Applied Linguistics and ELT from the University of Warwick, UK. He has previously taught in higher education sector in the United Kingdom, Pakistan and the Middle East. His major research interests include critical pedagogy, critical reading & thinking, CDA, curriculum & material development and sociolinguistics.

**Dr. Abdullah Al-Bargi** is Vice-Dean for Development at the English Language Institute (ELI), King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. He has also served as an advisor to the editorial board of the Saudi Gazette Newspaper. He was recently featured in the ASU Alumni Magazine "Learn Locally, Work Globally." He also teaches linguistics courses at the European Language and Literature Department at KAU. Dr. Al-Bargi earned his Master's in TESL and PhD in Linguistics/Rhetoric & Composition from Arizona State University, USA.
References


The Effect of Using a Web Quest Program on Developing Some EFL Critical Reading Process Writing Skills and Decreasing Writing Apprehension of the First Year Experimental Secondary School Students

Mervat Abd Elfatah Ali Said Ahmed
Okt Al Sqoor College of Science and Arts
Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
The present study aimed at investigating the effect of using a Web Quest program on developing some EFL critical reading, process writing skills and decreasing writing apprehension of the first year experimental secondary school students. The study followed a pretest-posttest experimental-control group design. The study sample consisted of 60 students from Fakus Experimental Secondary School and was divided into two groups: 30 students were assigned to the experimental group and 30 students were assigned to the control group. Instruments of the study were an EFL critical reading test, writing test and a writing apprehension scale. Students in both the experimental and control groups were pre-tested on their critical reading skills, their writing skills and their writing apprehension. Then, students of the experimental group were taught the program of Web Quest Critical Reading and Writing (WQCRWP) and students of the control group were taught in the traditional method. Finally, students in both groups were post-tested using the same tools. The study showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group on post-testing of critical reading skills, their writing skills and further on the post-assessment of their writing apprehension levels. Second, there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-and- post critical reading test, writing test and pre-and-post assessment of the writing apprehension scale for the experimental group in favor of post-testing scores on reading, writing and writing apprehension assessments. These differences can be attributed to using the program grounded in Web Questing and critical reading and writing. Hence, it was concluded that the program of Web Quest Critical Reading and Writing (WQCRWP) proved to be effective in developing some EFL critical reading, process writing skills and decreasing writing apprehension of the first year experimental secondary school students (the experimental group).

Keywords: Web Quest; critical reading; process writing; writing apprehension
Introduction

One of the cutting-edge edges of computer technology is the use of Web Quests for language learning. Bernie Dodge developed Web Quests in America in 1995, primarily for teachers in the secondary school system and for use with different disciplines regardless of the age of their users. Dodge (1997, para.2) defines Web Quests simply as "an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet".


1-Web Quests develop critical thinking, as students are not expected to just receive information passively but rather to use it actively to achieve a certain purpose. Students indulge in critical thinking which involves problem solving, judgment, analysis or synthesis to answer a list of questions.

2-The use of Web Quests highlights the importance of the teacher in setting up the tasks relevant to the needs of the learners. The teacher is a facilitator who uses his students' background knowledge to decide on how they advance their own intellect, design, scaffold his students' learning, implement, and evaluate the Web Quests.

3-Web Quests increase students' motivation to learn through the challenge of authentic tasks, which require them to make comparison, construct hypotheses in relation to real life situations and strengthen the link between them and the task.

4-Web Quests create opportunities for collaboration as students need to work together to complete the given task. Collaborative tasks diminish the feeling of isolation among students and provide peer support through group work to achieve their goal and communicate in the target language.

Chu (2004) used Web Quest Writing Instruction to improve students' performance in writing, reduce their writing apprehension and examine their perception of Web Quest as a Writing Instruction. The sample of the study was two junior second-year classes at a college of foreign language in southern Taiwan. Instruments of the study were a writing performance test, a writing apprehension test and a post-instruction perception questionnaire. The findings of the study indicated that Web Quest Writing Instruction improved students' writing performance, reduced their writing apprehension and students had a favorable perception of Web Quest Writing Instruction.

In addition, Kocoglu (2010) examined using Web Quest in teaching EFL reading/writing. The sample of the study was 34 first year ELT Turkish university students. Instruments of the study were a reading performance test and a writing performance test. The experimental group was taught using Web Quests and the control group was taught using teacher-led tasks. The results of the study indicated that the experimental group showed better performance than the control group in the reading performance test, but the two groups showed equal performance in the writing performance test.

This study is different from the previous studies that it used Web Quests to develop some EFL critical reading, process writing skills and decrease writing apprehension. Web Quests are integrated with six units of the second term of the advanced level course of the first year experimental secondary stage students.
The procedures

The Web Quest lessons in this study are developed within the theoretical framework of Web Quest: the inquiry–based approach, constructivism theory, and the principles of cooperative learning, with some modifications made to suit the students' needs and interests. The development of Web Quest is based on the predetermined objectives of the advanced level English course of first year experimental secondary stage (Move Ahead Plus) with a focus on essential critical reading and writing skills, but with little attention paid to speaking and listening skills. The first step is the design of the content of the Web Quests in terms of designing interesting tasks, assigning students' roles, finding relevant and appropriate resources' links, providing enough or suitable scaffolding, evaluating rubrics for evaluating students' writing product, and writing lesson plans. The steps of teaching are based on the Web Quest parts and approaches to teaching critical reading and process writing. Therefore, when implementing the Web Quest lessons of this study, the teaching plans are designed to provide clear steps of critical reading and writing instruction.

There are two major stages of implementing the Web Quest. The first one concerning the critical reading session which consists of 3 steps: pre-reading, reading, and post-reading stage. Then, the steps in teaching writing are followed. They include the steps of pre-writing (planning), writing (drafting), and post-writing (revising and editing). A summary of the teaching steps in the lesson plans is presented in table (1).

Table 1. Summary of the teaching steps of the experiment (Adopted from Suraya, 2011) with some modifications to suit the stages of critical reading and process writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts of the Web Quest</th>
<th>Steps of Teaching</th>
<th>Purposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Introduction (to gain students' attention and introduce the topic) | Pre-reading phase | -To introduce the activity  
-To activate students' background knowledge |
| Task (doable and interesting) | Reading phase | -To set the purpose for reading  
-To assign students' role |
| Process (to provide step by step instructions, resources and guidance for students in order to complete the task) | Post-reading phase/ Pre-writing phase (Planning) | -To check critical reading comprehension and skill mastery  
-To discuss difficulties & problems students encountered while reading  
-To help students compile and analyze information  
-To prepare the language needed for writing |
| Evaluation (to provide rubrics on how the task will be evaluated) | Post-writing phase (revising and editing) | -To evaluate the task  
-To give feedback and suggestions on students' tasks |
As shown in the previous table (1), Web Quest is used as a tool, which is integrated with the Advanced Level of "Move Ahead Plus" of first year experimental secondary stage students. Web Quests are integrated with the first six units of the advanced level “Move Ahead Plus” of first year experimental secondary stage students. Each unit in this advanced level is divided into four parts: the first part is a reading one with two reading comprehension passages. The second part deals with grammar structures. The third part deals with the writing skill, and the fourth part deals with listening and speaking skills. This study is restricted to dealing with the first part and the third one of each unit (the reading and the writing parts). The questions of the reading passages are modified according to the critical reading skills. The Web Quests are carried out using FrontPage Program. The five steps of the Web Quest (an introduction, the task, the process (+the resources), evaluation and conclusion) are integrated with the critical reading and the writing process as indicated in table (1). The title of the Web Quest is specified according to the title of the unit in the advanced level of "Move Ahead Plus" of first year experimental secondary stage students.

The teaching steps of the experiment go as follows as indicated in table (1):
1- The introduction of the Web Quest: in which the teacher introduces the topic to the students. This step includes the pre-reading phase in which the teacher introduces the reading activity and activates the students' background knowledge.
2- The task of the Web Quest: in which the teacher sets the purpose for reading and assigns students' roles.
3- The process of the Web Quest which includes four sub stages:
   a- The reading phase: which includes giving instructions, online resources, and guidance for students to complete critical reading of the textbook passages and the online resources. It also includes feedback opportunities for students.
   b- The post-reading phase: which includes checking the students’ critical reading comprehension and skill mastery, and discussing difficulties students encounter while reading.
   c- Pre-writing phase (planning): which includes preparing the language students need for writing, benefiting from the critical reading of the textbook passages and the online resources to write. Consequently, the critical reading of the textbook passages is used as a source for writing.
   d- Writing Phase (Drafting): in which students complete the task of writing.
4- Evaluation of the Web Quest (The Post-Writing Phase): in which the teacher provides the rubrics on how the writing task is evaluated and the feedback of students' writing.
5- Conclusion of the Web Quest: which includes closure to the activity, extending the gained knowledge to other domains, and retention of knowledge.

The semester lasted 14 weeks. The first week was devoted to the administration of critical reading and writing pre-tests and the writing apprehension scale to the experimental and the control group to assess their critical reading ability, writing ability and their writing apprehension level. The implementation of the Web Quest sessions was carried out in two hours a week. The implementation of the Web Quest instructional lessons started in the second week as an
orientation session so that the students get acquainted with the new teaching and learning styles. The control group was taught using the traditional method of teaching critical reading and process writing while the experimental group was taught using the Web Quest Critical Reading Process Writing Program (WQCRWP). After teaching the program, the critical reading test, the writing test and the writing apprehension scale were re-applied on students in the experimental and control group (post-tests) on 9th of May 2013 as the students' final exams.

Results of the study:
This study showed the following results:
Table 2. The Results of the t-test of the post-test of the experimental and the control group in the critical reading test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df.</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>104.63</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>62.31</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>54.53</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is obvious from table (2) that there is statistically significant difference at level 0.05(one-tailed) between the mean scores of the experimental group(X1=104.63) and the control group(X2=54.53) in the post-test of the critical reading test in favor of the experimental group as indicated by T-value(62.31). This difference may be attributed to the effect of the experimental treatment exemplified in the Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) the experimental group received.

Table 3. Results of the t-test of the post-test of the experimental and the control group in the writing test in writing evaluation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df.</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50.90</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>60.09</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.53</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (3) shows that there is statistically significant difference at level 0.05 between the mean scores of the experimental group(X1=50.90) and the control group(X2=20.53) in the post-test of writing in favor of the experimental group as indicated by T-value(60.9). This difference may be attributed to the effect of the experimental treatment exemplified in the Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) the experimental group received.

Table 4. Results of t-test of the post-application of the experimental and the control group in EFL writing apprehension scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df.</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>86.40</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>17.94</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>103.07</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (4) indicates It is obvious that there is statistically significant difference at level 0.05(one-tailed) between the mean scores of the experimental group(X1=86.40) and the control group(X2=103.07) in the post application of writing apprehension scale in favor of the experimental group as indicated by T-value(17.94). This difference may be attributed to the effect of the experimental treatment exemplified in the Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) the experimental group received.
Table 5. Results of the t-test of the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group in overall critical reading test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df.</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>54.30</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>58.62</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>104.63</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 indicates that there is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test (X1= 54.30 ) and the post-test (X2= 104.63 ) of the experimental group students in overall critical reading test in favor of the post-test . Hence, such difference may be due to the effect of the experimental treatment exemplified in the Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) the experimental group received.

Table 6. Results of the t-test of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group in EFL writing test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df.</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20.13</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>68.92</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50.90</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 indicates that there is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test (X1= 20.13 ) and post-test (X2= 50.90 ) of the experimental group students in overall writing test in favor of the post-test . Hence, such difference may be due to the effect of the experimental treatment exemplified in the Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) the experimental group received.

Table 7. Results of the t-test of the pre-test and the post-test of the experimental group in EFL writing apprehension scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>df.</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-application</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>86.40</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>16.88</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-application</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>103.56</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 indicates that there is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-application (X1= 86.40 ) and post-application (X2= 103.56 ) of the experimental group students in the writing apprehension scale in favor of the post-application. Hence, such difference may be due to the effect of the experimental treatment exemplified in the Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) the experimental group received.

Findings of the study:

The discussion of the findings included:

1-The effect of Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) on students’ critical reading.
2- The effect of Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) on students’ process writing.
3- The effect of Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) on decreasing students’ writing apprehension as follows:

1-The effect of Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) on students’ critical reading:
The effect of WQCRWP on students’ critical reading was investigated and determined in comparison with that of traditional critical reading instruction. As shown by the results of the study, students in the experimental group improved their critical reading significantly (See table 2) and figure (1) and (2).

**Figure 1.** Shows the mean scores of the experimental and the control group in the post-test of critical reading and its skills.

![Figure 1](image1.png)

**Figure 2.** Shows the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre and the post-test of critical reading and its skills.

![Figure 2](image2.png)

To the knowledge of the researcher, there is no study which dealt with the effect of Web Quest on critical reading but some studies have dealt with the effect of Web Quest on reading skill such as Puthikanon (2009), Kocogula (2010), and Chen (2011) who proved that Web Quest has a positive effect on EFL students’ reading skill.

Speculation can be made to explain why the WQCRWP was more effective than the traditional critical reading instruction. The fundamental distinction between these two instruction
methods was found in the effective features of the Web Quest as the tasks are authentic that motivate students to be actively engaged in the instructional process, and the abundant Ahead Plus for the first year experimental secondary stage students and the web materials presented on given websites. Students received the reading input by surfing these web materials in the multi-media language lab. In other words, students read an abundance of relevant material about a topic and then wrote about it. The web materials in the WQCRWP offered the kind of language input that Chen (2011) described as possessing “linguistic complexity, quality, quantity, variety, genuineness, and relevance” when he commented on the capability of computer technology in providing input to language learners. The traditional critical reading instruction was reading comprehension passages in the book of Move Ahead Plus for the first year experimental secondary stage students and teacher-directed oral discussion held in a regular classroom.

Improvement in students’ critical reading comprehension ability could be due to the knowledge of vocabulary and content that the students gained from the Web Quest lessons. The students stated clearly in their sessions the usefulness of the Web Quest sessions in providing them opportunities to learn new vocabulary and content knowledge when they were exposed to a lot of reading materials. This is supported by the view of Nation (2002: 267) in that “reading has long been seen as a major source of vocabulary growth.” Moreover, both L1 and ESL/EFL research studies have provided evidence showing the possibility of incidental vocabulary learning through repeated exposure (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006). Besides, practice is necessary for improvement in reading. According to Ranandya & Jacobs, (2002: 300), “people learn to read, and to read better, by reading.” The more chance of reading practice the students have, the more chance of reading improvement they are likely to get.

Sufficient scaffolding and support can be an important issue for explaining the significant results of critical reading ability improvement. Theoretically, the design of scaffolding is at the heart of the Web Quest model (March, 2000). It can be noted that when reading authentic texts from the Internet, students always find it very difficult to cope. Although the World Wide Web provides the opportunity for language learners to access authentic materials in the target language, this very authenticity can be problematic due to the level of the language they encounter or the genres with which they are unfamiliar (Murray, 2005). Unlike textbook materials, authentic texts that students read from the Internet cannot be simplified to suit the students’ proficiency level. In doing Web Quest, the students have to deal with a lot of authentic materials that can be overwhelming and discouraging for them. Therefore, scaffolding was needed to help students overcome such difficulties.

The significant role of scaffolding in enhancing critical reading was supported by the research findings of Tsai (2005). Most of the students were able to comprehend the authentic texts due to the inclusion of abundant and firm scaffolding which was provided to support them in the implementation of the task. The students also found that the prepared scaffoldings were very useful and could help them improve their reading and writing performance. Without such guidance, they might have been discouraged when they had encountered difficult texts.

2-The effect of Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) on students’ process writing:

The WQCRWP was more effective than the traditional process writing instruction See table (3) and figures (3) and (4) for many reasons:
The writing input in the traditional process writing instruction was printed material and teacher-directed oral discussions held in a regular classroom. The process writing input in WQCRWP was the printed materials in the book of Move Ahead Plus for the first year experimental secondary stage students and the web materials presented on given websites. Students surf the web materials, critically read them and then write about them using the reading to writing approach. Critical reading was used as an outside source. Research on second language reading and writing connections also suggested that learners may improve their writing ability if they are exposed to reading texts in a process of communication (Leki, 1992; Abu Rass, 2001; Elley, 1991 and Ghawi, 1996). Thus, students in the WQCRWP probably outperformed their counterparts in the traditional process writing instruction because the former spent a
substantial amount of time skimming, scanning and deciding relevant web materials for the purpose of commenting their ideas in their writing.

2- WQCRWP was effective for improving students’ writing skill and this was shown by the writing test. Students also perceived that WQCRWP was effective in relation to their reading skill as reading to writing approach was employed in the WQCRWP. Exposure to abundant and varied resources in English was one of the advantages most often mentioned by the students. Students felt that accessing and surfing the web materials relevant to the writing topics benefited them a great deal for their actual writing process. Accessing and surfing web materials primarily involved the act of reading, which may lead to students’ perception that they improved their reading skill in addition to their writing skill.

3- As for the enhancement of the participants’ writing abilities, with teacher’s assistance, this process of learning could effectively enlarge the amount of vocabulary in the process of reading and provide ideas and background knowledge for writing. After the students had sufficient information, they learned how to plan their writing, how to use the gathered information to support their ideas, how to write the first draft, and how to come up with the revised and edited version with appropriate coherence in their writing. Throughout the entire teaching and learning process repeated in every lesson, the participants in this study gradually gained more confidence in reading and writing in English and shared similar perceptions of the reading and writing improvement.

4- Most students accept using Web Quest: the students’ language improvement, positive perceptions and attitudes, and their increased participation could be considered as indicators of their acceptance. The central focus of investigating the effectiveness of this type of Web-based learning activities is to promote student learning and to create changes in terms of encouraging students to be highly engaged in learner-centered instruction.

5- Based on the findings, the change may be due to the following factors: the use of computers in the classroom can lead to higher motivation and higher levels of student engagement. Most students agree that computer technology suits their interest and their lifestyle. Besides, online activities are more attractive to students than the traditional ones (Urtel et al, 2006). Moreover, the cooperation among group members could help low achievers to gain more confidence when they had to read and write in groups and this was able to lead to more learning. The findings of this study have showed the importance scaffolding has for EFL learners, especially for those with low proficiency. The assistance could result in more favorable reading and writing improvement, more positive perceptions, and active participation in the learning process.

6- Students also perceived a positive effect of the WQCRWP on specific writing components in their writing. They believed that the WQCRWP improved their content, choice of words and organization in their English writing.

3-The effect of Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) on decreasing students’ writing apprehension:

The effect of WQCRWP on decreasing students’ writing apprehension was investigated and determined as shown by the results of the study; students in the experimental group decreased their writing apprehension significantly (See table (4) and figures (5) and (6).

Figure 5. Shows the mean scores of the experimental and the control group in the post-application of the writing apprehension and its axes.
Students have a positive perception of the writing tasks assigned in the WQCRWP. They thought that these writing tasks are related to their real-life experiences. In addition to their real-life relevancy, students reported most of the writing was fun, imaginative, and appealing to their interest. Fun factor seemed to be an especially important element for this group of teenaged students in deciding whether they liked a certain writing task or not. In addition, most of the students thought that WQCRWP was helpful to them in generating ideas for their writing. This finding is likely to relate to the advantages students perceived about the web materials; students explicitly stated that the abundant and relevant web materials made writing easier, enabling them to come up with better ideas and richer content for their writing.
Students showed strong preference for the WQCRWP over traditional writing instruction as students found that WQCRWP was more interesting and they felt that the class atmosphere was more relaxing. Students also recognized how the learning situation in the WQCRWP benefited their learning efficacy and autonomy. They reported that working on a personal computer in a lab made them more focused and less distracted and enabled them to learn at their own pace and gain more personalized experience.

More essentially, the results revealed that Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) proved to be effective in developing the experimental group students' critical reading skills (identifying the main idea, recognizing the author's purpose, identifying the author's bias, making inferences properly, recognizing relation between reasons and effects, analyzing denotations and connotations of words, making predictions properly, making comparison and contrast, recognizing the author's tone, drawing logical conclusions, evaluating arguments, identifying fact and opinion, making generalizations, identifying hidden assumptions and making good summary, writing skills (quality (length), purpose, genre, content, organization, grammar, vocabulary choice and language mechanics) and decreasing students' writing apprehension. This result is consistent with many previous studies that found that Web Quest proved to be effective in developing students' ability to read, write and decrease their writing apprehension: Goodwin-Jones (1993), Gonzales-Bueno (1998), Chu (2004), Termsinsawadi (2009), Puthikanon (2009), Chen (2011) and Sauraya (2011).

This development might be attributed to several factors, which might have helped the experimental group students' progress in EFL critical reading, writing skills and decreasing writing apprehension.

**Conclusion:**
The purpose of this study is to use Web Quest to develop critical reading, process writing skills and decrease writing apprehension of the first year experimental secondary year students. The development of the Web Quest was carried by following the Web Quest framework whose main principles are based on the constructivist theory of learning, inquiry-based learning, scaffold learning, higher order thinking skills and cooperative learning. Critical reading and process writing lessons of the advanced level of Move Ahead Plus of first year secondary school students are molded into the critical elements of Web Quest specifically designed for teaching in an EFL classroom.

Talking into account that both the experimental and control groups were homogeneous in the level of critical reading skills and writing skills in the pre-tests, therefore, any difference that occurred between the two groups in the post-tests after the application of Web Quest Critical Reading Writing Program (WQCRWP) can be attributed to the use of the program.

**About the author:**
**Mervat Abd Elfatah Ali Said Ahmed** holds Ph.D. She is currently a lecturer of English at Oklt Al Sqoor College of Science and Arts at Qassim University in Saudi Arabia. She teaches graduate and undergraduate courses of English language skills. She is also teaching translation, Applied Linguistics, Semantics and Pragmatics, Research Methods and historical linguistics. Her research focuses on using computer applications in teaching EFL.
References:


Redefining the Reading Culture: Overcoming EFL Teachers’ Prejudices against Students’ Reading Habits

Alaa Al-Musalli

The Netherlands

Abstract
The rationale of this study is to examine the negative perceptions common among some societies regarding the print-based reading cultures of other societies. The sample whose perceptions are under investigation are English teachers working in higher education in the Sultanate of Oman, while the specific society or group of people whom are believed to have a lacking reading culture are Omani university students. Teachers’ perceptions of the reading culture of Omani youths are studied and compared with students’ reports on their actual reading habits. The paper calls for an understanding of the true meaning of having a reading culture and presents a more realistic and equitable picture of the existing reading habits among Omani university students.

Keywords: Reading, Reading Culture, Arab Students’ Reading Habits, Omani Students’ Views on Reading
Introduction
Despite the different backgrounds teachers in Oman have, they all seem to be quite frustrated about basically the same aspects of the students' linguistic and study skills abilities. Some of the judgments they make about students are similar to the extent that there seems to be a list of quote-like statements that teachers quite frequently pass on without much reflection. Personally, I have heard some of my fellow expatriate university teachers, some of whom have taught in the Sultanate for over 20 years, make statements like: “Omani students don’t have a reading culture”, “Omani students have no motivation to read”, “Omani students’ parents don’t encourage them to read”, and as an explanation for this widespread misfortune, some say “Most of the students' parents are illiterate”. The latter shocking standpoint made the former uneducated arguments sound louder and more disturbing than before especially that I have not had any similar impressions about Omani students or their parents while working in the same context for over seven years.

Can these arguments be true just because they are common? Can any given society not have a reading culture? To see whether these negative perceptions against Omani youths are justifiable, viewpoints of a sample of English university teachers regarding Omani students' reading culture are compared with reports that a sample of Omani university students gave regarding their actual reading habits and backgrounds.

Background
Reading, both as a skill and habit, has been a subject debated in many contexts in the Arab world. Teachers and researchers preach about the significance of this skill in classes, conferences or even on TV; this has encouraged the public to talk about reading in many arenas outside the academic world.

In newspapers, for example, reading and the spread of a culture for reading has been the center of debate by people from different backgrounds and walks of life. A series of interviews with the public in Muscat Daily (2011) on the reading habits of young people give many interesting viewpoints about the situation of the reading culture among Omanis. An Omani science lab supervisor states that students feel that they are burdened by homework, so they have no time to spare to read for pleasure. Another Omani national agrees adding the bad influence of school peers and friends who do not promote reading as another reason for the lack of reading. He contends that the habit of readings is missing among Omani youths because of the low rate of education in the past, which affects the importance parents give to reading; this reiterates what some teachers, mentioned in Introduction above, stated about the connection between illiteracy in Oman and lack of reading. This means that even among Omanis, parents’ illiteracy is perceived as one of the roots of the lack of a reading culture among Omani youths. It is clear that even Omani nationals are over-generalizing the problem of lack of reading to cover the entire Omani population.

Expatriates in Oman also hold negative views about the situation of reading in Oman; a publisher living in Oman states that the reading habit is disappearing because of the shortage in public libraries in Oman (Muscat Daily, 2011). This argument, coming from a publisher in Oman, is clearly restricting the habit of reading for pleasure to reading paper books, magazines and so on.

Similar negative pictures come from reports and surveys. A DW-world report cites a Lebanese survey which found that Arabs read only about seven minutes per year. In December 2010, an article in Gulf News, a Dubai-based newspaper, gives a similar portrayal of the reading
culture in Arab societies. Absal (2010) reports Dr. Mustafa, a college teacher in Dubai, quoting a UN survey in 2008 that found that:

- the average Arab citizen in the Middle East reads approximately four pages of literature a year— which corresponds to learning five words a day.

The average American, he continues, reads 11 books per year, while the average British reads eight books per year. According to Dr. Mustafa, the reason why Arabs are so far back compared to the American and British is that Arab parents and teachers in the Arab world do not encourage reading at a young age. Many children in the Arab world see reading “merely as a school task and thus a necessary evil”; this means that it is by no means a source of pleasure for them. Also, there are aspects that hinder Arabs from reading in Arabic, for example, the limited vocabulary learned through reading, the nature of Arab culture being generally oral which makes speech a vital source of information, and the different Arabic dialects existing in many cultures compared with what they read in standard Arabic.

However, an important question about this negative depiction of Arabs’ reading habits is: are all these aspects completely negative ones? For example, instead of categorizing a unique skill of a given culture, such as the oral nature of the Arab culture, as a disadvantage causing a lack of improvement in other skills, we must see this as a separate positive feature of that culture and a possible reason why Arabs depend on different sources of information compared with other societies. Boullata (1989) describes the oral nature of the Arab culture as a reliable method to preserve the Arab culture and pass on knowledge from one generation to another. At one level, orality has led Arabs to depend on memory which has helped them in reciting poetry, telling epic narratives and romances, and passing on proverbs and genealogical data. At another level, orality has helped develop skills such as improvising which Arabs used in poetic duels. Clearly, the oral tradition of Arabs has given the Arab culture depth and sophistication; therefore, rather than categorizing it as a disadvantage that has affected the Arab reading culture, it should be seen as a source of wealth for cultural transmission passed on from previous generations. The fact that Arabs today still depend on orality is by no means a drawback; similar to reading, orality is a skill in itself. Therefore, Arabs are not lacking information; they simply derive it from other sources besides reading.

Another question to ask is: whether the lack of an interest in reading is typical of and specific to the Arab culture? American schools adequately provide children with the skill to read but not the will to read. Bayless states that in America “While virtually everyone is capable of reading, half are alliterate; they have chosen not to read for pleasure”. The term “alliteracy” is best defined as “the capacity to read but not the desire” (2010, p.10). This means that people are only reading for work purposes and to manage daily life routines. Findings of the Research Division Report of 2004 and the Renaissance Learning of 2008 show that:

- 10% of the population reads approximately 80% of the books purchased or circulated. 40% of the population is responsible for only 20% of books purchased or circulated (Bayless, 2010, p. 5).

In Africa, there are many similar reports about the lack of an interest in reading. Nigerian children, for instance, Onwubiko (2010) states, are no longer interested in reading outside homework despite the fact that the past generations had a thirst for education and knowledge. Reasons for the ‘lack of interest in knowledge’ in Nigeria are: (1) lack of motivation among children, which creates a general apathy for reading, (2) lack of parental guidance, monitoring and encouragement, so children are not managing their time properly, (3) inadequate funding of
educational institutions to build libraries or buy books, (4) poor economy and low standard of living, which forces parents to worry more about food than knowledge, (5) quest for money among children to support their families, (6) the examination code, which makes children care more about passing exams than acquiring knowledge, (7) absence of school and public/community libraries, (8) increasing cost of publishing and lack of support for publishers, and (9) advent of the Internet, which children are abusing and copying from without much reading.

Obviously, some of the above reasons apply to countries other than Nigeria. They could well be factors working in many advanced societies at different degrees or levels. Thus, the problem of a lack of an interest in reading is by no means restricted to one given society. The dangerous views against the reading culture of Arabs, arguments such as those presented by my colleagues, seem to be prevailing despite the fact that they come from professionals in the filed of education. However, one of the most important weaknesses in these views is that although they agree on the idea that there is a lack of a reading culture, they do not agree on the definition of the problem; i.e. ‘What is meant by a reading culture?’

My colleagues’ definition of lack of a reading culture stems from their frustration that identifies the problem as being a lack of an interest in reading in the English language, which is why students are not learning and developing as quickly as they hope. As for Dr. Mustafa’s argument, he restricts the lack of a reading culture as a lack of interest in literature. But is literature the only source for pleasure or knowledge? Such dramatic discrepancies in the definitions of what constitutes a reading culture are therefore the core source of the problem.

As for the public, they too have contradictory ideas of what constitutes a reading culture in terms of identifying the sources for pleasure reading. To some, paper books are the only means of pleasure reading, while others depend on many other tools. The differences in people’s preferences, whether of paper copies or e-copies, seem to be the prime source of the misunderstanding. It goes without saying, the public as well as professionals are in a dire need for a clear definition of ‘The Reading Culture’ for them to pass judgment on whether or not there is any lack of it.

Contrary to the different ideas both the public and educators have about what constitutes pleasure reading, there is an agreement in the literature that the definition of reading culture is not restricted to the reading of books; rather, the definition is broad and incorporates all types of reading sources. Bayless defines reading as a cultural trait:

the result of specific actions and behaviors inculcated in the family environment which produce the will to read (manifested in habitual and enthusiastic reading) married with the skill to read (usually imparted by schools)(2010, p. 12).

Enthusiastic reading is not defined by race, IQ level, gender, or income, and it helps achieve desirable outcomes in life. Onwubiko defines reading culture as:

a learned practice of seeking knowledge, information and entertainment through the written words. Such practice can be acquired by reading books, journals, magazines, and newspapers, etc (2010).

Therefore, a simple definition of the reading culture can be: reading about what interests you from any given source, be that a magazine, newspaper, webpage, or even comic book. Different cultures and generations within each culture depend on various sources for pleasure reading, and the current advancement in media have changed many cultural habits. The same DW-world report that mentioned the negative picture given by the Lebanese survey on Arab readers draws a
somewhat more realistic and practical view on how Arabs read. It reports that although illiteracy is still present across the Arab world, in some Arab countries like Egypt, there is a great interest in books and book fairs. Close to a million visitors attended the Cairo book fair the beginning of 2011. The report continues, “There is a wealth in literary and artistic knowledge production in Arab countries”. Al-Sherbini (2010) reports on an initiative taken by Alph Bookstores, a local bookstore in Cairo, to stock taxis with books for clients to read in traffic jams. These “knowledge taxis” were initiated to encourage people to read short stories and poems on their way to their destinations. A taxi driver reports that most of his clients welcomed the idea, and women especially were more enthusiastic. This optimistic project only shows that there is indeed an interest in reading. This also suggests that the reading culture across the Arab world is not uniform and that Arabs have different reading habits.

In defense of the situation of reading in Oman, an Omani sales professional gives a fairly positive picture. He maintains that reading is no longer restricted to hard copies as e-paper formats are accessible to the public. He states that “It’s not that people don’t read, they just don’t read a physical book anymore”. Another Omani, an IT professional, agrees stating that people are using the Internet as a source for reading because it is easy to access, cheap, and quick (Muscat Daily, 2011). The 2011 Muscat International Book Fair which is an annual event organized since 1992, included over 500 publishers from 25 different countries. The public’s interest in this event has increased yearly and has exceeded expectations.

The Research

In this study, we depended on questionnaires to collect the participants’ views. The participants consist of teachers and students, as will be discussed below; hence, two questionnaires were designed for this study. The teachers’ questionnaire aimed at understanding the teachers’ perceptions of their students’ reading culture by asking them to comment on four statements with YES/NO (see Table 1.). On the other hand, in the students’ questionnaire they were required to answer questions regarding their reading habits as well as provide information on their parents’ reading abilities and habits (see Students’ reading habits onwards for the questions). The latter aspect was added to investigate the relationship between parents’ literacy level and the students’ reading culture to investigate the argument that teachers give concerning the influential factor of the lack of an interest in reading among students’ parents, as mentioned in the Introduction.

The Participants

This study was conducted at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in the Fall of 2010. Two groups of participants were involved: teachers in the Language Center (LC) and their students who were studying in the Foundation Programme, which helps develop their English before they join their respective colleges.

Teachers

The number of participants involved in this investigation is 53 teachers from the LC at SQU. Omani nationals and Arab teachers were excluded from this study; it was feared that these teachers would have a biased viewpoint regarding this topic due to their shared linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, only native speakers of English and other languages were involved in this study.
Students

The number of participants involved in this study is 103 students from the same level in the Foundation Programme. The study was administered during the students’ first semester at the university, so they may have not had the chance to change their study habits from what they practiced at school. The students were informed that they were involved in a study on their reading habits and that the investigation had nothing to do with class assignments or homework. They were also told that their teachers would have no access to their anonymously filled-in questionnaires in order not to affect their answers due to fear from their teachers’ reactions.

Results

Teachers’ Perceptions

The teachers’ questionnaire was designed in a way that would take very little time to fill in. The statements were very short and required black and white (Yes/No) answers, so the options did not allow other alternatives or comments. The reason why no grey-area answers were encouraged was to try to reach clear-cut perceptions similar to the ones mentioned in Introduction above, where the teachers had direct and certain negative attitudes towards students’ reading culture. The idea was to see if other teachers had a similar certainty regarding their beliefs about students’ reading habits. However, some teachers did not comment or give an answer to some of the statements; therefore, the ‘Uncertain’ category in Table 1. below accounts for such cases when the teachers either wrote ‘Don’t Know’ or left the box empty, both of which are considered positive feedback since they indicate that not all teachers have adamant black or white perceptions about students’ habits. Furthermore, some teachers added short comments next to some of the statements in the margins of the questionnaire paper, as will be discussed in Teachers’ additional comments below.

Table 1. Teachers’ Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCEPTIONS</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>UNCERTAIN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students are reading oriented.</td>
<td>11.3 % (six cases)</td>
<td>88.67 %</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students read MORE in their mother tongue.</td>
<td>84.9 % (six cases)</td>
<td>11.3 %</td>
<td>3.77 % (two cases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the students’ parents CAN NOT read in their mother tongue.</td>
<td>9.4 % (five cases)</td>
<td>69.8 %</td>
<td>20.75 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the students’ parents DO NOT read in their mother tongue.</td>
<td>35.8 %</td>
<td>43.39 %</td>
<td>20.75 %</td>
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Table 1. shows the teachers’ replies to the four statements given in their questionnaire. It yields the following two findings: one concerning students’ and the other concerning their parents.

Perception of Omani Students’ Reading Habits

The first important finding is that 88.67% of the teachers believe that Omani students are not reading oriented as opposed to 11.3% who believe that students do read for pleasure. There was no specification about which language is referred to in this statement; hence, the statement reads something to the effect of “Students are reading oriented in any language, not specifically English”. Therefore, the majority of the teachers’ replies indicate that Omani students are not
interested in reading in any language, this overgeneralization is quite a harsh judgment especially that teachers are making it without any substantial evidence besides the students’ poor reading skills in English.

The teachers’ answers to the second question surprisingly shows that they have a somewhat distorted idea of what having a reading culture means. They give a contradictory picture about the students’ reading habits. This time, 84.9% of the teachers state that Omani students read more in their mother tongue. This means that teachers believe that students do indeed have a reading culture but not in English; rather, they prefer reading in their mother tongue. Hence, there is a serious problem in the way teachers understand the concept of “Having a Reading Culture”.

It is clear from the teachers’ replies to the first statement that they are restricting having an interest in reading to reading in English for the aim of improving students’ language proficiency. Therefore, the idea that the majority communicated in the first and second statements is their belief that Omani students are not reading oriented in English, but they are reading oriented in Arabic. Thus, the majority of the participants agree that there is an unequal interest in reading in their mother tongue and in English, favoring the mother tongue. This is a different statement from the common idea shared among teachers that Omani students do not read for pleasure at all. This misconception should therefore be corrected by specifying that Omani students are inclined to read for pleasure more in their mother tongue than in English. Clearly, there seems to be no serious mistake in such favoritism since reading for pleasure in the mother tongue presents less challenges as opposed to reading in second or foreign languages.

Perception of the Parents’ Reading Habits

The second important finding in the table above relates to the students’ parents. Although the teachers have no apparent means of knowing any information about the parents’ reading habits, about 80% of the participants were able to give a Yes/No answer to this question.

The most striking finding is that about a third of the sample, 35.8%, agrees that most of the students’ parents do not read for pleasure in their mother tongue. This figure is quite high considering that the judgment being made here is based on a very subjective picture of what goes on in the students’ home environment. In contrast, 43.39% of the participants believe that the students’ parents do indeed read in their mother tongue. Here again, the teachers are mostly speculating, but the difference here is that this time it is a positive perception. Furthermore, 20.75% of the participants reported that they are uncertain, so they do not provide a comment on this statement. The first finding is perhaps more shocking than the latter two due to the negative implication it contains.

Another surprising finding relates to the parents’ literacy ability. Five teachers, 9.4% of the participants, stated that they believe their students’ parents are illiterate which is, despite the low percentage, an alarming speculation. On the other hand, the rest of the participants provide a more positive picture on this aspect; 69.8% of the participants believe that students’ parents can read in their mother tongue.

Also, the same 20.75% of the teachers participants who stated that they were uncertain about the previous comment, i.e. that concerning whether parents like to read in the mother tongue, reported that they do not know or are uncertain of the parents literacy level. This is a positive input since instead of giving a negative/positive comment, they found it more reasonable to state that they do not know or are simply uncertain of the answer. The fact that teachers do not know information about their students’ background is understandable since in Oman, as is the case in some other countries in the Middle East, some teachers and students consider asking about the
home environment an invasion of privacy. What is not understandable is that how some teachers could make baseless judgments about the academic abilities of their students’ parents without even meeting them.

**Teachers’ Additional Comments**

A few teachers wrote short comments next to the statements in their questionnaire which revealed different attitudes. Two of the teachers argued that with respect to reading for pleasure, there is a difference between genders. The first teacher merely pointed out that there is a difference, while the second stated that only female students are reading oriented; so according to this teacher, male students do not read for pleasure. Unfortunately, we had not anticipated such a comment from teachers or we would have included a question about gender in the students’ questionnaire to investigate this aspect. Another comment gave a guessed estimate of the number of students who are reading oriented. A teacher argued that about 70% of students are reading oriented regardless of their gender. Also, on a different note, another teacher noted that about 50% of the students’ parents do not read for pleasure. Finally, a teacher commented that reading the Holy Quran is not considered reading for pleasure, and therefore if students reported that they read the Quran, this should not be considered reading for pleasure. This comment is subject to question since the Quran is a rich source for historic information as well as being the reference of the religion and moral values of Islam. In addition, the first word revealed in the Holy Quran is the word: “Read”, which comes as an order to learn and gain wisdom hence emphasizing the importance of reading for Muslims.

It is important to stress here that the above speculations are not based on findings of scientific research; and therefore, cannot be considered objective judgments on the part of the teachers. These comments merely represent impressions reached by these teachers based on personal experiences or observations, which may not be valid. The impact of these ideas, though, is the result of the apparent widespread misunderstanding of the students’ habits as will be discussed below.

**Students’ Reading Habits**

As mentioned in The Research section above, the students’ questionnaire required answers to short and straightforward questions. The following will be an account of what students’ reported concerning their own as well as their parents’ reading abilities; these accounts will be compared with what the teachers’ perceived about these aspects.

**Read for Pleasure or Not?**

The first aspect under investigation in the students’ questionnaire is whether or not the students read for pleasure. Two thirds of the student participants, 68.9%, reported that they indeed read for pleasure. When comparing this finding with the negative perceptions of the majority of the teachers, 88.67 %, we reach a confirmation of the idea that teachers’ views regarding students’ reading habits are invalid. This huge misperception of students’ habits is a worrying indication of a lack of understanding of the students’ abilities and background which is a crucial aspect in any teacher-students relationship.

On the other hand, 31% of the student participants stated that they do not read for pleasure, yet the same percentage of students give a contradictory report to this when answering the next question (see below) which means we cannot depend on this figure as a basis for further findings.

**Reading in Arabic versus English**
The second question in the students’ questionnaire focused on whether the students read more in Arabic or English. 83.49% of the student participants reported that they read more in Arabic than in English. This remarkably matches what the teachers perceived concerning this point, for 84.9% of the teacher participants believe that students read more in their mother tongue, as explained above.

Surprisingly, even the 31% of the student participants who reported that they do not read for pleasure gave a reply to this question, which indicates that this group also practices some form of pleasure reading. It might well be that this 31% of the student participants have a problem identifying what constitutes pleasure reading or do not completely separate between the concept of reading for pleasure as an extra reading activity and their study-related readings; also, they might not see themselves doing enough reading to qualify them to say they are reading for pleasure.

Can Parents Read?

To investigate the notion of a present connection between parents’ literacy and lack of a reading culture among Omani youths as mentioned above, the student participants were asked to specify whether their parents can read in Arabic, English or in both languages. Table 2. below gives details about the students’ replies. The most intriguing findings are that the majority of the students’ mothers, 67.96% of the participants, can read in Arabic alone, while the majority of the students’ fathers, 45.6% of the participants, can read in both Arabic and English. Other findings indicate that 41.7% of the students’ fathers can read only in Arabic, while 3.88% can read only in English. In general, more students reported that their parents can read in both Arabic and English than those who reported that their parents can read only in English which is understandable. Also, only two cases for each parent gender, 1.9%, were reported as completely illiterate. Comparing this very small percentage with what the 9.4% of the teacher participants reported concerning their belief that the majority of their students’ parents cannot read is indicative of how alarming and incorrect this attitude is.

Table 2. Can Parents Read

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents’ Literacy: Can Parents Read?</th>
<th>ARABIC</th>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
<th>BOTH</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>67.96 %</td>
<td>0.97 % (one case)</td>
<td>13.59 %</td>
<td>1.9 % (two cases)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>41.7 %</td>
<td>3.88 % (four cases)</td>
<td>45.6 %</td>
<td>1.9 % (two cases)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International Human Development Indicators (2011) report an estimate by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in 2010 that reveals an 86.3% literacy rate in Oman for both genders above the age of 15. This estimate is quite close to the illiteracy statistics reached in the latest census in Oman in 2010. Ali Al Raisi, Director General of the Census Department in Oman, states that the illiteracy rate of the Omani population dropped from 21.9 % in 2003 to 12.2 % in 2010 (Vaidya, 2010). It is noteworthy that this increase in literacy in Oman goes far back to 1993. According to a bulletin produced by the Omani Ministry of National Economy in 2009, the 1993 census revealed an illiteracy level of 41.3%. This drop of illiteracy from 41.3% to 21.9% to 12.2% since 1993 until 2010 indicates anything but a lack of a culture of reading. It is also worth noting that the bulletin reports a higher level of illiteracy among females than males across different age groups in the 1993 and 2003 censuses. However, for the 2010 census such comparison has not been published. Nevertheless, this confirms the finding reached in this study concerning the fact that 67.96% of the students’ mothers are literate. It is clear that the increase in literacy among
Omanis is an obvious indication that illiteracy is not a prominent factor affecting the reading culture of today’s university students, for the majority of their parents are literate.

Do Parents Encourage Reading for Pleasure?
The fourth question focused on whether the students’ parents encourage them to read for pleasure. The majority of answers, 78.6%, were positive, yet 20.38% of the participants reported that their parents do not encourage them to read. It is clear that the majority of the students’ parents understand the importance of reading for pleasure and therefore support it in the home environment; nonetheless, the fact that 20.38% of the parents do not support reading for pleasure is an alarming indication that some of the students’ parents are playing a negative role in the students education. It is possible that these parents see reading for pleasure as a waste of time and a distraction from academic studies.

What Students Lately Read
The fifth and final question in the questionnaire asked the students to identify what they had lately read. Table 3. below provides details of their replies. The Internet is the most common source of reading as 39.8% reported; also, books and newspapers are common reading materials for 33% and 30.9% of the students respectively. Arabic short stories were reported by 5.8% of the participants as another reading interest. Furthermore, there are individual cases which reported reading English short stories, magazines, The Holy Quran, and novels (represented in ‘Other’ in Table 3. below).

Table 3. Read Lately

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOOK</th>
<th>NEWSPAPER</th>
<th>INTERNET</th>
<th>ARABIC SHORT STORY</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33 %</td>
<td>30.09 %</td>
<td>39.8 %</td>
<td>5.8 %</td>
<td>0.97 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that all the student participants gave a source for their reading is a second confirmation that their answer to the first question, discussed in Read for pleasure or not? above, is indicative of a lack of understanding of what constitutes reading for pleasure (see also Reading in Arabic versus English above).

Conclusion
The main finding of this study suggests that there is a patent misunderstanding of the meaning of “The Reading Culture” or “Being Reading Oriented” among educators and the public. Findings of the teachers’ questionnaire in this study suggest that English teachers at the university level in Oman define the concept of having a reading culture as: having an interest or inclination to read in English regardless of any attempt to read in the mother tongue, which explains why 88.67 % of the teacher participants believe that Omani students are not reading oriented on the one hand and why 84.9 % of these participants believe that Omani students read more in their mother tongue, on the other. This contradiction is an obvious indication of a lack of an understanding of the students’ backgrounds, their interests and of the true meaning of pleasure reading. Another important finding is that even some students do not know what reading for pleasure means as discussed in Read for Pleasure or Not, Read in Arabic versus English and What Students Read sections described above.

Therefore, we can sum up by stating that the views that the majority of English teachers have regarding the lack of a reading culture among Omani youths are invalid and can only be justified
as stemming from the teachers’ frustrations regarding the general lack of an interest in reading in English since many students are not improving their English language Skills as quickly as their teachers would hope. The fact that an idea is reiterated and widely accepted as being true does not make it so; thus, rather than spreading outdated or unsubstantial information about the reading abilities and family backgrounds of a particular group of students, which are in most cases based on a personal interpretation rather than current studies, we need as educators to do what we preach: read, investigate, and understand.

**Recommendations**

Defining the problem is key. By amending the definition of the problem, we can focus on the correct issue. If the problem is that Omani students cannot read, then we need to find better ways to develop their reading skills or give them more time to practice reading. However, if the problem is not having any enthusiasm to read specific materials, then we need to define the types of materials they find challenging in order to make alterations or introduce new more engaging materials. If the material we expect students to enjoy reading is limited to reading English books such as novels, short stories and articles, then we should redefine the problem and not over-generalize the lack of reading such sources to all sources of information.

Parents have been made responsible for encouraging their children to read for pleasure. Bayless asserts that enhancing enthusiastic reading is the role of the family and culture, starting from the early years of (0 to 6 years), but can also be accomplished at later years (Ennis, 1965 as cited in Bayless, 2010, p. 12). Parents can help achieve a reading culture though specific behaviors and activities that require ‘time, persistence and consistency’. According to the Program for International Student Assessment (2007), a study of fifty-seven countries, including America, supports the importance of the home environment for better performance. Bayless argues that schools can teach the skill of reading effectively, but the family is responsible for exercising the skill and providing children with the inspiration and desire to read; therefore, schools and families reinforce each other’s work (2010, p. 16).

But some parents may see reading for pleasure as a waste of time and a distraction from academic studies. Here comes the role of teachers and the curriculum to enhance the use of extracurricular material for class assignments. There is a need to develop more pragmatic reading practices such as critical reading exercises both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, instead of widening the gap between teachers and students by stopping at misperceptions and pondering on the reasons, we need to bridge the gap through using new types of materials and media for reading. Teachers can use digital books, newspapers and magazines to encourage students to read as these are more accessible, easier to handle, and cheaper than paper copies.

Researchers and educators have not saved an effort to show us how to grow or enhance a reading culture. Onwubiko (2010) asserts that it is the responsibility of institution heads and teachers in addition to parents to encourage children to read as reading broadens their ‘understanding of life’. Onwubiko (2010) concludes that school heads and teachers can cultivate a reading culture in many ways. First, making changes in the curricula can create more interest in acquiring knowledge. For example, instead of using only course books in class, newspapers and educational magazines can provide reinforcement for civic knowledge. Second, parents’ interest can be raised through extra-curricular activities such as drama or public debates in which their children are involved. Also, schools can raise funds to support their libraries and organize reading and writing competitions for students. Finally, schools can collaborate with publishing companies to support their students and libraries. Onwubiko stresses the role of schools heads
and teachers in creating a reading climate for children. He therefore does not believe that the lack of interest in reading is the sole responsibility of the parents as parents also need to be educated as to the best means to encourage reading in the home environment (see also Bayless (2009) on how to grow a reading culture).

It is obvious that there is a general misunderstanding of the term reading culture among the public as well as professionals which is causing people to have very different and somewhat prejudicial views against the reading culture of specific groups of people. Omani youths, as an example of Arab readers, read more in their mother tongue than in English, which does not make them less reading oriented than any other culture. The time has come for teachers and the public to think pragmatically and leave baseless impressions behind, so rather than hammering on a false and negative perception about a given culture, objective solutions should be presented to rectify what is believed to be in need of repair. Maybe the problem lies in our own beliefs and maybe we think a group of people is behind in many ways because our own knowledge about them is lacking.

About the Author
Alaa Al-Musalli holds a Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Wales, Bangor, UK. She taught in the English Department at Qatar University in the State of Qatar (2000-2003) and in the Language Center at Sultan Qaboos University in the Sultanate of Oman (2003-2011) and is currently a self-employed writer. Her specific areas of specialization are psycholinguistics and testing, and her research expertise is in listening and note-taking skills.

References
Motivational Practices in English as a Foreign Language Classes in Saudi Arabia: Teachers Beliefs and Learners Perceptions

Fakieh Alrabai
Faculty of Arts, Muhayel Aseer branch
King Khalid University
Saudi Arabia

Abstract
This study investigated the beliefs of 36 teachers of English as foreign language in Saudi Arabia of their motivational practices in language classes and their 826 students’ perceptions of their foreign language motivation in these classes. A structured questionnaire was employed to identify the teachers’ frequency of use of some motivational techniques like developing a positive relationship with students, designing and presenting stimulating learning tasks, promoting learners’ self-confidence, enhancing autonomy, reducing language anxiety, etc. A self-report questionnaire was utilized to evaluate some aspects of students’ motivation like their attitudes toward language teacher, self-confidence, autonomy, anxiety, as well as instrumental, integrative, and intrinsic orientations. A variety of preliminary and main analyses were used to analyze the collected data. The findings of these analyses indicated that teachers’ beliefs of techniques use mostly matched learners’ perceptions of their motivation in language classes. Some areas of discrepancy in teachers’ and learners’ ratings were identified. Results further indicated that motivational techniques are not frequently utilized in English language classes in Saudi Arabia and that very important aspects of learner’s motivation like reducing learners’ language anxiety and promoting their autonomy are frequently ignored in teacher’s practices in this context.

Keywords: Motivation; motivational teaching; motivational techniques; teacher behavior.
Introduction

Motivation is a key factor in the acquisition of second and foreign languages. In spite of its undeniable importance in this aspect, it is widely acknowledged that Saudi EFL learners generally do not possess very high levels of L2 motivation (AlMaiman, 2005; Alrabai, 2011; Al-Shammary, 1984). The reasons for this phenomenon are diverse and complex, but the nature of research on motivation within the Saudi context has certainly made no significant contribution to improve this situation. The available studies on foreign language (FL) motivation in the Saudi context attempted to identify the types and levels of language motivation among Saudi EFL learners (e.g. AlMaiman, 2005; Alrabai, 2007; Al-Shammary, 1984) with no attempts to explore the applications of motivation in the actual classroom (e.g. how really teachers’ motivational practices impact learners’ foreign language motivation). The chief goal of this study therefore is to approach a novel method of foreign language motivation research in the Saudi context by exploring the beliefs of teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Saudi Arabia of their motivational practices as well as their students’ perceptions of these practices.

Literature review

Motivation is important in that it influences the extent to which other factors involved in SL/FL acquisition (e.g., attitudes, aptitude, self-confidence, language anxiety, intelligence, etc.) are recognized (see, e.g., Dörnyei, 2001b; Gardner, 2001; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Gardner (1985, p. 10) conceptualized the term language learning motivation as “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes towards learning a new language.” The work of Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert, established research in the field of FL/SL (L2) motivation with a social psychological perspective that dominated the field from the 1960s until the early 1990s. The common belief during this period was that students’ attitudes toward a specific language group were likely to influence their success in incorporating aspects of that language (Gardner, 1985). Research during this period was more concerned with integrative-instrumental motives/orientations dichotomy. Gardner and Lambert (1972) stated that integrative motivation refers to the interest in learning an L2 because of a personal interest in the people and culture of the target language; while instrumental motivation relates to the desire to learn the L2 for a particular purpose, such as getting a job or fulfilling educational requirements.

The early 1990s was a turning point in the research of L2 motivation, with researchers’ attention in this area shifted to a more education-oriented approach laying the foundation for the cognitive-situated period of L2 motivation research. This shift has resulted in the appearance of situation-specific motivational concepts, such as self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-determination, language anxiety, learner autonomy, extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, motivational group dynamics concepts, etc. According to Pintrich and Schunk (2002), intrinsic motivation is the desire to learn for learning own sake without external incentives. Dörnyei (1994) has defined group cohesiveness, which is a group motivational component, as the strength of the relationship linking the learner group members to one another and to the group itself. Linguistics self-confidence refers to the belief that the mastery of an L2 is well within the learner’s means (Dörnyei, 2009). Language anxiety, which is a component of linguistics self-confidence in Dörnyei’s (1994) model of L2 motivation, was conceptualized by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986, p. 128) as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process.” Learner autonomy, according to Little (1995), involves the capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action.
Since this shift in SL motivation research, numerous studies proposed different techniques to generate, sustain, and promote learner motivation in language classes (e.g., Alison, 1993; Alison & Halliwell, 2002; Brown, 2001; Chambers, 1999; Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Williams & Burden, 1997). Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) indicate that motivational techniques refer to the instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation. In 2001, Dörnyei developed a systematic framework of L2 motivational techniques known as Motivational Teaching Practice. This framework presents main techniques and different sub-techniques that are categorized in four dimensions. The first dimension concerns creating the essential motivational conditions in the classroom needed to initiate learners’ motivation. These conditions include having positive relationships with learners, building a friendly and supportive learning atmosphere in class, and creating cohesiveness among learners in the language classroom. The second category of techniques comprise those necessary to generate primary student motivation like findings ways to acquaint learners with the culture and values of the foreign language and its community, promoting learners’ expectations of success, helping students to have clear, realistic, and attainable goals when learning English, and establishing relevance between the teaching materials and learners’ goals and needs. The third dimension concerns maintaining and protecting the learners’ generated motivation. This involves presenting cooperative learning in the classroom, protecting learners’ self-esteem and promoting their self-confidence, making learning stimulating and enjoyable to learners, and supporting learners’ autonomy. The fourth dimension entails techniques that aim at encouraging learners to hold positive motivational self-evaluation for themselves as language learners. Among such techniques are those dealing with increasing learners’ satisfaction about learning the foreign language, providing them with motivational feedback about their performance, helping learners’ to make positive motivational attributions about their past language learning experience, and offering rewards to learners in a motivating manner.

The body of research on motivational techniques remains limited. To the researcher’s best knowledge, the only four studies that empirically examined the practicality of motivational techniques so far are those by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), Cheng and Dörnyei (2007), Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), and Moskovsky, Alrabai, Paolini, & Ratcheva (2013). In the first two studies, 200 Hungarian and 387 Taiwanese EFL teachers ranked 50 odd motivational techniques in terms of their perceived importance in promoting learners’ motivation to learn English, and as well their actual frequency of use of these techniques in their language classes. Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) used a variety of instruments like self-report questionnaires, classroom observations, and a post-lesson teacher evaluation scale to evaluate the motivational practices of 27 EFL teachers and the FL motivation of over 1300 EFL learners in South Korea. The findings of this study revealed a significant positive correlation between teachers’ motivational teaching practices and students’ classroom motivation. A significant limitation of Guilloteaux and Dörnyei’s study was, however, that it was more concerned with the teachers’ general motivational practices and did not utilize specific motivational techniques in the language classes to examine their effectiveness in enhancing learners’ FL motivation.

Using a longitudinal pre- and post-treatment quasi-experimental design, the study by Moskovsky et al. (2013) provided a methodologically-controlled investigation into the effects of ten preselected teachers’ motivational techniques motivation, which were implemented among an experimental group during an eight-week teaching program. The results of this investigation provided strong evidence that implementing motivational techniques in Saudi EFL classrooms resulted in a significant positive change in learner motivation, and it also confirmed a positive
The major limitation of the study by Moskovsky et al. (2013) was that the findings were inconclusive in terms of how the utilization of motivational techniques would impact learner actual achievement.

English language status in Saudi Arabia

English was introduced in Saudi schools in the late 1950s (Al-Shammary, 1984). It was initially taught only in intermediate and secondary schools (years 7-12). Currently, English in Saudi Arabia is taught starting from grade six of primary school up to grade three of high school. The rationale for the late learning of English is that its acquisition might interfere with the acquisition of the mother language (Arabic) if taught at an early age. As for university, English is taught at the preparatory year for two semesters, and it is a prerequisite for admission to most Saudi universities. It is also a requirement for completing higher education in some majors in Saudi faculties like medicine, engineering, and nursing, where it is the medium of instruction. English is still considered a foreign language in Saudi Arabia (e.g., Al-Maini, 2006) because of the dominance of native Arabic in most daily activities. This dominance results in relatively few opportunities to hear, speak, and write English inside or outside of the classroom (Al-Otaibi, 2004).

Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) stated that the Saudi government has recognized the importance of English language by making it a mandatory subject in schools and universities. However, the level of achievement in learning English as a foreign language is far below expectations: after years of study, most Saudi students are unable to communicate in English and have only the most basic reading and writing skills. This phenomenon may be attributed to a number of cultural, social, religious, and political barriers that undermine the value of learning English in the Saudi context.

In addition to religious and cultural restrictions, there are other challenges to the EFL education in the Saudi context, such as the nature of English classroom instruction which is usually a teacher-centered rather than student-centered (Al-Shehri, 2004), the typically overcrowded classes (Al-Mohanna, 2010), and the authoritative character of the English language teacher in that context who is typically seen the ultimate controller of class who decide what students can and cannot do (Alrabai, 2011).

All of these challenges contribute to the phenomenon of low degree of motivation to learn English by Saudi learners, and it is therefore essential that EFL instructors integrate motivational techniques in their teaching practices. As a first step in determining the optimal methods of achieving this, it is necessary to evaluate the current situation of teachers’ motivational practices in Saudi EFL classes and to assess to what degree such practices influence learners’ motivation.

Materials and Methods

Objectives of the study

The chief goal of this study is to evaluate the motivational teaching practices in Saudi EFL classes by exploring teachers’ beliefs and learners’ perceptions about these practices.

Participants

A sample of 36 volunteer male and female EFL instructors and their students (N=826) from King Khalid University, King Abdullah University, and two secondary schools from Jeddah and Riyadh took part in this study. The sample population of teachers had a wide range in ages, qualifications, teaching experience, and regional backgrounds; they taught students studying at
different levels with different FL proficiencies, ranging from beginner to advanced. Some statistics about participating teachers is reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information for participating EFL teachers (N = 36)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Highest qualification</th>
<th>EFL teaching experience (in years)</th>
<th>Age (years old)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>10-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Highest qualification</th>
<th>EFL teaching experience (in years)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>BA</td>
<td>%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. FQ = frequency.

The sample population of students ranged in age from 15 and 25 years, and had a range of EFL learning experience from as little as 5 years to over 15 years. More statistical information about the participating learners is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographic information for participating EFL learners (N = 826)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>School level</th>
<th>EFL learning experience (in years)</th>
<th>Region of origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>5-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. FQ = frequency, CC = Capital city, WR = Western region, SR = Southern region.

Instruments

The study developed two questionnaire surveys: one to investigate teachers’ beliefs of their motivational practices in language classes, and the other to measure learners’ motivation as an estimated outcome of such practices.

Teachers’ survey

Participating teachers were required to rate their actual frequency of use of 58 motivational techniques in motivating learners in the EFL classroom based on a five-point Likert scale that ranges from “Hardly ever” to “Very frequently”. Rating options have been assigned the following numerical values: “Hardly ever” = 1, “Rarely” = 2, “Occasionally” = 3, “Frequently” = 4, “Very frequently” = 5; with high scores indicating more frequent use of the given technique by participating teachers.
The 58 sub-techniques that came out in the primary version of this instrument were selected based on the hypothesis that they could be of positive effect on learners’ FL motivation if utilized properly in the teaching practices of EFL teachers. These sub-techniques were clustered under different scales/techniques (see Table 3) so as to measure a variety of aspects of teacher motivational practices: developing a positive relationship with students; promoting group cohesiveness; familiarizing learners with the target language culture and related values; presenting learning tasks in stimulating ways; promoting learner’s realistic beliefs, goals, and needs; making learning tasks stimulating; reducing learners’ language anxiety; promoting learners’ self-confidence; and promoting learners’ autonomy.

Learners’ survey
To evaluate learner motivation, a survey (N of items=67) was employed to target some learner motivational variables, such as motivational intensity, linguistic self-confidence, intrinsic motivation, attitudes towards the English teacher, integrative motivation, instrumental motivation, group cohesiveness, learner autonomy, and language anxiety. These variables were selected based on the anticipation that they would be positively affected by the utilization of motivational techniques in foreign language classes. They were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree” with the following values assigned to the rating options: “Strongly disagree” = 1, “Disagree” = 2, “Neither agree nor disagree” = 3, “Agree” = 4, “Strongly agree” = 5. High scores designating high levels of learner motivation (with the exception of the learner anxiety variable, where high scores indicate low levels of learner’s motivation and vice versa). Numerous sources were consulted when constructing this instrument (e.g., AlMaiman, 2005; Alrabai, 2011; Al-Shammary, 1984; Chang, 2005; Clément & Baker, 2001; Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994; Dörnyei, 1994; Gardner, 2010; Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997; Guilloteaux, 2007; Horwitz et al., 1986; Pintrich & Groot, 1990; Schmidt, Boraie, & Kassabgy, 1996; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). This tool was administered in Arabic, the learners’ native language, to eliminate the risk that the limited English competency of some respondents would affect their ability to respond to all questions.

Procedures
Piloting
The questionnaires used in this study were piloted to ten EFL teachers and 86 learners from four institutions in Saudi Arabia. Both the learners and teachers represented a population similar to that of the main study sample, but were not included in the main study. Responding teachers in the pilot study recommended rewording some items in the teachers’ survey such as item 30 to be ‘Find out your students’ needs, goals, and interests and build them into the lesson” instead of ‘Find out your students’ needs, goals, and interests and build them into the teaching curriculum’ as to make it more applicable to the Saudi EFL context, where teachers usually teach English using a ready-made curriculum. These items were reworded accordingly in the final version of the questionnaire survey.

Data collection
As to satisfy research ethics requirements, institutions’ approval and participants’ own consent were sought and granted before the commencement of the study.
The main study was conducted over two semesters of the Saudi academic year (September 2012 - June 2013). On the day of the questionnaire administration, thorough information about the study as well as detailed instructions on how to complete the questionnaire was presented to participants. Each respondent was asked to fill out a demographic information sheet about himself/herself including gender, age, and teaching/learning experience before completing the questionnaire.

Teachers were recruited first. Due to the fact that the majority of those teachers are typically non-native speakers of English, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic to eliminate the risk that foreign language competence would affect participants’ responses. Teachers were provided with the English version and the translated Arabic version of the questionnaire and were asked to respond to either of the two. It took them from 30-40 minutes to finish responding to the whole questionnaire items.

The learner motivation questionnaire was administered next. The researcher administered the questionnaire to students directly in the absence of school teachers/ administrators whose presence might affect students’ responses. Learners were assured that their responses remain entirely confidential and anonymous. The learners required 40-60 minutes to complete the entire questionnaire.

Data analysis
Preliminary data analyses
The out-of-range and missing values in both the teachers’ and learners’ data were checked for and amended as a first step in preliminary analyses. The 51 sub-techniques in the teacher final survey were initially grouped under 9 scales based on their content similarities. This initial grouping followed Cheng and Dörnyei (2007), Dörnyei (2001b), and Dörnyei and Csizér (1998). The internal consistency of the 9 scales was tested by means of a reliability analysis (alpha). For the reliability test, the researcher went in line with what has been suggested in the literature (e.g. Dörnyei, 2001a) that indices with alpha values of .60 and greater are considered reliable. Scale #5 ‘increase learners’ positive goals, realistic beliefs, and needs’, which comprised four items, had an alpha score of .48, and consequently was excluded from main analyses.

An item analysis test was then conducted, revealing the need to discard the following items: ‘encourage learners to personalise the classroom environment according to their taste,’ from scale # 1 (see Table 3); ‘encourage students to apply their English language proficiency in real-life situations’ from scale # 3; and ‘personalize learning tasks’ from scale # 5 because they were found to decrease the alpha coefficients of their scales, if included. Scales with discarded items are marked with ^ in the final version of the survey.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was finally conducted on teachers’ data to identify the underlying components of the scales. The results derived from the factor analysis revealed that all the items in the final version of the survey loaded highly on the scales under which they were initially grouped. The final set of sub-techniques/items along with their techniques/scales is presented in the teacher’s survey in Table 3.

Table 3. Final rank order and descriptive statistics of the techniques/scales and their constituent items/sub-techniques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/item</th>
<th>Develop a positive relationship with your students ^</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>α = .66, M = 3.69, SD= .59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale/item</td>
<td>Familiarize learners with the target language culture and related values $\alpha = .79, M = 3.64, SD = .57$</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Remind students of the benefits of mastering the English language.</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Increase the amount of English language you use in the class.</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Encourage students to use English language outside the classroom.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Promote students to contact with English language speakers and cultural products.</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Encourage students to explore the English language community through the internet.</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Familiarize students with the cultural background of the target language.</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/item</th>
<th>Promote learners’ self-confidence $\alpha = .76, M = 3.41, SD = .78$</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Recognize students’ effort and achievement.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Give students positive feedback and appraisal of their work.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Show students that you have high expectations for what they can achieve.</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Make sure that grades reflect students’ effort and hard work.</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Teach various learning strategies and help students to design their learning strategies.</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Celebrate your students’ success and accomplishments.</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Give students other rewards besides grades.</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/item</th>
<th>Make the learning tasks stimulating $\alpha = .89, M = 3.36, SD = .82$</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Highlight and demonstrate aspects of English language learning that your students are likely to enjoy.</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Select tasks which require involvement from each student.</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Make tasks challenging to involve the students.</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Make the learning tasks more attractive by including novel, humorous, and fantasy elements.</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale/item</td>
<td>Present learning tasks in stimulating ways $^\wedge$</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Provide the students with clear instruction and appropriate techniques about how to do the task.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Guide and assist students until they perform the learning task(s) successfully.</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Make sure students receive sufficient preparation before you start the lesson.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Break the routine of the classroom by varying the presentation format and learning tasks.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Explain the goal of each learning task.</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Use an interesting activity to start the class.</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Raise the students’ expectations of the task outcomes.</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Summarize the lesson outcomes at the end of each lesson.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/item</th>
<th>Promote group cohesiveness and set group norms</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Encourage students to interact, cooperate and share their personal information and thoughts.</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Explain to the students the importance of the class rules and the consequences for violating them.</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Include activities that lead to the successful completion of whole group tasks.</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Divide students into small groups and ask them to work toward a shared goal.</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Allow students to suggest other class rules.</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/item</th>
<th>Reduce learners’ anxiety $^\alpha$</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Design tasks that are within the limits of students’ ability.</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Deal properly with learner’s anxiety-provoking beliefs/misconceptions</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Reduce students’ fear of negative evaluation.</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Reduce students’ communication apprehension.</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Promote cooperation between students instead of competition.</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Reduce fear of language test in learners.</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/item</th>
<th>Promote learners’ autonomy $^\alpha$</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Encourage students to adopt, develop, and apply self-motivating techniques.</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Adopt the role of a facilitator of learning rather than the controller of the class.</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Involve students in classroom discussions.</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Allow students to assess themselves.</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Give students as much choices as possible about their learning by allowing them to give ideas and involving them in planning and running their course program.</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Give students the choice to choose the due dates of course</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Let students have a say in deciding on some of the norms (rules) that run their classroom.

Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, \( \alpha \) = Cronbach alpha coefficient, \(^\wedge\) items were discarded from this scale due to low (<.30) item-total correlations.

The students’ data was also subjected to preliminary statistical analyses, including the internal consistency Cronbach’s alpha, item analysis, explanatory factor analysis (EFA), and normality tests. The final-version instrument suggested that its data was reliable, and normally distributed in all constructs.

Main analyses

The collected data was subjected to descriptive analyses including mean and standard deviation, which were computed to identify teachers’ beliefs and learners’ perceptions about the motivational teaching in Saudi EFL classes. Teachers’ beliefs were identified using the final rank order of the scales/techniques that were rank-ordered based on the participating teachers’ responses in descending order of the mean. Learner motivation was assessed based on learners’ responses using the mean scores of the motivational variables examined in this study.

Results

Teachers’ data findings

Based on the findings derived from the analyses, we used the following classification criteria to categorize teachers’ use of motivational techniques: techniques with a mean value of more than 4 were perceived as frequently used techniques in the classroom; techniques with mean value of 3 to 4 were considered occasionally used techniques; techniques with mean value of less than 3 were considered rarely used techniques. The full classification of techniques is available in Table 4.

Table 4. Perceived frequency of use of motivational techniques by teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of use</th>
<th>Techniques</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequently used</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally used</td>
<td>Most occasionally used techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop a positive relationship with your students.</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Familiarize learners with L2 related values.</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally used</td>
<td>Least occasionally used techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote learners’ self-confidence.</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make the learning tasks stimulating.</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present learning tasks in stimulating and enjoyable ways.</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote group cohesiveness and set group norms.</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely used</td>
<td>Reduce learners’ anxiety.</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote learners’ autonomy.</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mean value of the techniques/scales in this study ranged between 2.91 (out of 5) as a minimum value to 3.69 as the maximum value. This indicates that the frequency of motivational techniques used in Saudi EFL classes ranged from rare (techniques with overall mean scores under 3.00) to occasional (techniques with overall mean scores of 3.00 to 3.69). The occasionally used techniques categorized into two categories: the most occasionally used techniques (M=3.50 to 3.69) and the least occasionally used techniques (M= 3.21 to 3.50). Table 3 shows the final rank order, the descriptive statistics of the techniques/scales, and the constituent sub-techniques of each.

Participating teachers reported that they most occasionally utilize the following two motivational techniques in their EFL classes:

*Develop a positive relationship with your students* (M=3.69, SD=.59) was found to have the highest score of any technique. Participating teachers assumed that they most frequently demonstrate four aspects of teacher motivational behaviour in their EFL teaching practice: the teacher’s commitment toward his/her students’ academic progress (item 1), showing personal warmth, respect, and acceptance to students (items 2, 3, and 7), the teacher’s passion and enthusiasm for teaching English (items 5 and 8), and creating a relaxed and supportive classroom atmosphere (techniques 4 and 6).

*Familiarize learners with the target language culture and related values* (M=3.64, SD=.57) was ranked as the second most occasionally used technique by respondents. It is interesting to notice that informants reported on their use of techniques that target three different sorts of L2 values. Techniques that promote learners’ instrumental values (items 9 and 11) were the ones most occasionally used by teachers, followed by intrinsic values techniques (item 10). Techniques that promote integrative values (items 12, 13, and 14) were the least utilized by teachers due, possibly, to the lower amount of contact that Saudi EFL teachers usually have with the target-group community and culture, which made teachers less interested in techniques that target this domain of values.

Scales 3-6 represented the second group of techniques. Participants perceived that they occasionally utilize these techniques in their classes, but not as most occasionally as techniques 1 and 2, nor as rarely as techniques 7 and 8.

*Promoting learners’ self-confidence* (M=3.41, SD=.78) was perceived by participating teachers as the third occasionally used technique in their EFL classes. The seven sub-techniques in this scale are reflective of four very fundamental aspects of foreign language learner’s self-confidence. These aspects were recognizing students’ accomplishments (items 15, 18, 20, and 21), providing learners with positive motivational feedback (item 16), setting high expectations of students and showing faith in their abilities (items17), and helping students design their own learning strategies (item 19).

*Make the learning tasks stimulating* (M=3.36, SD=.82) was ranked by teachers as the fourth highest-scoring technique in their classes. Participants in the current study acknowledged that they usually make use of different individual techniques to design stimulating and enjoyable learning tasks for their students. These techniques include highlighting and demonstrating aspects of English language learning that students are likely to enjoy (item 22), selecting tasks that require involvement from each student (item 23), making learning tasks challenging (item 24), and making the content of the learning tasks attractive by including novel and humorous elements (item 25).

The fifth rank-ordered technique in this study was *presenting learning tasks in stimulating ways* (M=3.34, SD=.82). Teachers acknowledged the importance of keeping learners
motivated throughout the lesson: at the start of the lesson (items 28, 30, and 31), while working on learning tasks (items 26, 27, 29, and 32), and at the end of the lesson (item 33); items 26 and 27 attracted much of teachers’ attention.

Promote group cohesiveness and set group norms \( (M=3.21, SD=.88) \) was ranked sixth, as the least occasionally used by the participating EFL teachers. Participants reported paying less attention to factors of group dynamics such as group cohesion (items 34, 36, and 37) and group norms (items 35 and 38) in their classes.

Scales 7 and 8 came at the bottom of the ranking list as the rarely used techniques in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia with overall mean scores under 3.00.

Reducing language anxiety is a very crucial issue to learner motivation, as numerous studies’ findings have revealed that more anxious students tend to be less motivated to learn English (see, e.g., Alrabai, 2011; Clément et al., 1994; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Hao, Liu, & Hao, 2004; Liu & Huang, 2011). This has been reported by EFL teachers as rarely used in their classes \( (M=2.95, SD=.91) \). Teachers assumed that they often try to minimize learning tasks difficulty to learners’ ability limits (item 39), and sometimes find ways to deal with the beliefs and misconceptions that learners usually link to learning a foreign language (item 40). Other very important sources that evoke learners’ anxiety in language classes like fear of negative evaluation (item 41), communication apprehension (item 42), competition (item 43), and language test (item 44); appeared, however, to be frequently ignored in participating teachers’ practices. Item 44 ‘reduce fear of language test in learners,’ \( (M=2.08, SD=1.02) \) achieved the lowest mean in the whole survey, reflecting the fact that EFL teachers might regard this technique as not incorporated in their teaching practice.

Despite the importance of promoting learners’ autonomy to increase their motivation (see Brophy, 2004; Deci & Ryan, 2000), promote learners’ autonomy \( (M=2.91, SD=.91) \) was ranked as the most rarely used technique to enhance learners’ motivation in Saudi EFL classes. Participants recognized that they sometimes encourage students to adopt, develop, and apply self-motivating strategies (item #45), but it seems that crucial autonomy-supporting practices such as adopting the role of learning facilitator (technique #46) and involving students in discussions that take place in the classroom (item #47) did not receive high scores from respondents in this study. There are also many other important aspects of learner’s autonomy that appear to be disregarded in teacher’s classes, including allowing students’ self-assessment (item 48), providing learners with some choices and freedom about learning (items 49 and 50), and allowing students to have a say in decision-making in their classes (item 51).

Students’ data findings

Based on their responses, students’ motivational variables could be classified into three levels: the highly rated variables with mean scores of above 4, the moderately rated variables with mean values of 3 to 4, and the low rated variables with mean values under 3. The ratings of these variables are presented in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Students’ ratings of motivational variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of rating</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly-rated variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327
www.awej.org
Moderately-rated variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards English language teacher</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group cohesiveness</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistics self-confidence</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational intensity</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Low-rated variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners’ language anxiety</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners’ autonomy</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Instrumental orientation* (M=4.18) and *integrative orientation* (M=4.02) have been highly rated by students, indicating that participating students possess substantial reserves of these orientations (see Table 6).

**Table 6. Descriptive statistics for the motivational variables in students’ questionnaire and their items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable/item</th>
<th>Instrumental orientation [\alpha = .83, M = 4.18, SD= .77]</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Studying English is important because it will be useful in</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>getting a good job.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Studying English is important because I need it to pass</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English exams and graduate from the school/college.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Studying English is important because I will be able to</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>search for information and materials or chatting with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>people in English on the internet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Studying English is important because I like to travel</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to countries where English is used.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Studying English is important because it will help</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>me to continue my studying in the future in an English-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>speaking country like America, Britain, or Australia.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable/item</th>
<th>Integrative orientation [\alpha = .86, M = 4.02, SD= .85]</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Studying English is important because I will be able to</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interact more easily with speakers of English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Studying English is important because I will be able to</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>know the life of the English-speaking nations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Studying English is important because it will allow me to</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>have English-speaker friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Studying English is important because it will allow me to</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>better understand and appreciate English art and literature.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable/item</th>
<th>Intrinsic motivation [\alpha = .79, M = 3.68, SD= .74]</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>My goal of learning English is far more than just</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11 I wouldn’t study English if I didn’t have to. 4.03 .71
12 Learning English is a boring activity for me. 4.01 .71
13 I would like to continue to learn English even after I leave this school/college. 3.86 .76
14 I would study English even if it were not required by this school/university. 3.83 .76
15 I am enjoying learning English this semester. 3.61 .73
16 When English classes end, I often wish they would continue. 2.40 .77

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable/item</th>
<th>Attitudes towards English language teacher</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>My English teacher criticizes me when I give wrong answers in the classroom.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>My English teacher is hesitant and unconfident.</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>If I do well in English this semester, it is because of the efforts and the fascinating teaching style of my English teacher.</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>My English teacher is insincere.</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>My English teacher is helpful.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>My English teacher encourages and inspires me to give my best efforts to learning.</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I rely a lot on my English teacher to do learning tasks.</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>My English teacher is considerate.</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>My English teacher compliments me when I give a correct answer in the classroom.</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>My English teacher tolerates his students’ mistakes.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>My English teacher is approachable.</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>My English teacher is linguistically competent.</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>The teaching style of my English teacher is unclear and confusing.</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>My English teacher believes in my abilities to succeed in this course.</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable/item</th>
<th>Group cohesiveness</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>My classmates show respect to each other.</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>My classmates are friendly.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>My classmates cooperate with each other in class.</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>My classmates are inconsiderate.</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>I believe that we represent a coherent group of learners in English class.</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>I rely on my classmates when doing learning tasks.</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>I feel that learners in our class are stimulated to learn English.</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable/item</th>
<th>Linguistics self-confidence</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Motivational Practices</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>I often experience a feeling of success in my English classes.</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>I feel I am making progress in English.</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>I believe I will receive good grades in English.</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>I am worried about my ability to do well in English this semester.</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>In English lessons, I usually understand what to do and how to do it.</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>I can master hard learning tasks in English class.</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Motivational intensity</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>I have been working hard to learn English this semester.</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>I have been paying close attention to and actively participating in the class discussion.</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>I have been spending a lot of time at home working on my English assignments and preparing for the coming lessons.</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I haven’t spent sufficient time working on my English homework.</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>I haven’t been participating enough in discussions that take place in our English class.</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Learners’ language anxiety</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>I am usually at ease (comfortable) during tests in my English language class this semester.</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>I feel worried about the consequences of failing my language class this semester.</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>I feel confident when I speak in English in my language class this semester.</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in English this semester.</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class this semester.</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>I can feel my heart pounding when I’m going to be called on in language class.</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in any other classes this semester.</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class this semester.</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>I am afraid that the other students in the class will laugh at me when I speak in English.</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make in class this semester.</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Motivational Practices in English as a Foreign Language

Fakieh Alrabai

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>α = .71, M = 2.85, SD = .75</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>I set clear goals for myself for learning English this semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>I set clear strategies for myself for achieving my goals of learning English this semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>The ideas and suggestions I offer in English class are usually welcomed by my English teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>I usually take part in choosing the activities that we do in English class this semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>I easily express my own ideas and participate in the discussions that take part in our English class this semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Most students don’t participate in the discussions that take place in our English class this semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>I take part in deciding due dates for assignments and exams in our English course this semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>I feel that other students take part in English class discussions much more than me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>I take part in deciding on the content of our English course this semester.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, α = Cronbach alpha coefficient.

As can be seen in Table 6, intrinsic motivation (M = 3.68), attitudes toward English language teacher (M = 3.67), group cohesiveness (M=3.60), and linguistic self-confidence (M=3.51); achieved moderately high rankings as components of learner motivation. Motivational intensity (M=3.14) which denotes the efforts learners exert in learning the L2 was a low moderately-ranked motivational component. The figures in Table 6 show that the concepts of learner anxiety (M=2.88), and learner autonomy (M=2.85) achieved the lowest ratings as components of learner motivation.

Discussion

Teachers’ perceptions of their motivational practices matched student’s beliefs of their actual motivation in most variables in this study. Teachers perceived having positive relationship with learners, the technique they most occasionally utilize for motivating language learners (M = 3.69). Learners, on the other side, demonstrated moderate positive attitudes toward their language teachers (M = 3.67). These quite consistent ratings of both teachers and learners of this variable indicate that the positive behaviours teachers demonstrate to learners usually have positive impacts on their motivation. This finding is in line with the findings of most of previous studies like that of Chambers (1999), Cheng and Dörnyei (2007), Dörnyei and Csizér (1998), and Dörnyei’s (2001b, p. 120) who confirm that “[a]lmost everything a teacher does in the classroom has a motivational influence on students, which makes teacher behaviour the most powerful motivational tool.”

Teachers have ranked familiarizing learners with the values associated with language learning as the second most occasionally used technique in their classes (M=3.64) which matches the high ratings that learners assigned to instrumental and integrative orientations (M=4.18, 4.02; respectively). Previous research has demonstrated that familiarising learners with L2 culture and
related values does have a positive motivating effect on learners (see, e.g., Dörnyei, 2001a, 2001b; Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; among others).

Many previous studies that investigated the role of L2 motivation in the Saudi EFL context (e.g. Al-Otaibi, 2004; Alrabai, 2007; Al-Shamary, 1984) found that Saudi EFL learners are instrumentally motivated in the first place. This fact was confirmed by the high mean values that this variable scored in this study. It appears that participating teachers used to reinforce the originally-existing high values of this variable in their learners, which resulted in high levels of instrumental motivation for participating students. The relatively higher ranking of instrumental than integrative motivation generally supports the view that the ‘instrumental motivation’ type plays a more prominent role in foreign language contexts where learners have little or no interest in the target-language culture, and few or no opportunities to interact with its members than the ‘integrative’ type (Ellis, 1994).

Teachers perceived that they least-occasionally utilize other techniques like promoting learners’ self-confidence, making learning tasks stimulating, presenting tasks in stimulating ways, and promoting group cohesiveness and norms.

Participating teachers recognized the importance of promoting learners’ self-confidence and assumed integrating it into their teaching practice. This recognition is in line with what is established in literature that students’ perceptions of their own abilities has a fundamental effect on the amount of effort they exert on learning (see e.g., Clément et al., 1994; Dörnyei, 1994; Good & Brophy, 1994). Teachers further went in line with what is well-emphasized in many different areas like psychology and education (see Dörnyei, 2001b; Raffini, 1996) that making learning tasks stimulating is a vital method for inspiring learner motivation.

It has been increasingly recognized in literature (e.g. Clément et al., 1994; Dörnyei, 1994; Dörnyei, 2001a, 2001b; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003) that learner groups can be a substantial source of motivation to learn an L2; and that group-based motives such as group cohesion and group norm usually influence learners’ motivation considerably. There are, however, many challenges that confront creating a cohesive group of EFL learners in the Saudi context. Teachers in this context typically work under the pressure of the density of the pre-scribed EFL curriculum that generates their fear of not being able to cover the whole syllabus on time. This forces them to follow the traditional Grammar-Translation Method (Al-Maini, 2006) and to ignore communicative teaching; which in turn eliminates the chances for creating cooperative learning among learners. Another barrier for generating cooperating learning and therefore cohesiveness among learners in the Saudi EFL classes is the phenomenon of overcrowded EFL classes. Tinto (1998) emphasized that large classes have been linked to a decline in learner motivation for studying because students in these classes feel as if they have been discouraged from asking questions, communicating with other students or approaching their teachers.

There was a large drop in the mean score of the “promoting group cohesiveness” scale because of the low mean of item 38 in teachers’ survey, ‘Allow students to suggest other class rules’ (M=2.79, SD=.99). Teachers reported that they very rarely use this technique due to the fact that in such a controlled environment as the Saudi EFL setting, the rules used to run classrooms are normally imposed by education institutions, which is a real barrier that would make it inapplicable for the EFL teachers to effectively utilize this technique in the Saudi context.

The ranking of the above least occasionally utilized techniques matches the moderate ratings learners assigned to some of their motivational variables that could be an output of utilizing these motivational techniques like intrinsic motivation, group cohesiveness, linguistics self-confidence, and motivational intensity.
The ranking that teachers provided to reducing learners’ anxiety (M=2.95), and promoting their autonomy (M=2.91) as rarely used techniques in their classes largely matches learners’ high levels of language anxiety (M=2.88) and low autonomy levels (M=2.85).

The reasons behind the high level of anxiety held by Saudi learners of English as a foreign language are multifaceted. This phenomenon could be attributed to several causes, including the misconceptions usually linked to learning English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. Other contributing factors could be the threatening classroom atmosphere in which learners’ errors are not tolerated (Tanveer, 2007); the lack of the learners’ involvement in class discussion and decision-making; the competitive atmosphere for learning, where learners work against each other instead of cooperating; the overcrowded EFL classes, which generate a real obstacle to the proper involvement of learners; the ready-made EFL curriculum that often cares for the quantity rather than the quality of the content; the strict classroom rules imposed by schools in Saudi Arabia, which do not allow learners to experience sufficient freedom and therefore evoke feelings of anxiety. All of these obstacles generally limit the teachers’ opportunities to expose their students to anxiety-reducing techniques in their classes.

The very low mean score attained by item 44, ‘reduce fear of language test in learners’ (M=2.08, SD=1.02), could be ascribed to the fact that teachers themselves have no choice but to follow the typical assessment procedures in Saudi EFL context that primarily depend on written tests to evaluate the learners’ progress in the English language (Tanveer, 2007). These procedures place great pressure on teachers to deal with learners’ fears about their assessments, which appeared a difficult task for most participating teachers to handle.

There are many reasons that could justify the rare utilization of techniques that promote learners’ autonomy as perceived by teachers in this study. Benson (2000) and Good and Brophy (1994) assumed that students in formal school setting are usually provided with very few opportunities to exercise autonomy in the practice of learning and that schools could not be therefore considered the best place to support learners’ autonomy. Warden and Lin (2000) furthermore have argued that a teacher is not seen as a facilitator of learning but as a presenter of knowledge in countries with a history of obedience to authority. This is true in the Saudi context where the teacher there is regarded as an autocratic and authoritarian figure who is seen as the main source of knowledge and the ultimate controller of the class rather than a democratic leader and facilitator of learning (see Ehrman & Dörnyei, 1998, pp. 159-162) for explanations about these two leadership styles). As a result of the EFL teacher’s authoritative personality in the Saudi context, many aspects of student’s autonomy are usually ignored in the process of learning and learners in that context are most often regarded as passive and merely observers in class. In his conclusions about the teacher-student interaction in EFL classes in Saudi Arabia, Arishi (1984) clarified that students are rarely asked to bring in their own ideas in the target language and teachers rarely use students’ ideas extensively. Al-Otaibi (2004) explained that Saudi EFL learners have no choices about the content that they study, as it is prescribed by a rigid curriculum. It is no surprise then that under such conditions in the Saudi EFL context, it is probably hard for techniques concerning learner autonomy to be implemented properly in that context.

The teachers’ ranking of techniques for reducing learners’ anxiety and promoting autonomy contradicts their ranking for other techniques like developing a positive relationship with learners and promoting learners’ self-confidence, which they perceived as occasionally utilized in their teaching practices. Beside language anxiety being a component of learner’s self-confidence (Clément et al., 1994; Dörnyei, 1996), it is well-acknowledged that having a friendly
relationship with students and supporting their self-confidence for learning usually results in diminishing their apprehension of language learning and greatly enhances their autonomy to learn. This contradiction could be attributed to the possible subjectivity of teachers’ responses to some of the survey items. The same inconsistency appears in learners’ ratings when they reported having a positive view of their teachers while reporting high levels of anxiety and low levels of autonomy at the same time. As previously mentioned that Saudi students are accustomed to adhering to authority, it could be that it is a cultural value for students to report a positive attitude toward any authority figure, in this case a teacher, and that such a cultural value inherently created a systematic issue in learners’ survey results. In this regard, one limitation for the current study to be acknowledged concerns the lack of triangulation, as the only instruments used to collect data were self-report questionnaires. Using classroom observations seems necessary to validate teachers’ claims that they do use specific motivational techniques in their classes, and also to evaluate learners’ in-class motivation. Another significant limitation is that the findings of this study remain unrevealing with regard to how teachers’ use of motivational techniques would affect learners’ actual achievement in the foreign language. This could be in fact an interesting future point of research to investigate. A third limitation of this research is that it focuses entirely on frequency of utilizing motivational techniques, and overlooks other important factors such as intensity and extent of these techniques. For example, a teacher may spend the first minute of the class doing an icebreaker game and categorize that as one action in the “reduce learner’s anxiety” technique, however that teacher may need to spend a few minutes rather than just one minute to break the ice before a student in a speaking class feels comfortable speaking in front of the group. Thus, while we believe that the methodology that solely considers frequency is valuable, the results of a research of this kind cannot be generalized across the other areas, and that further research into other important areas like intensity and duration of implementation of motivational techniques could be beneficial.

Conclusions, implications, and recommendations

Motivational techniques have been found to be occasionally or rarely used by participating EFL teachers in this study. Teachers assumed that they most occasionally demonstrate behaviours in class by which they try to develop positive relationships with their students and as well employ a variety of techniques to familiarize learners with the values and culture of the target language and its community. Respondents indicated that they least occasionally make use of some techniques to find ways to promote learners’ self-confidence, make learning tasks stimulating and enjoyable to students, attempt to present learning tasks in inspiring ways, and promote learners’ cohesiveness in the language classroom. Respondents have, on the other hand, showed that they rarely utilize motivational techniques that reduce learners’ feelings of language anxiety and support their autonomy in language classes. Participating students reported high levels of instrumental and integrative motivations, and moderate levels of intrinsic motivation, self-confidence, positive attitudes toward their English teachers, and motivational intensity. They, conversely, reported low levels of autonomy and high levels of anxiety when learning English.

The current study appears to be of particular value to the EFL learning/teaching environment in Saudi Arabia. It contributed in identifying some of the aspects of learners’ motivations that teachers usually care for in their teaching practice, and, on the other side, the other motivational aspects that are usually ignored in current pedagogy. These implications might improve teachers’ motivational practices, which could enhance learners’ motivation, and
thus improve learning outcomes for an EFL cohort notorious for its lack of motivation and success.

This study suggests a number of recommendations for EFL teachers, EFL learners, EFL curriculum designers, and academic institutions in Saudi Arabia. The study recommends that EFL instructors should care for their students’ motivation by demonstrating proper personal and teaching behaviours in the classroom. Teachers have to pay special attention to students’ autonomy by granting them more control over their learning and involving them in decision-making like determining their test dates and the dates that their assignments are due. They should support their students rather than be controlling or demanding. Moreover, teachers should go beyond the fixed curriculum and the traditional methods of EFL teaching, and involve as many motivational techniques as possible in their teaching.

This study advises that Saudi EFL learners should be aware of the feelings and beliefs they experience when learning English. In this regard, learners have to recognize their irrational beliefs, fears, and feelings in order to be able to interpret them in more realistic ways. They have to talk openly with their teachers about the nature of these feelings and beliefs and to be aware that most learners usually feel uncomfortable, uneasy, and apprehensive in FL classrooms and that such feeling are common in most of the language learners and they are not associated with any particular individual.

This study advises that curriculum designers in Saudi Arabia are to design the EFL curriculum in ways that allow for the utilization of motivational techniques to take place in language classes. EFL curriculum content should be built on what students see as important, not on what designers think is important. In this regard, there should be clear and effective ways to connect the content of learning tasks to students’ interests, needs, goals, experiences, daily life activities, and real-world situations. In addition, learning tasks should contain novel, attractive, and humorous elements that arouse students’ curiosity to learn. The designed tasks should be within students’ limits of ability in order to reduce their anxiety of failure and instead boost their confidence in successful completion of these tasks. There should be tasks into the curriculum that encourage cooperative learning where students work collaboratively and exchange personal experiences and knowledge. The quality rather than the quantity of the curriculum content should be cared for when designing the curriculum. Designers should try to reduce the density of the EFL curriculum content in a way that diminishes fears that teachers will not be able to cover the whole content on time and provide them with sufficient chances to make use of motivational techniques in their classes.

Academic institutions in Saudi Arabia have to grant both teachers and students freedom to run classes using their own ways in order to eliminate the strict institutional norms they usually impose. These institutions are strongly encouraged to find practical solutions for the phenomenon of overcrowded EFL classes as to enable teachers to properly integrate motivational techniques in their teaching practices. Institutions should involve teachers in pre-service and in-service training programs in which they are exposed to extensive instruction on how to use motivational techniques in the language classes.

About the author:
Dr. Fakieh Alrabai is an assistant professor of Applied Linguistics at the Faculty of Arts, Muhayel Aseer branch, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. Dr. Alrabai is the author of many books and journal articles that deal with issues in the areas of foreign language motivation and
language anxiety. Some of the articles authored by Dr. Alrabai are published in highly-ranked Applied Linguistics journals like *Applied Linguistics*, and *Language Learning*.

**References**


Factors Influencing Jordanian EFL Students’ Choice of a University

Turki Ahmad A. Diab Bani-Khaled
Department of Linguistics
Faculty of Foreign Languages
University of Jordan

Abstract:
This study aimed at identifying the reasons behind choosing a university by Jordanian undergraduate EFL students. A random sample of (425) male and female students were invited to answer a web-survey question: "What are your reasons for choosing the university in which you are learning English now?" The participating students were all Jordanian first and second year level enrolled in undergraduate English Language and Literature programs during the academic year 2012-2013 in five major state universities in the country. The written responses were analyzed thematically and the major reasons for selecting a university for learning English were identified and ranked in order of importance. The results showed that choosing a university in Jordan for learning English is influenced by (12) factors. The basic factors that received most importance were reputation of the institution; cultural and social considerations; family role; location of institution; learning opportunities; academic staff; employability and future plans. Other marginal factors were found to be campus beauty, size and safety; availability of specialization; experience of other students; personal interest in the language; and type of institution.

Keywords: factors; English; university; Jordan; students; higher education; EFL
Introduction

There is now more demand on higher education than any time in the past, particularly in developing countries such as Jordan. In fact, in a country that is regarded as poor in natural resources, higher education becomes a straightforward way out to boost the ailing economy. Therefore, increasing pressure is being exerted on universities to accommodate more students and adjust to standards of quality assurance. The number of students attending universities in Jordan has increased from (77841) to (218900) within the period between 2001 and 2007. The average rate of students joining higher education institutions reached 40% which is more than the regional average. More public universities were opened and now Jordan has ten state universities. Also, the rate of students attending private universities has increased recently. Between the years 2000-2006 the rate of joining the twelve private universities reached (18 %) annually where the numbers jumped from (36642) to (55744). At the same time, the rate of students attending community colleges declined from (30.000) to (26215). This shows more demand on university education in the country. It is expected that the number of university students would reach 92000 annually with the year 2013 where it was (50469) students in 2005 at the undergraduate level. (Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2007, from Wikipedia).

The decision to select a particular institution of higher education is by no means a simple task. In fact, it could turn to be a complex process. This is because of the very wide range of options that may be available in varying degrees. We also observe that colleges and universities have become more competitive in their recruitment of potential students. Even in big public universities, students have to pay considerable fees for their education which led to changes in the way university education is largely viewed. Going to college has become now an enterprise and the students are seen as consumers. This may complicate the process of selecting a university or a particular specialization. Therefore, we can assume the decision to join a particular university or program as a problem facing students and their families. University education is not an end in itself. It is rather a means to achieve personal goals. Therefore, any university degree is bound to be judged by the relative degree of its marketability. This is important because policy makers need insights into the needs and expectations of students and their sponsors. Better program designs can result on the basis of such insights.

Research Problem

The selection criteria pertaining to university study deserves continuous research. This is because many variables may come in contact. The complexity of deciding to enter a certain university or program may arise from the many factors that one can think of. In fact, we may conceive the issue as academic, social, cultural, or even financial. This study aims to identify possible important factors that may guide or influence the choice a particular higher learning institution for learning English in Jordan. The idea for this research came as a response to a casual spontaneous statement made by one of my students in a writing course. The statement was: "I really had a really hard time picking a university to study in". The statement provoked me to investigate the issue further by attempting to understand factors that guide EFL students in choosing a university for studying English.

There is a clear gap in the EFL literature, especially with reference to the Jordanian context, as too how or why students select institutions of higher education. Therefore, it is hoped that this research prompts other researchers to widen the scope of their research interests to include criteria and factors influencing language learners' choices of academic institutions in
pursuit of their aspirations. The question of the study was formulated as follows: What are the possible factors that may drive Jordanian EFL college students in their selection of a university?

**Literature Review**

The subject of higher education institutions choice criteria has received considerable research attention. Beswick (1989) surveyed (227) freshmen using a questionnaire in Alberta. The findings showed that parents were the most influential persons affecting the process. Important variables in the choice of a university among the students included the image of the university and the program in addition to the location of the institution and the kind of courses offered.

Similarly, Kallio (1995) reported that graduate students' decisions to select a university were influenced by criteria such as "residency status, quality and other academic environment characteristics, work-related concerns, spouse considerations, financial aid, and the campus social environment". On the other hand, (Price et al. 2003) pointed out that the choice of a university is influenced by factors such as facilities provided.

Catley (2004) found that the reputation of the course was so important in deciding where to apply in the case of law students. Other considerations in the choice of a course were entry requirements and quality of teaching. In addition, the study indicated that "the position of the university in league tables, the attractiveness of the university campus and the quality of the sports, library and computing facilities" were significant variables. Interestingly, the students showed interest in factors such as the university location, city attractiveness, and the quality of nightlife. Moreover, the study showed that the proximity of the university to the student’s home was an important factor. In addition, there was an effect coming from recommendations by friends, family, school or the career office.

Pimpa (2004) investigated career choices among Thai students in relation to family effects. The family was shown to have influences in relation to variables such as "finance, information, expectation, persuasion, and competition". On the other hand, Anderson et al. (2006) considered the effect of role model practitioners and career counseling on pharmacy students’ choice of pharmacy. A sample of (463) students participated in a survey and the results showed that most of the students said they received encouragement to pursue pharmacy. It was found that most often a family member or friend provided the encouragement. The students were also frequently encouraged by pharmacists or pharmacy students to study pharmacy. Potential earning power was found to be a factor for a majority of students. However, career-day events appeared to have a minimal effect on student choices.

Maringe (2006) analyzed factors affecting students' choice of university in the Southampton University Partnership Scheme. The survey involved (387) students and the results indicated that the students were adopting a rather 'consumerist approach' in their selection of a university. It may be interesting to note that factors such as employment and career prospects were significantly preferred over interest in the subject.

Further insights may be found in Kankey and Quarterman (2007) who examined choice factors among softball players. They collected data through a questionnaire covering (196) students in the state of Ohio. The results showed that softball players’ choice of a college or university were affected by availability of "academic program, head coach, career opportunities after graduation, social atmosphere of the team, and the amount of financial aid". Less important factors included "friends, affiliation of the university, media coverage, Web site, sponsorships, high school coach, and ethnic or gender ratio of the university".
Keshishian et al. (2007) assessed the choice of major in pharmacy vs. non-pharmacy college undergraduate students enrolled in St. John's University (Jamaica, NY). Variables analyzed included gender and cultural background. However, the results section in the abstract did not actually include any outcomes as most of it was detailing methodology. The Canadian context may be seen through the study of Wang (2009) who surveyed (600) international students in Canadian universities. The study concluded that factors influencing students' choice of university varied according to different regions. Furthermore, Trend (2009) studied influences on future UK higher education students' perceptions and educational choices across Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences. Factors relating to family and social class were reported to exert a dominant influence on students' choices.

Afful-Broni, and Noi-Okwei, (2010) reported on undergraduate students of selecting university education in a Sub-Saharan African University and argued that the selecting a particular institution of higher learning is not for the individual alone but also the whole of Ghana as a nation. Another African study is Semela (2010) who investigated the choice of Physics among university students in Ethiopia. It was found that "enrolment in physics was the lowest and applicants who were assigned to the physics undergraduate programs were those whose mean score in Ethiopian National Higher Education Entrance Examination was the lowest compared to any other group".

Hua-Li et al. (2010) found that discipline of study had only little impact on Taiwanese and Norwegian students' preferences. Moreover, the results showed that personal advice was most preferred factor among Taiwanese students when choosing university. On the other hand, Ming (2010) explored students’ college choice decision in Malaysia. Factors affecting choice of a university included "location, academic program, college reputation, educational facilities, cost, and availability of financial aid, employment opportunities, advertising, higher education institutions' representatives and campus visits."

Also, Blackburn (2011) identified five factors influencing college choice and these were: "repute, syllabus, quality, facilities and career". Similarly, Tin et al. (2011) examined households’ criteria in selecting higher education institutions in Malaysia. Factors significant in choice decision were identified as: "financial aid, safety of the campus, academic reputation, university image and accommodation". Further, the study emphasized three dimensions in explaining the decision criteria of Malaysian households. These were: personal factors, socialization and campus, program and cost."

On the other hand, Lee and Chatfield (2011) analyzed factors affecting choice of college by hotel management students in the USA. The results indicated factors such as school characteristics, financial aid, degree benefit, environment, facilities, family support, aspirations, cost, career preparation, and media. Within the UK context, Rodrigues et al. (2011) reported on factors that influence student pursuit of science careers and in particular variables such as the gender, ethnicity, family and friends. The study examined (536) Scottish pupils' perceptions regarding intention to choose careers in science in relation to factors such as family, friends, gender and ethnicity. The results revealed that the most significant factor influencing pupils' career choices in Scotland was perception of whether parents wanted them to select a career in science.

Moreover, Law and Yuen (2012) examined choice of accounting among students in Hong Kong. The results showed that parental influence was the most significant factor in selecting accounting as major. Intrinsic interest was found to be the second most important influencing factor in choosing accounting. Furthermore, Shahid et al. (2012) used a qualitative
approach through in-depth interviews. The study found that word of mouth was very influential. The least important factor in the process of selecting a university seemed to be the factor of marketing and advertisement.

Recently, Oon and Subramaniam (2013) examined school students' in Singapore in terms of their intentions to study physics. The study involved 1076 physics students selected from 16 secondary schools and junior colleges. The results revealed that physics was perceived as a difficult subject. The students viewed school physics as relevant. Also, the students viewed their physics teachers as a strong factor in fostering interest in physics. The students valued highly the role of lab work, 'enrichment' activities, and textbooks in encouraging them to develop a liking for physics. It was also reported that the students perceived parents and peers at school as having negative attitudes towards physics.

Finally, Jafari and Aliesmaili (2013) researched factors influencing the selection of a university by high school students in Iran. Findings showed that economic factors, university related factors, personal factors, and social factors influence student's choice of university respectively.

Having reviewed previous research in this field, it comes as a surprise that the EFL context, particularly in the Arab and Jordanian contexts, has actually received no attention by researchers as to the question: What affects EFL university students' choice of a university for learning English? It appears to be a case of neglect that requires immediate response.

Method

(500) male and female first and second year university students in Jordanian state universities who were enrolled in undergraduate bachelor English language and literature programs were asked via a web survey (using face-book and emails) to answer the question: What are your reasons for choosing the university in which you are learning English now? The sample was randomly selected to represent five major public universities in the country. The students' responses were collected by email. Students were told about the purpose of the research and were told that their answers would be treated confidentially. The responses rate was (85 %). The number of students who responded was (425). The students' answers came in writing as short answers to the research question. The written statements were analyzed manually and were categorized thematically. Frequencies and percentages were counted for each factor influencing students' decisions to select a university for learning English. The factors were ranked in order of importance measured by percentage of students identifying them. Interesting and significant quotations were selected as illustrative examples. Names of individual universities were kept anonymous so that no comparisons can be made.

Results

The data in this study revealed the types of factors that guided the target EFL students in selecting a university of their higher education. In what follows, the major criteria or factors behind choosing a university for studying English are listed in accordance to relative importance. This ranking is measured by the number and percentage of students who mentioned the particular factor in their reports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Ranked factors influencing EFL students' choice of a university</th>
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<td>Percentage</td>
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Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327
Factor 1: Reputation of the Institution

The great majority of the students (n= 400; 94.11%) focused on the reputation of the academic institution as the number one factor that impacts choice of a university for learning English. The students written statements stressed the image of the university. This is shown in the name and history of the institution. All statements on this factor were grouped for a thematic and key word analysis. The results show clearly a strong inclination to choose a university with a name in the society. A number of key words were frequently used by the students highlighting this factor.

The following key words are illustrative examples:
"reputation; great; mother university; respectful; number one; ancient; oldest; international; nice; best; famous; strongest; hard to enter; perfect; good; most important; well known; excellent; precious". The following are but some illustrative quotations:
"And known as the strongest in teaching English specially"
"The certifi mate from the University of ... is different from other Universete"
"University of .......... is a unique educational university"
"People from the hole world join it to study in this precious university"
"It contains on a great crow of professors that give the university richness like no other"
"I attended University of .... for what it had graduated of an excellent students. Doctors, engeneers and many other specialisest"
"Because I am in the oldest and ancient university"
"It is one of the respectful universities"
"I attended University of .... for what it had graduated of an excellent students. Doctors, engeneers and many other specializest"

Factor 2: Cultural and Social Interaction

The second factor in ranking (n=378; 88.94%) was cultural and social interaction opportunities that the campus provides. The EFL students see the university as a venue for socializing and interacting with other people. The key words / phrases that were used in reference to this factor were as follows:
Meet; share; cultures; see; friends; be together; hangout; people; foreign students;
Illustrating this factors were expressions and statements like this:
"Learn about other cultures"
"To meet my friends"
"Share daily gossip with them’
"See a lot of people"
"A lot of my friends from the school chose this university so we can be together"
"To meet my friends and hangout with them"
"To know different thing about other cultures"
(always in the faculty many foreign students that we can stand with them and improve our languages ...benefits from their experience in their culture."
"also have a very cultural stuff of workers that we can get knowledge and beneficts from them"

**Factor 3: Family**

Coming third was the factor of family involvement in the selection process of a university for learning English. This factor received (n=366; 86.11%) of the total number of students. The key words or phrases that were identified in connection with this factor were: mother; family; relatives; parents; and father. The following quotations may serve as good examples of this factor:

"My mother worked here for 20 years"
"My relatives told me about how beautiful it is"
"My family attend me to the ...(name of University)"
"My parents want from me to go the university to be a girl who has a good education"
"My family hope to me to attend this university"
"Since I was a kid, I kept coming to the University with my mother, she studied English Literature. That’s why I am here now studying what I love and where I always dreamed of."
"My mom used always to tell me about her experience in (...) The friends she made...The adventures she been through...How she worked hard to get a good average"
"My mother and my father entered it.... I saw their education is very strong so I started thinking to enter it"
"My all family learned in this university."
"My father told me you should to study in university of...."

**Factor 4: Location**

The fourth factor in ranking was the location of the university, particularly with reference to the place of living of the student's family. The number of students who mentioned this factor in their statements was (n=352; 82.82%). Many key words indicated this factor such as: close; my houses; place; home; Amman; located; far; near; away from; place. In what follows, some statements are quoted to illustrate the location factor:

"Close to my house"
"It placed in Amman"
"It located close to my home"
"Not far from my home"
"The nearest to my home"
"Near my home"
"because I wanted to study away from my family"
"near to my home"
"It is very near from my place of living"

**Factor 5: Learning Opportunities**
Interest in knowledge and education at the university level came as factor number 5. This factor received (n=334; 78.58%) of the total sample. This was reflected in a number of key words which were frequently used by the students to indicate this variable in their choice of a university. Examples of these key words / phrases are: learn; information; expand; get knowledge; increase; study; new things; good education; enhance; know more. The following are illustrative quotations:

"Teaching me lessons like how to manage things in my life and solve problems"
"Expand my information"
"Learn new things"
"I have always wanted to know more"
"Have knowledge"
"I can get knowledge"
"To learn"
"Increase my knowledge in everything"
"study and learn new things"
"I want good education that can enhance my knowledge"

Factor 6: Academic Staff

Coming in sixth place was the reputation of the academic staff of the university. This factor was mentioned by (n=310; 72.94%) of the participating students. The key words / phrases that indicated this factor were: teachers; doctors; people; efficient; professors; and best. The following are some illustrative examples:

"Has strong teachers."
"The teachers make the student strong and full of knowledge."
"Amazing people to deal with"
"Efficient doctors"
"The doctors...At (...) are well known"
"Most people know it contains the best doctors as well."
"Has good professors."
"They have good method to teach students"
"It has a great professors and management"

Factor 7: Employability and Future Plans

The seventh factor affecting choice of university was the degree to which the institution is marketable in the labor market. Students wrote about their plans for the future and mentioned how their university education is influenced by this criterion. This factor was mentioned by (n=295; 69.41%) of the sample. Many key words / phrases realized this factor: These were: finish; successful; weapon; plan; achieve; goals; graduation; career; future; want to be; aims; interview; employment; job; and companies. The following are some quotations that show how the students were thinking while selecting a university.

"Finish the master degree successfully"
"To be a doctor in this university"
"I want to be a successful girl"
"I think the certificate with the girl or lady as a weapon in her hand"
"After graduation, I can start my life as what I planned"
"To help me achieve my goals"
"And for my carrier in future"
"Then get a good job in future"
"I have an aims which I want to achieve it in my life"
"I want to be a journalist on the future"
"When I graduate I will work fast because I am in (name of University)"
"At the interview the viewers going to ask me about from where I graduated because half the percentage of employment depend on that."
"To help me to find a job"
"And all companies accept you to work with them if you are graduated from it"

Marginal Factors
Receiving less attention by the students were other factors such as campus (size, beauty, safety) (n=233; 54.82%); availability of specialization (n=210; 49.41); experiences of other students (n=%), interest in the English language (n=%), and type of university (public vs. private) (n=%). The students used expressions such as the following:

**Campus** (size, beauty, safety): (n=233; 54.82%)
"Beautiful from inside"
"The green trees"
"My relatives told me about how beautiful it is"
"attractive views and trees...we can set under them, relax after the stress of the lectures and exams"
"there is no strikes and fights in it"
"they will be safe in this university"
"big university"
"The largest one in Amman"

**Availability of Specialization**: (n=210; 49.41)
"I was accepted in the specialization which I want"
"The major that I want to study exists exclusively at (Name of university)"
"It has many majors"
"It has the specialty that I wanted to study"
"It teaches several courses such as scientific and literature branches"

**Experiences of Other Students**: (n=150; 35.29%)
"I asked a lot of universities students about this, most of them advised me to apply to the University of......"

**Personal Interest in English**: (n=135; 31.76%)
"I like to learn foreign language and English language"
"I wanted to learn English more and more"
"The English language is very important for me"
"now studying what I love"
"I love my foreign languages"

**Type of University** (public vs. private): (n=95; 22.35%)
"I don’t want to enter a private university."
"public university is lower fees."
"Government university is more respectful."
Discussion

The literature review indeed revealed many insights with reference to particular countries or subject specializations. It is surprising that none of the previous studies reviewed pertains to English as a major. It is also strange that neither in Jordan nor in other Arab contexts this kind of research has been attempted. This study seems to be the first of its kind in Jordan in relation to the EFL situation. The factors governing students' choice of a university are reported in this study in a ranking order. The methodology adopted here is qualitative utilizing students' perceptions of factors as expressed in written short reports. As the pressure is increasing for quality higher education in the country, it becomes essential to know how decisions are made regarding university choice. There are certainly a complex host of variables that come in mind when a student or family considers the path for further learning. In this research, the criteria behind choosing a university for learning English are explored by directly asking the students enrolled in EFL programs to report on their own reasons to join a particular institution of higher education. Many students said in their reports that the selection of a place to learn for higher education is not an easy process. They see the choice of a university in connection with their future.

The top factor in choosing a university by Jordanian EFL students was clearly the reputation of the institution. The great majority of the students (n= 400; 94.11%) focused on the reputation of the academic institution as the number one factor that impacts choice of a university for learning English. The Jordanian EFL students stressed the image of the university as a guiding factor. The name of the university as perceived by members of the community seems to be based on notions like history of the institution. Being a relatively old university seems to be favored by a great number of students. In addition, students seem to appreciate the university standing as an international place of learning measured by the percentage of students from other nations.

The second factor in the ranking was cultural and social interaction opportunities that the campus provides (n=378; 88.94%). These results show the importance students attach to their relationships. At this relatively young age, students want to make sure that campus life provides the best opportunities for developing friendships and cultural growth. The family involvement in the selection process comes as no surprise. In a closely tied conservative society like Jordan, family members and close relatives do interfere in the choice of a particular university. This factor received (n=366; 86.11%) of the total number of students. Moreover, the role of the mother was particularly highlighted by the students of this study.

The fourth factor in ranking was the location of the university, particularly with reference to the place of living of the student's family. The number of students who mentioned this factor in their statements was (n=352; 82.82%). Interest in knowledge and education at the university level came as factor number 5. This factor received (n=334; 78.58%) of the total sample. This is a purely intrinsic orientation among the students of this study. Students think of the extent to which a university may satisfy their desire to learn and gain knowledge. It may be interesting to find that the students in this study showed some degree of maturity as they clearly valued education in intrinsic terms. They think of a university in terms of personal development where knowledge and learning are vital considerations. Students and their families do pay for their higher education and this may justify their concern for quality of campus learning.

Coming in sixth place was the reputation of the academic staff of the university. This factor was mentioned by (n=310; 72.94%) of the participating students. Academic staff members
Factors Influencing Jordanian EFL Students' Choice of a University

Bani-Khaled

are also part of the reputation factor stressed in a number of studies. This goes with program or syllabus quality where the methods used by the staff members make a difference.

The seventh factor affecting choice of university was the degree to which the institution is marketable in the labor market. This factor was mentioned by (n=295; 69.41%) of the sample. Employability and future plans do affect students' choices of a particular academic institution. Other less significant factors have been also identified in this study. Each of these factors received 55% of the sample, but they remain important variable that provide insights as to the selection process. Campus considerations came on eighth place with (n=233, 54.82%). Students in this study reported variables such as campus size, attractiveness, and safety. Therefore, such considerations do seem to have some impact on students' thinking about which university to take as far as learning English is concerned.

Less than half of the sample (n=210; 49.41) reported concern about availability of specialization as a factor in their university choice. They seem to prefer institutions with diverse specializations in relation to language study. At the bottom of the factors list came considerations like views of other students who may have experienced campus life (n=150; 35.29%). Surprisingly, the personal interest in the language came very low in the ranking in relation to other factors. Only (n=135; 31.76%) of the students mentioned interest in English as an important factor. This can be explained by the fact that nearly all universities in Jordan offer undergraduate programs in English and Literature with a large degree of similarity. In fact, many universities tend to have the same study plans for EFL degrees. This however, remains to be verified by future research. The type of university, i.e. public or private came at the very bottom of factors as it was mentioned by (n=95; 22.35%). There seems to be a clear preference to public universities in Jordan. Students apply to public universities first and only if not accepted there, they tend to seek education at private universities where the fees for private universities are higher.

Conclusion

This study hopes to provide some insights on factors that influence Jordanian students' choice of university for learning English. However, there still remains to be many aspects of this issue to be clarified in further studies. The results of this study corroborated findings reported in the previous literature and therefore provided confirmed evidence of the presence of certain factors that guide students and their families in their choice of universities. Local universities in Jordan may take insights from this study as well as from other literature reported here when considering ways of recruiting potential students. Further research is needed to explore this issue in more detail, especially with reference to the expectations and needs of EFL students.

Limitations

This study was limited in that it did not aspire to include students of private universities in Jordan. Also, no attempt was made to highlight any significant differences between groups of students according to sex, level of study or social backgrounds.

About the Author:
Dr Turki Bani-Khaled is an Associate Professor of Applied English Linguistics at the University of Jordan. He holds a BA in English Language and Literature from Jordan University and MSc in ESP from Aston University, UK. He also holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from Exeter
University, UK. He has worked in UAE, Bahrain in addition to Jordan. He has published a number of research articles and books on ESP, lexicography, teacher education, and applied linguistics.

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Investigating the Effects of Structured and Unstructured Tasks on Arab learners of English Oral Performance

Mahes Ali Al-Mahes
The British University in Dubai
United Arab Emirates

Abstract
There is a growing recognition in Arab countries that an ability to communicate effectively in English is a valuable employment skill that goes hand-in-hand with vocational educational programmes. This study investigates the impact of task structure on Arab learners' oral performance. A mixed methods approach was used to conduct the study, in which ten students from VEDC foundation school were chosen as a sample. Narrative structured and unstructured tasks were used to test the impact of task structure on learners' oral performance in terms of fluency, accuracy, and lexical density. The findings indicate that pre-task activity can be a useful tool in improving accuracy and fluency which contributes to the efficacy of the task based learning approach in supporting and developing the key areas of oral proficiency which have significant implications for teaching and learning.

Keywords: TESOL, oral performance, structured tasks, fluency, and accuracy.
Introduction

Within the area of TESOL, there are a variety of sub-fields that try to understand how we acquire language and what impact this may have on teaching methods. One of these fields is psycholinguistics, which is the study of the cognitive and psychological processes that underpin language acquisition. As Robinson (2011) suggests, within the field of psycholinguistics, the development of task-based learning has been of interest in recent scholarship. In part, this is because it presents opportunities for student-centered learning that builds upon a student’s ability to acquire, rather than learn, language (Ellis, 2003). Therefore, I investigated this issue in the context of Arab learners of English.

Statement of the Problem

One challenge for teachers in the ESL classroom is developing tasks that encourage and motivate learners. Another is understanding how the structure of a set task may impact a student’s learning. These are the two challenges that this studies explores, a study that has been set in the specific context of Arab learners of English in Abu Dhabi Vocational Education and Training Institute (ADVETI). This study is important in relation to existing work that focuses on common errors made by students in relation to oral proficiency skills, and how best to structure classroom activities to encourage success for this set of learners (Rabbahah, 2005). Furthermore, there is a growing recognition in Arab countries that an ability to communicate effectively in English is a valuable employment skill, one that goes hand-in-hand with vocational educational programmes. Therefore, being able to provide effective teaching recommendations related to oral proficiency underscores the value of this work.

Research Question

This exploratory study will attempt to answer the following question:
Will the structure of a task, or the lack of structure of a task, impact the oral proficiency of Arab students learning English in the foundation school at Abu Dhabi Vocational Educational and Training Institute (ADVETI)?

Context of the Study

For the purposes of this study, I set the cohort a narrative task, replicating a classroom environment, and presented them with two options: a structured task and an unstructured task. The purpose was thus to evaluate what impact the nature of the task would have on their linguistic abilities. By framing the study in this way, the intent was to determine which approach was best applied in the real world classroom. The scope of the work was to provide a review of theoretical constructs before outlining a methodological approach for testing the impact of structured and unstructured tasks in testing oral proficiency in Arab learners. A test instrument was developed and used for testing a group of Arab learners during February 2013, and the outcomes and conclusions from these will be presented in the final summation of the work.

Literature Review

There are four key skills of language acquisition: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking is viewed as the most important; indeed, the primary goal of the majority of second language learners is to be able to speak confidently and fluently in the target language (Ur, 2006, p.120). A definition of speaking in this context is that it is a process, usually interactive (though not exclusively), that requires production, reception, and processing of
information (Burns & Joyce, 1997). How the information is produced and how it is received depends upon the context of the utterance, who is involved in the conversation, their language abilities, and even their social understanding of the situation being discussed, a construct known as sociolinguistic competence (although as Slater and Li (2012) contend, this also requires underlying grammatical and linguistic ability in the target language).

According to Levlet (1989) there are three processing stages undergone when an utterance is made: conceptualisation of the message, formulation of the language, and articulation of the message. Skehan (1998) extends this by outlining three components of the articulation stage: fluency, accuracy, and complexity. Based on these stages, instruction and assessment of speaking and listening as important components in the achievement of communicative competence have grown prominently within the field of second language teaching. Historically, second language teaching has focused on vocabulary and grammar acquisition, but without a definite and targeted focus on speaking fluently and oral proficiency (Bygate, 2002). In regards to this latter element, Omaggio (1998) defines oral proficiency as “the ability to communicate verbally in a functional and accurate way in the target language” (p. 353). Indeed, most second language speakers are aiming to converse in a transactional way with native speakers, rather than being initially able to deliver a narrative or monologue. This, according to Bygate (1996), leads to the development of interaction skills.

With all of this in mind, understanding how to encourage oral proficiency and assess development within the classroom can be difficult for teachers who need to incorporate aspects of fluency, accuracy, and the confidence of L2 speakers in being able to deliver information in an effective way (Richards, 2007).

The effect on TESOL syllabi as a result has been a move to task-based approaches to language instruction (Ellis, 2003; Nunan, 2004). One of the rationales for this is given by Nunn (2006), who notes that a task-based foundation “leads to student-led holistic outcomes in the form of written reports, spoken presentations... that lead to decision making outcomes” (p. 70). In this context, the term “task” has led to a variety of diverse interpretations. According to Willis (1996), it is an activity where there is a goal to be achieved through use of the target language, with less focus on meaning.

In a similar vein, Lynch and Maclean (2000) suggest that task should be something that reflects real world situations in which students may find themselves. Ellis (2003), however, defines a task as something that has six essential features: it must be a workplan, have a primary focus on meaning, involve real-world language processing, engage cognitive processes, and have a definitive outcome. Finally, a task can also be conducted using any of the four language skills.

Considered from the perspective of psycholinguistics, the task is something that “guides learners to engage in certain types of information processing that are believed to be important for effective language use and/or for language acquisition” (Ellis, 2009, p. 197). This approach is grounded in the interaction hypothesis developed by Long (1981), which suggests that second-language acquisition is based on communication and interaction, rather than directed input and drilling. There are also influences from Skehan’s cognitive approach (1996), a framework that highlights the distinctions between two types of learner processing (i.e., lexical and rule based), as well as Yule’s communicative effectiveness model, which as Block (2003) notes is grounded in semantic and referential meaning, rather than function of language use.

Essentially, the task-based approach to learning is focused on a communicative approach to language teaching and acquisition, but as Schmidt (1995) indicates, this can be at the expense of form, as a teacher focuses only on communication. Therefore, as Radwan (2005) indicates,
there does need to be a balance among form, meaning, and communicative ability. One of the ways this can be achieved is through the design of the task and its overall nature, particularly whether the task set to students is structured or unstructured, and the cognitive demands that are placed on the student by the content and nature of the task (DeKeyser, 2011).

According to Tavakoli and Skehan (2005), structure in this context means whether there are clear timelines, scripts, or familiarity within the task requirements as given to the learner. Essentially, in a structured task, there is only one sequential outcome that can be achieved by the student, otherwise the overall information being presented would be compromised, losing meaning and thus communicative effectiveness (Rahimpour & Mehrang, 2010). In contrast, an unstructured task means that the information presented could have problem resolutions and outcomes that do not require such strict formation and sequence, as moving elements would not lose the meaning or coherence of the utterance or narrative.

The importance of the task structure and its potential impact on oral proficiency is grounded in various theories relating to cognitive approaches in relation to language learning. Skehan (1998) suggests that fluency, accuracy, and complexity are important components of oral proficiency. Within these dimensions, Skehan suggests that there is competition for processing space within the cognitive system, and that one is achieved at the minimisation of another, based on the finite attention capabilities of the speaker. As a result, speakers of second languages will give precedence to either fluency, accuracy or, complexity of language (Stengers et al., 2011). This precedence to one system over another leads to a lack of symmetry due to the mismatch between formulaic language and individual lexical processing systems (Cutler & Weber, 2004). However, Iwashita et al. (2001) found no significant influence or variation depending on which system was focused on by the nature of the task. More recently, Ellis (2009) has indicated that the processing requirements for the planning of a task can impact the fluency, accuracy, and complexity of an utterance or narration by L2 speakers.

The rationale for this is that there are two potential systems that may be applied: the exemplar-based and rule-based systems. In the exemplar system, there are not only discrete lexemes in the speakers mental lexicon but also learnt chunks of formulaic language. In contrast, the rule-based system is more abstract and relies on the knowledge of the patterns that create spoken language (Opitz & Friederici, 2004). Thus, as Skehan et al. (2012) indicate, the nature of a task is likely to impact how a student will plan for his or her utterance, and can thus influence his or her complexity, fluency, and accuracy.

Skehan’s view is disputed by Robinson (2001), who suggests that underlying human psychology makes it possible for the attention and thus cognitive abilities and processing to incorporate both systems to create effective oral abilities. Essentially, he suggests that the systems work collaboratively rather than in conflict, as suggested by Skehan. This view is somewhat supported by neuroscience data, as indicated by Opitz and Friederici (2004) who claim that the two systems work independently but that both are activated during language processing tasks.

This recognition of the two systems and their roles within language processing raises a question for second language teaching regarding whether a structured task or an unstructured task provides the most efficacious way of ensuring that the exemplar and rule based systems can work and be stimulated during a lesson to provide oral proficiency. That structured tasks require less processing of the sequencing before working on the accuracy and complexity, and thus fluency of the task, suggests that a structured task may be more effective. This suggestion appears to be both supported and disputed by previous studies that examine the role of task
structure and its impact on oral proficiency (Foster & Skehan, 1996; Iwashita et al., 2001; Mehnert, 1998; Skehan & Foster, 1999; Teng, 2007; Wu, 2005).

This conflict of outcomes may be due to the view that, from a psycholinguistic perspective, an unstructured task could potentially remove the processing load of having to sequence the information before developing the fluency, and thus may increase the complexity. One potential reason for this has been suggested by Mehnert (1998), who indicates that planning time is directly correlated to oral proficiency. In an unstructured task, there is no need for sequencing information to be processed, providing additional time for planning of the language to be used, highlighting the potential for improved complexity, fluency, and accuracy.

One of the difficulties in assessing task structure and its relationship to oral proficiency has been, as Chiang et al. (2008) note, a lack of consistency in previous studies. First, there is variation in the tasks set, from a structured and unstructured picture story approach, to narratives, interviews and decision making tasks, that makes cross-study comparison challenging. In addition, the measures used for assessment of oral proficiency are not standardised, and this again poses a challenge to comparison studies. How these challenges are resolved for this work will be highlighted in the methodology, which has been developed based on the understanding of the various frameworks and theories reviewed in this section.

Methodology

The approach taken for gathering data was based on the study conducted by Rahimpour and Mehrang (2010). The rationale for this was that narrative tasks are those most often utilised in oral proficiency evaluation (Tavakloi & Skehan, 2005) and also provide for sequenced (structured) and unsequenced (unstructured) formats to be presented to participants. Thus, the survey instruments used in the work needed to be clear and at the right level for the learners.

Survey Instruments

Recognising the need for appropriate instruments led to the selection of the “Picnic” story seen in (Appendix A). As this narrative task has clear time line and sequence and there is specific target language that can be applied by the students, it provides a way of targeting the students’ rule-based schemas.

For the unstructured task, and to assess the prominence or otherwise of the exemplar system, the “birthday party” story used by Rahimpour and Mehrang (2010) was replicated (Appendix B). This story has a less clearly defined event sequence, which makes it more open to interpretation by the participants.

Testing Procedures

In terms of delivery of test instructions, in both cases the students were given the opening line so that they had a starting format. Information about what was required was given to the students in Arabic. This was so that there was no confusion about what was required. Their English narratives were recorded for subsequent analysis. Transcripts of the students narratives can be found in (Appendix C).

Data Measurements

The narratives, which are classified as qualitative data, were then analysed using the example of Rahimpour and Mehrang, and were evaluated according to three distinct areas for the narratives, including accuracy, which was measured through a count of error-free T_units,
Investigating the Effects of Structured and Unstructured Tasks

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identified dominant clauses, and their dependent clauses. In addition, fluency (number of words per minute) and lexical density were measured, which is the total number of different lexical words over the total word count of the utterance. This evaluation provided the study with quantitative data, marking the work as a mixed-methods approach study that was exploratory in nature. The rational for this is that as Burke and Onwuegbuzie (2004) note, when undertaking language research, a mixed-methods approach offers wider analytical focus and clear results should the work need to be replicated.

The decision to evaluate accuracy, fluency, and density was made because it provided a means of both the exemplar system and rule based system of the students, leading to an overall oral proficiency grade for each test. In addition, these are standardised tests within ESL research and have been applied in previous studies. The three measures, once calculated, were then evaluated, and patterns were reviewed using a combination of both Excel and SPSS statistics. The results are provided in the following section.

**Sampling**

A total of 10 students participated in the study, each undertaking to provide a narrative from both a structured and unstructured task. The criteria for inclusion was that the learners are Arab learners at an intermediate level, and at least eighteen years of age. As such, a purposive sampling approach (Merriam, 2009) was taken with the participants being recruited from students known to the researcher through his own work. Furthermore, to conform to ethical requirements, no personal details were taken to ensure anonymity, and each individual was asked to complete a participant consent form, an example of which is shown in (Appendix D). This provided them with information about the study, along with how the data would be used, and ensured that they understood why their involvement was requested and what it would involve.

**Analysis of the Findings**

The overall scores for each area are presented, and then each area is considered individually. The figures below indicate the individual scores achieved by the group for each task as well as the mean, standard deviation, and variance calculations from SPSS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structured</th>
<th>Total words</th>
<th>accuracy %</th>
<th>fluency wpm</th>
<th>density %</th>
<th>oral proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 4</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 5</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 6</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>14.21</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 7</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 8</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 9</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 10</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>148.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>28.32</strong></td>
<td><strong>112.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>19.81</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard deviation</strong></td>
<td><strong>41.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.08</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.57</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.38</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen from figures 1 and 2, the mean word delivery for each narration was considerably higher in the structured task. This demonstrates that the pictures provided had a specific target language to be used, and thus allowed for greater speed, which is further confirmed by the variation in mean fluency levels, with the structured task delivering around 15% higher levels than the structured.

But when reviewing the mean scores for accuracy and complexity, the unstructured task, despite, and potentially as a result of, the lower word count, provided around a 10% better outcome for the students as a group. In the complexity analysis, the improvement was closer to 13% for the unstructured task. This suggests that the structure of a task impacts differently on variable oral proficiency skills and processes, as indicated by Ellis (2009).

What is also noticeable when reviewing the whole group summaries in figures 1 and 2 is the variance levels: in all cases except the total word count, the variation in the group was much greater for the unstructured task. This can potentially be accounted for by individual variation among the students. However, as personal variables were not controlled for during the testing process, it is difficult to say this with certainty, or it’s also difficult to determine whether the variance is related to task structure. To validate results, future studies in the area would need to ensure that consideration is given to individual student differences.

In terms of overall proficiency, the mean achievement was less for the unstructured task, but only by a small margin, although it is further noted that the variance in overall score was far greater for the unstructured narratives than for the structured. This suggests that while in some areas (accuracy and complexity) the unstructured tasks provide improvement, as an overall approach to achieving full oral proficiency, the structured task does appear to deliver improved outcomes.

Having reviewed the summary outcomes and ranges of achievement, each of the specific areas was then analysed and compared task for task. The first individually reviewed area of comparison was the total words provided by the students for each task. As the figure below indicates, all students provided more words overall for the structured task, suggesting that they...
were able to deliver more information based on the data given that was in a format that encouraged narration.

But when the figures for lexical density are considered, as seen in the figure below, there was a greater variety of lexicons applied during the unstructured task for 90% of the students. The one student who achieved higher lexical density in the structured task had the lowest overall word count and shortest narratives across both tasks. Therefore, the percentage figures against their total oral presentation could be skewed by this fact.

The fact that the majority of students had increased lexical density suggests that the unstructured task was giving students greater flexibility to deliver higher levels of complexity within their narrative, as they were not constrained by the target language indicated in the structured task. This is in line with the findings of Wu (2005) and Iwashita (2001), who suggest that unstructured tasks can deliver improved lexical density as there is greater room for creative speech, which is underlined by the mean and standard deviation outcomes for both tasks as
indicated above. It does, however, contradict the findings of Rahimpour and Mehrang (2010) and Tavakoli and Foster (2008), who did not find a variation in complexity based on task structure.

Another factor to note, however, is the selection of words by the students: the lexical density test considers the use of “open class” (verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs) within the narrative. However, there is no evaluation of where nouns or verbs have been used as a form of circumlocution where the student is unsure of the exact word or phrase that should be used in the context (Chaloub-Deville, 2001). A number of the students substituted the word “garden” for “park,” and “tools” or “equipment” for toys and games. While use of this strategy demonstrates an ability to convey a level of meaning, and can be an effective way for students to communicate their intent [see Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, (2000)], it can also be an indicator of reduced vocabulary knowledge and overall ability in the target language. Although not the focus of this study, it was necessary to highlight this area as a potential factor in the overall oral proficiency of the students. It also confirms the need for variable control during a study of this kind.

To further evaluate the variation in task outcomes, the accuracy was then considered for each task. As the figure below indicates, there was a much wider variation between the students, which highlights the varied nature of their abilities.

50% of students had higher accuracy in the unstructured, and 50% had higher accuracy in the structured. As a group, however, the mean scores for accuracy were in fact higher for the unstructured tasks. Given that previous studies (Tavakoli and Foster, 2008; Tavakoli, 2009) have indicated that formal task structure aided accuracy, this was a surprising result. However, it is also noted by Skehan and Foster (1999) that pre-task activity also aids accuracy. The participants in this group did not have any pre-task activity, and this may have affected the generally low levels of accuracy achieved by the participating students.

The other measure taken to create an overall oral proficiency score was fluency, calculated as words per minute for each narrative. The outcomes are shown in the figure below. Words were calculated irrespective of accuracy for this measure.
As the figure indicates, 90% of students produced a greater number of words per minute for the structured task. This is in line with the view that form-based tasks reduce the processing load for planning of utterances and thus lead to greater fluency rates, as Tavakoli and Foster (2008) have already demonstrated. The average fluency rate for the group for the structured task was 112 words per minute, compared to 96.3 for the unstructured.

In terms of overall oral proficiency the three outcomes were combined to give each student a percentage score that provides an indication of their ability with narrative for structured and unstructured task, as shown in the figure below. 70% of the students achieved a higher oral proficiency score in the structured task, suggesting that overall the structured task provides a more effective outcome. One of the students who achieved more in the unstructured task was again the same student who had high accuracy but very low word count and overall fluency levels, suggesting they applied a greater level of planning before speaking, which may account for their outcomes. The other student had mid-range fluency and mid-range accuracy compared to the rest of the students in the group.
It would appear, therefore, in reviewing the various test outcomes, and in particular the overall oral proficiency levels, that the structured task approach provides an improved achievement level. However, in some areas, there is an indication that the unstructured task is more effective, particularly in the area of lexical density, as it offers the students an opportunity to be more inventive with their language. This perspective, however, is tempered by the recognition of the students’ use of circumlocation and paraphrasing in a number of the transcripts.

To illustrate this graphically, the two figures below indicate the overall spread of ability relating to number of words uttered by each student, rising from lowest to highest.

For the structured tasks, there was a general pattern to the density ability for the students, but some variation in relation to accuracy as the word count increased. It is also notable that for the mid-range fluency students there was a dip in density and accuracy, which suggests that at this level, there was a focus on fluency rather than accuracy and lexical complexity. This
underlines the view that the two processing systems work in contradiction to one another during structured speaking tasks.

This was less clear when reviewing the overall outcomes for the unstructured task, as the figure below indicates. As the word count increased, the accuracy initially appeared to grow at a similar rate, but at the higher levels of words per minute, there was a decline in accuracy and lexical density. Therefore, while not as definitive as the outcomes noted for the structured task, it can be seen that again, the two processing systems are operating in a contradictory way.

![Figure 7 Unstructured task outcomes](image)

**Figure 7 Unstructured task outcomes**

**Discussion**

Initial conclusions from theoretical studies were that students engaging in oral proficiency tests would give precedence to fluency, accuracy, or complexity (Skehan, 1998; Stenger, et al. 2011), and that the cognitive processing mechanisms required in each case would hinder the ability to apply the other two. The test results suggest that this is indeed the case when comparing ability within a structured or unstructured task situation. Furthermore, evaluation of cognitive processing in neuroscience indicated that although both form-based and exemplar-based information processing were activated (Opitz & Frederici, 2004), they operated independently of one another, rather than in a complementary way. The fact that the students produced greater levels of fluency (words per minute) in the structured task but higher lexical density in the unstructured tasks appears to substantiate these conclusions.

What was not incorporated into the study outcomes was the individual student characteristics, including confidence and knowledge level. The results suggest that there was a mixed range of abilities within the group, with some students focusing on short general phrases such as “after that they...” which increased their overall word count but impacted the overall lexical density. Others were more fluid in their narratives, creating more complex sentences for both the structured and unstructured tasks, which provided them with a higher overall fluency score.

The overall oral proficiency scores achieved by the students, while indicating that the structured task did appear to deliver better results than the unstructured, did not account for grammar. As Iwashita (2010) notes, evaluation of grammatical accuracy is not always included in oral proficiency, as it detracts from the idea of communicative competence. If an L2 speaker
is able to convey their meaning, even with grammatical errors, then they are frequently presumed competent in the target language.

A brief look at the grammar used in both tasks across the whole cohort indicates some common errors; for example, “make him a party,” which uses a verb that is not conjugated correctly and confuses prepositions and pronouns. As Aburizaiza (2013 notes, these patterns of error are common among Arab learners, who made up the cohort. This is because the transfer of knowledge from Arabic to English in terms of grammatical constructs is not always direct, and because there are no comparable translations for the student to use. While grammar was not incorporated as a measure of task nature effectiveness, when reviewing the transcripts it was important to indicate these factors, as future work in the area may need to include this element, but with an awareness of the common patterns of errors found in Arab L2 learners and speakers.

Overall, the study appears to have demonstrated that the assessment of oral proficiency is affected by task structure, but that the effect is dependent on which aspect of the proficiency is measured. An overall assessment suggests a bias towards the structured task, highlighting the reduced processing load that comes with no need for a planning stage, as indicated by Stenger et al. (2011). However, there are also indications that the unstructured tasks, which are created by the predominance of the exemplar processing system, can lead to increased lexical density, as demonstrated by figures 6 and 7, showing the overall scores for each task and trends in accuracy, density, and fluency. These findings therefore have implications for both teachers and students.

Implications for Teaching and Learning

As a teacher understanding not only the processes which the students undergo in achieving oral competence in a target language, but also the underlying cognitive systems that deliver the learning is of vital importance. This is because it can aid in creating a learning environment that stimulates these areas and encourages motivation and improved acquisition ability. The outcomes of this work, which appear to conform to both ESL and cognitive studies in relation to language processing suggest that narrative tasks need to be focused on either fluency, accuracy or complexity and that it is the nature of the task that will dictate which of these will be given precedence in the classroom and by the students. If the objective is fluency then the structured narratives appear to deliver greater opportunities as the reduced planning requirement provided by the nature of these tasks encourages confidence and thus fluency.

However, if the approach is aimed at assessing lexical complexity, the initial indications are that it is the unstructured tasks that are more effective. This appears to be because the focus is on the exemplar system of language processing, which allows for more application of a varied and creative vocabulary.

The third component, that of accuracy is more difficult to assess in the light of these outcomes. Whilst previous studies have found no variation in accuracy (Rahimpour & Mehrang, 2010) related to task structure, the students in this group were equally split in regards to which task delivered the greatest level of accuracy. This may be due to the small size of the group, or the individual learning characteristics of the learners. There is also the potential that being Arab learners the errors were common ones made by those transferring knowledge from Arabic to English. This tentative conclusion is made based on the similarity between the errors made by the group.

Therefore, from a teaching perspective, when determining whether to apply a structured or unstructured approach, it would appear that both approaches should be incorporated into the classroom but that the teacher should decide in advance which aspect of oral proficiency to focus
on. With regard to student assessment and understanding of the difficulties they may encounter in oral proficiency testing, the study has indicated that where the processing load is lower such as in a structured narrative, the fluency is increased but the lexical density is reduced as the students attempt to remain within the confines of the specific target language that can be applied to the test, a difficulty noted by Teng (2007).

To combat this issue with a lesson, the task can be set as necessarily following the sequence but encouraging greater levels of creativity, potentially with prompts from the teacher by pointing out specific elements from individual picture boxes that the student did not incorporate into their story. In addition, there is an indication from Skehan and Foster (1999), and reinforced by Matsumora et al. (2008) that pre-task activity aids in oral proficiency tasks in relation to both accuracy and lexical density. This may be because the processing load is reduced by the pre-planning prior to delivering a narrative but this is supposition only at this stage.

This strategy can also be useful with the unstructured task, reviewing the story beforehand and identifying certain objects and words that can then, if the student wishes be incorporated into their narrative. This pre-task activity is, moreover an important part of the overall task based learning approach. As Gonzalez and Arias (2009) note, this is because the pre-task activity can frequently activate a student’s internal cognitive schemas in relation to the narrative, which improves their overall performance during the task. An important facet of this in relation to the unstructured task is that each student’s mental lexicon for English will be different so the prompting may result in different vocabulary items being activated based on they personally process the visual representations of the story to be told.

In terms of lesson planning there is indications that attention and processing by students does appear to be dependent on the nature of the task. Therefore, when planning lessons for oral proficiency development, the tasks that are incorporated into the lesson should alternate between these systems and the use of a combination of structured and unstructured tasks does appear to deliver the required level of alternation. The rotation of tasks that focus on either form or exemplar processing in this way should thus provide a positive contribution to balanced development of oral proficiency skills in L2 learners.

**Conclusion**

The area of psycholinguistics can provide valuable insights into how to support and encourage L2 learners from all areas and within this context there is evidence that task based learning encourages motivation and communicative competence. In a more specific context, this work considered whether nature of task had an impact on oral proficiency in Arab learners. The outcomes are that there is a variation that occurs, related to whether a narrative task is structured or unstructured. This appears to be related to whether the processing mechanisms of form or exemplar based are given predominance during the task, and correlates with previous studies in the area (Mastumora, et al., 2008; Stengers, et al., 2011). In addition, the study is in alignment with work undertaken by neuroscientists regarding how language is processed and produced in a narrative-based situation.

These findings therefore have implications for teaching practice. Specifically they suggest that it is important to ensure a balanced development approach is taken in the ESL classroom that incorporates both forms of oral testing as well as how oral proficiency is assessed. In addition, there is a further indication from the literature review, but not empirically tested by this work, that pre-task activity can be a useful tool in improving accuracy and fluency. This is
due to the fact that pre-task activity can encourage activation of the student’s own mental lexicon to increase complexity as well as reducing the time required for pre-planning processing which increases fluency. What is not clear however, is whether there is a variation in effect of pre-task activity on structured and unstructured tasks, which, if examined could provide further recommendations and suggestions for the development of classroom activities for oral proficiency.

It was also found that the evidence of the study contributes to the efficacy of the task based learning approach in supporting and developing the key areas of oral proficiency. What is particularly pertinent is the variation found in the different elements, underlining the different processing mechanisms that operate cognitively to produce target language.

Finally, the work has provided some additional information about common oral proficiency mistakes made by Arab students in relation to the use of circumlocution, and incorrect application of prepositions and pronouns when conducting oral tasks, which would benefit from further investigation in the future to evaluate whether this is influenced by task structure.

About the Author:
Mahes Ali Al-Mahes is a doctoral candidate of TESOL at the British University in Dubai. He completed his Masters degree in TESOL from the British University in Dubai in 2012. He is currently an ESL Instructor at Abu Dhabi Vocational Education and Training Institute (ADVETI), UAE. His doctorate research topic is the effectiveness of M-Learning in Education.

References


Metaphor in Political and Literary Texts: A Pragmatic Analysis

Sattar Hussein Abbood
University of Baghdad, College of Languages, Iraq

Sabah Sleibi Mustafa
University of Baghdad, College of Languages, Iraq

Abstract
This paper seeks to compare the pragmatic use of English metaphor in political texts with the one that is used in literary texts in order to find out the similarities and differences manifested in both texts. It also tries to combine the three most well known views of metaphor, namely: the cognitive view, the semantic view and the pragmatic view. To this end, the paper analyses some examples of metaphor taken from political speeches addressed by the last three American Presidents [Bill Clinton (1993), George W. Bush (2001) and Barrack Obama (2008) and (2009) (http://millercenter.org/president/speeches)] and two short stories written by two American authors in 2004: (A) “The Secret Goldfish” by David Means (B) “Bohemians” by George Saunders. All the texts are provided in an appendix and each example mentioned in the analysis has a reference to the text number and paragraph number in which it has been cited. The results show that there are many differences in the use of metaphor in both texts. The main difference is that political texts often tend to use metaphor with a positive attitude using some concepts associated with a positive meaning, whereas literary texts often tend to use metaphors with a negative attitude using some concepts associated with negative meaning. The results also show that the main function of metaphors in political texts is ‘persuading’ while the main function of metaphors in literary texts is ‘adding aesthetic effects’.

Keywords: Metaphor, Conceptual Theory of Metaphor, political language, literary language, and comparison.
Introduction
Metaphor is a figure of speech that has been defined differently by different scholars of linguistics, philosophy and psychology. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica (2008) “metaphor is a figure of speech that implies comparison between two unlike entities, as distinguished from simile, an explicit comparison signalled by the words (like) and (as)”. When words are used with metaphoric senses, one field or domain of reference is carried over or mapped onto another on the basis of shared similarity between the two fields as in “The past is a foreign country” where the properties of the domain ‘a foreign country’ is transferred into the domain ‘the past’ (Goatly, 1997: 8).

The word ‘metaphor’ stands for the Greek word ‘transfer’ where the word ‘metaphor’ in English comes from ‘meta’ (change) and ‘pherein’ (carry) (Thorntonborrow and Wareing, 1998: 79).

The traditional view of metaphor represents it as an anomaly, something odd and deviant from the normal use of language. It gives metaphor minor importance in language and in people’s life in general. Thus, metaphor is confined to literature and is seen mainly as a rhetoric device (Goatly, 1997: 1). This traditional view sees metaphor as merely a matter of an implicit comparison where one concept is compared to another (Saeed, 1997: 302).

In the nineteenth century, an objection to the traditional view was voiced and it was observed that metaphor is not just a matter of an ornament but it is pervasive and plays a central role in language. Furthermore, during the past three decades metaphor has received a special interest by philosophers, psychologists and linguists since it was proved that metaphor is not just a matter of language but it is an indispensable tool in people’s language and thought (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 1). This transition in the view of metaphor began after Lakoff and Johnson (1980) had published their influential book Metaphors we live by, where they propose the Conceptual Theory of Metaphor (CTM). Metaphor, in the modern view, is seen as an important tool we use in our everyday life to fulfil various purposes to the extent that it is based on our experience of life. Thus, the essence of metaphor is seen as understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 5).

Metaphor in Political Texts
Since the time of Aristotle, it has been realized that rhetorical devices, notably metaphors, are very important in persuading the public in political speech (Ricoeur, 1977: 9). This view of metaphor is still acknowledged in the current time as being one of the persuasive linguistic techniques in the language of politics at word and phrase levels such as “Beacons of excellence”, “axis of evil” and “Cascade of change” (Woods, 2006: 48). For Charteris-Black (2011: 4), language is the lifeblood of politics because politics is concerned with acquiring, maintaining and sustaining power and that cannot be done without using language. The best politicians are those who have the ability to convince people that their policies can be trusted. By investigating the rhetoric of nine of the most persuasive politicians in Britain and America, Charteris-Black (2011: 2) finds that their choice of metaphor is essential to their persuasion.

Moreover, metaphors employed by politicians seem to gain wide currency and acceptance by people, that is, people in power get to impose their metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 157). For example, when the U.S.A. faced the energy crisis, President Carter (1977) used many metaphors to deal with this problem such as “the moral equivalent of war”. The acceptance of his use of metaphors was very effective not only in viewing certain realities but also in paving the way for policy change and political and economic actions (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 156).
Metaphors for politicians are indispensable tools by which they can have powerful attitudes even if they are not so. In emphasizing this importance of metaphor for politicians, the British conservative politician Winston Churchill once said: “How infinite is the debt owed to metaphors by politicians who want to speak strongly but are not sure what they are going to say” (Fainsilber and Ortony, 1987: 181).

Political language is full of extended meanings of the words which have lost their original meanings through metaphors but still retain important currency in the political discourse as a result of their metaphorical power such as ‘witch-hunt’, ‘stalking horse’, ‘straw man’ and ‘melting pot’ (Woods, 2006: 66).

Metaphor in Literary Texts

It is widely believed among lay people and scholars that the origin of metaphor lies in literature because poets, by their creative genius, always create new metaphors which represent the most genuine examples of metaphor (Kovecses, 2010: 49).

In this respect, MacCormmac writes:

> Literature without metaphor would become less imaginative and poetry would be so impaired as to become dull and perhaps even trite. (1972: 57)

For example, the writer Gabriel García Márquez (1985) in his novel “Love in the Time of Cholera” uses the sentence “Tea tastes like window” which gives rise to a new metaphor by comparing the taste of tea to a window. This creative metaphor offers a new perspective to understand a certain aspect of how tea is tasted. Although such creative literary metaphors are more ambiguous than ordinary ones used in everyday life, they are richer in meaning and in function since they provide a less clear picture from which we can derive a stronger point of view hidden in the speaker’s intended meaning (Kovecses, 2010: 49). Aitchison (1999: 141) states that literary writers try to create novel patterns and provide ambiguous expressions by using metaphors such as “black despair”, “green fingers” and “purple patch”.

Metaphor is widely used in literature to achieve stylistic purposes through linguistic deviation. It is seen as a kind of semantic deviation used to foreground a particle text on the level of meaning (Semino and Steen, 2008: 234). For Short (1996: 43), metaphor is a tool for semantic deviation used in literature to produce inconsistent semantic relations as in Dylan Thomas’ poem (Light Breaks Where no Sun Shines):

> Light breaks where no sun shines;
> Where no sea runs, the waters of the heart
> Push in their tides;

> And, broken ghosts with glow-worms in their heads (Short, 1996: 43)

By using metaphor, the poet is able to produce a number of semantic paradoxes which the reader needs to think up an answer to solve them and to make sense of what seems to be meaningless at first sight (Short, 1996: 43).

Pragmatics and Semantics of Metaphor

Semantics deals with the literal meaning while pragmatics deals with the intended meaning. Thus, when metaphor is dealt with literally, that is by describing it in terms of substitution, comparison or interaction, it is confined to semantics. On the other hand, when metaphor is interpreted to reach the intended meaning, it is brought to the circle of pragmatics where context of situation is seen as the main factor to get that meaning (Fraser, 1993: 331).
The effect of metaphor is stronger when it is seen as a form which breaches the rules of selectional restrictions since it becomes clear that the speaker wants to convey some hidden meanings by using metaphor. In this case, pragmatics is the field concerned. Fraser (Ibid: 334) claims that when a speaker says “Harry is married to his work”, he intends to convey some non-literal hidden meaning and the sentence needs to be interpreted metaphorically since the use of metaphor is clear i.e., the sentence is taken to be false if it is interpreted literally. In such cases, the hearer must take the expression as being non-literally intended in order to understand the sentence.

This is different from using metaphor in a sentence such as “John is our priest” in a case that we know that john is not a priest but a plumber. Although this sentence does not violate selectional restrictions, it could be also taken metaphorically (Fraser, 1993: 333). However, in this case, unlike the previous example, we need to know the context, the speaker and ‘John’ in order to determine whether the sentence is meant to be metaphorical or not. If we have previous information that ‘John’ is not a priest, so we can understand that the intended meaning behind using metaphor here is that “John always provides advice” (Fraser, 1993: 333).

Wilson and Carson (2006: 404) maintain that the goal of the pragmatic account of metaphor is to reveal how metaphors are understood by the addressee, that is, by constructing meaning from the words used metaphorically. They assert that pragmatics uses semantics in order to decode metaphors as in “Caroline is a princess” which can be interpreted pragmatically depending on the literal meaning of the word ‘princess’. This happens when the properties of an actual princess is transferred to a girl who is a spoiled, indulged, used to special treatment, having her wishes acted on and so on (Wilson and Carson, 2006: 405).

Metaphor and Context
For any text, it must have internal and external factors to be meaningful. The internal factors are related to the formal linguistic properties of language (the sounds, typography, vocabulary, grammar, and so on). These factors are the concerns of semantics. The external factors, on the other hand, are related to the contextual information obtained outside the text and which affect the formal linguistic meaning (the speaker’s intentions, context of situation etc.). These external factors are considered within the framework of pragmatics (Verdonk, 2002: 19).

Thus, both semantic and pragmatic information have to be taken into consideration in order to understand metaphors. However, since metaphors are usually associated with the intended meaning of the speaker/writer, the context in which a metaphor is used seems to be more important than its formal linguistic information, that is, metaphor is more associated with pragmatics than semantics (Levinson, 1983: 156).

When an appropriate context is provided, the intended meaning can be understood easily even when creative metaphors are used as is the case with the literal expressions (Glucksberg and Keysar, 1993: 402). Thus, context plays an essential role in specifying whether a certain sentence should be taken literally or metaphorically. For example, the sentence “He is a clown” could be taken literally when we speak about a performer who wears funny clothes and tries to make people laugh or it could be taken metaphorically if we criticize a person for his bad actions (Leezenberg, 2001: 88). As a result, the context is the main factor which specifies whether a certain expression should be interpreted semantically or pragmatically.

Although the role of context in understanding metaphor is crucial, metaphors that have fixed meanings in a way that they are dead or conventionalized can be understood without the help of the context. Nevertheless, most of the time context is important and can help us to decrease our
efforts to establish the relationship between the tenor and the vehicle (the thing compared and the thing being compared to respectively) (Branden, 2009: 81-89).

The Semantic View of Metaphor
The interpretation of metaphor according to the semantic view is is totally dependent on the literal meanings of the objects (the tenor and the vehicle). It either makes the similarity between the two objects as the basis of metaphor interpretation, or takes the difference between the objects as the primary factor of interpretation. It deals with the metaphorical meaning as a secondary one that arises from the interaction of the tenor and the vehicle on the level of the literal meaning (Leezenberg, 2001: 93).

1. The Comparison Theory
According to Leezenberg (2001: 71-72), The Comparison Theory (CT) has three main characteristics: First, it sees metaphor as either an example of implied comparison or as a corresponded form of simile. For example, the sentence “Man is a wolf” is an example of elliptical simile “man is like a wolf”. Second, the objects used in the comparison are the main factors in determining the interpretation of the metaphor. For example, the sentence “John is a lion” is understood when the two objects ‘John’ and ‘lion’ are seen as sharing a property of bravery. Third, it sees metaphor as having two meanings i.e., the literal meaning and the figurative meaning, and both of them are important in the interpretation of the metaphor, that is, the literal meaning forms the basis, while the figurative one triggers the intended meaning.

2. The Interactional Theory
According to this theory, the tenor and the vehicle interact in two ways: First, through a process of selection, suppression and emphasis of features which can form the ground of the tenor and the vehicle. Second, through the fact that not only the tenor is compared to the vehicle, but the vehicle is also compared to the tenor (Goatly, 1997: 114). This can be shown through Black’s (1961) example:

“A battle is a game of chess”
In this example, certain features are emphasised while others are suppressed. In this case, the status of combatants, casualties and speed of movement are emphasised as the grounds, whereas other features of battle such as topography, weapons, supplies etc are suppressed. As a result, we find that ‘chess’ is also made like ‘battle’ and not only ‘battle’ is made like ‘chess’ (Goatly, 1997: 114).

The Cognitive View of Metaphor
From a cognitive viewpoint of metaphor, all linguistic metaphors are motivated by conceptual metaphors found in our minds. These conceptual metaphors are regarded as the source of metaphors where a single conceptual metaphor can be expressed by different linguistic metaphors as in the conceptual metaphor THE MIND IS A MACHINE which can be said by different expressions as in “My mind is not operating today”, “I am a little rusty today” and “We are running out of steam” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 27).

The Conceptual Theory of Metaphor
Lakoff and Johnson’s book “Metaphors we live by” (1980) is generally credited with establishing a new approach of metaphor namely the Conceptual Theory of Metaphor (CTM).
Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 3) claim that our conceptual system, by which we think and act, is largely built on metaphors and that it plays a central role in our everyday life. Metaphors, according to this theory, enable us to conceptualize life experience, emotions, qualities, problems and thought itself. They have much power than they have in the previous theories and are seen as an integral part of our life and so they are metaphors we live by. Their first example relates to the conceptual metaphor “ARGUMENT IS WAR” (conceptual metaphors are conventionally written in capital letters). They state that “many of the things we do in arguing are partially structured by the concept of war”. They give a number of expressions which can be used as examples of this conceptual metaphor and which we commonly use in our daily language such as “Your claims are indefensible”, “He attacked every weak point in my argument” and “I demolished his argument” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 3).

The Proposed Model of Analysis
According to Knowles and Moon (2006: 60), none of the theories associated with the approaches mentioned above is completely right, nor is completely wrong or misguided. For Levinson (1983: 156-162), the best way to analyse metaphors is by combining the cognitive, semantic, and pragmatic approaches. Thus, in order to accurately analyse metaphors, the researcher suggests an eclectic model by which we can give a comprehensive account of how metaphors can be analysed cognitively, semantically and pragmatically.

The stages of the model of analysis can be summarised as follows:
1- Classifying metaphors according to the concepts that led to their creation based on our experience such as metaphors of war, metaphors of building, metaphors of sea, metaphors of journey etc. This is done by using CTM (the cognitive view), and
2- Highlighting the importance of the literal meanings of words used in the metaphors encountered, and how these literal meanings can show the similarities and differences between the objects compared. Consequently, these literal meanings can lead to the intended meanings. This is achieved by using CT and IT (the semantic view), and
3- Pinpointing the intended meaning via investing information from the context and making some inferences (the pragmatic view).

Example
The application of this eclectic model can be illustrated by analysing the word ‘crusade’ which was used by the British Prime Minister Tony Blair in his speech on 16 July 2001 as mentioned in the following extract:
“So there can be no greater crusade for a modern centre-left government than to invest in and reform our public services” (www.guardian.co.uk)

Crusade
Stage One: This metaphor is based on the conceptual metaphor “POLITICS IS RELIGION” and this means that politicians always make decisions that conform to the spiritual matters and religion is regarded as the basis for such political decisions.
Stage Two: The literal meaning of the word ‘crusade’ is a “Religious war”. Semantically, there is an implicit comparison between the word crusade and the duties of the government. The duties are compared to a religious crusade and the shared similarity between these two objects is the responsibility to implement both of them.
Stage Three: Pragmatically, the context helps us to understand that Tony Blair tries to persuade people that the main aim of his government is to make the necessary reforms that his country needs. He implies that his government sees the implementation of its duties as a religious duty and he is doing so to get the peoples’ sympathy and support and to persuade people that his government is following the right way to serve the country.

Since this metaphorical meaning of the word ‘crusade’ is listed in dictionaries, this metaphor is regarded as a dead one which has lost its metaphoric power. Thus, this metaphor is not an ambiguous one and does not need much effort to be understood.

Samples from Political Texts and Literary Texts

Politicians use metaphors in order to control the emotions of the listeners since metaphorical language is more motive than literal language. They create vivid images that increase the potentiality to share emotions and they employ this potentiality of metaphor to reassure the audience or to increase anxiety and raise anger (Landtsheer, 2009: 63).

On the other hand, Metaphors used in ordinary language differ from those used in literary texts. Metaphors in literature tend to be more creative and more expressive of human experience (MacCormmac, 1972: 62).

Below is the analysis of some types of metaphors used in the texts chosen:

1. Metaphor of Life and Death

The comparison between life and death is just like other types of contradicting comparisons such as light and dark, day and night, good and evil and sickness and health which provide a very effective positive or negative evaluation associated with human experience (Charteris-Black, 2005: 107).

1.1. Metaphors of Life and Death in Political Texts

Birth

A. BIRTH IS STARTING

1. In the year of America’s birth (Text 2, P. 25)
2. we force the spring, a spring reborn in the world's oldest democracy (Text 4, P. 1)
3. an idea born in revolution (Text 4, P. 15)

Birth metaphors are one of the aspects of life because life first begins by birth. In our political texts, all birth metaphors are associated with America. When something is referred to by its birth, it is given an indication of its start. Thus, when America is described as being born, this refers to its independence. The above examples treat America as a person who was born on the 4th of July 1776 when it got its independence. All the three American presidents (Clinton, Bush and Obama) use the idea of the birth of America in their inaugural speeches. This is because they want to support their own ideologies by focusing on something positive that all Americans agree on, and they represent themselves as an extension to this positive thing (America’s independence).

Death

A. FIRE

4. A small band of patriots huddled by dying campfires on the shore of an icy river (Text 2, P. 25)
Obama characterizes the extinguishing of fire as dying in order to give an idea of how many Americans have been killed in their war against the British army. As a result, he establishes a kind of coherence inside his speech by comparing the dying Americans to the extinguishing of fire through the use of metaphor. Another meaning extracted from the use of this metaphor is that when a fire is extinguished by the group who huddled around it, this could mean their readiness to leave the place and start another action. This indicates the soldiers’ readiness to fight the occupants and sacrifice themselves (as the dying fire) in order to achieve America’s independence.

1.2. Metaphors of Life and Death in Literary Texts

Death

A. DEATH IS REST
1. we gather here to put our dear fish to rest  
   (Text 5, P. 15)
In (1), death is compared to rest. Kovecses (2010: 50) stresses that one of the conceptual metaphors we have is ‘DEATH IS REST’. Many people, and especially Christian people, believe that when a person dies, he will go to paradise and be happy with God’s blessings. Another reason for using this metaphor is to avoid shocking the children who may witness the death of the fish. Thus, this is a metaphorical euphemism since it tries to lessen the strong meaning of death.

B. DEATH IS DOWN
2. A falling star is brief, but isn’t one nonetheless glad to have seen it?  
   (Text 6, P. 6)
One of the symbolic meanings of the action of falling is death. For example, if a leaf of a tree falls it withers and dies and so the process of falling has a reference to death. The woman describes her children as a ‘star’ because they are so innocent and their souls are so clean from anything bad, and thus giving light like stars.

C. DEATH IS LOSS / DEATH IS GOD’S TAKING OF PEOPLE
3. widows who had lost their husbands in Eastern European pogroms  
   (Text 6, P. 1)
4. She did not now begrudge God for taking them  
   (Text 6, P. 6)
These two examples express the meaning of death euphemistically. In (3), death is seen as the ‘loss of someone’, whereas in (4), it is seen as the ‘taking of somebody by God’.

2. Metaphors of Journey

Journey metaphors represent a very effective means in depicting the life time since the verbs of motion in a journey highlight the movements and actions taken in life and the destination reached at the end of a journey highlights the goals people want to achieve in their life (Charteris-Black, 2004: 74).

2.1. Metaphors of Journey in Political Texts

Politicians use journey metaphors in a very unique style to illustrate the achievement of their objectives. Words such as ‘road’, ‘path’, ‘journey’, ‘toiling up a hill’, ‘milestone’, ‘feet’, ‘forward’ and ‘march’ are all references that signal metaphors of journey (Charteris-Black, 2005: 46, 130).

A. AMERICA’S POLITICAL PROCESS IS A JOURNEY
Our journey has never been one of short-cuts or setting for less. It has not been the path for the faint-hearted … It has been the risk-takers….. who have carried us up the long, rugged path towards prosperity and freedom. (Text 2, P. 7)

who we are and how far we have traveled (Text 2, P. 25)

those people whose toil and sweat sends us here and pays our way (Text 4, P. 10)

These examples speak about the political development of America in the past. Example (1) is an extended metaphor in which Obama illustrates how America has started a journey which is full of dangers, and only the brave people could end this journey successfully. Obama implies that Americans have actually proved to be brave in taking this difficult journey, and defeating all the obstacles successfully. The purpose behind this journey is to reach a certain place i.e., ‘prosperity and ‘freedom’. In this metaphor, we have many comparisons:

- Americans risk-takers
- Coward people faint-hearted
- Political development journey
- Political problems rugged paths
- Destination prosperity and freedom

In (2), Obama regards the day of his inaugural as a certain station in the journey of America. He considers this day as an achievement which can be added to the other achievements of America. As a result, he encourages people to see him as one of the founders of America, and as a person who can lead Americans in their journey to the right road.

In (3), Clinton compares the founders of America to persons who paid the fare of the travel and let Americans reach their current place. The founders of America didn’t pay money for this travel, but their toil and sweat represented that fare which led Americans to get a lot of achievements through the levels of its journey.

This is a journey we continue today (Text 2, P. 9)

As we consider the roads that unfolds before us (Text 2, P. 20)

with eyes fixed on the horizon and God’s grace upon us (Text 2, P. 26)

These examples speak about the journey at the current time as though it were a station where Americans have to decide whether to continue or stop their journey. Americans decide that their journey must continue because if this journey ends, the sequences of America’s success will stop. Thus, Obama assures that the success of America will continue because Americans decide to continue their journey.

In explaining the metaphorical idiom in (6), Dag Hammarskjold says “Never look down to test the ground before taking your next step”. This indicates that only the one who keeps his eye fixed on the far horizon will find the right road (http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Dag_Hammarskj%C3%B6ld#Quotes_about_Hammarskj%C3%B6ld).

Consequently, only those travelers who study the next step very well can decide which road is the best in their journey. This is compared to politicians who consider the following steps before they rush and decide how to deal with the affairs of the country.

2.2. Metaphors of Journey in Literary Texts

A. LIFE IS A JOURNEY

1. The vision of the fish itself… travelling through the water as it spilled from the bucket was exact and perfect (Text 5, P. 9)
This is the only example of journey metaphors in the literary texts. The moving of the fish from the bucket to the pond is compared to travelling in such a way that the fish is in a journey and travels from one place to another. This metaphor is used to view the change in the life of the fish and its journey was compulsory since it is from something good to something bad.

3. Metaphors of Light and Darkness
People sometimes use certain symbols to convey what they want to say by using their experience. Light and darkness are among these symbols used metaphorically based on their experience (Kovecses, 2010: 21).

3.1. Metaphors of Light and Darkness in Political Texts
Light and darkness metaphors are often used in political speeches to give positive or negative evaluation since the two terms (light and darkness) offer a sort of contradiction (Charteris-Black, 2005: 51).

**Light**

**GIVING LIGHT IS GUIDING**
1. To all those who have wondered if America’s beacon still burns as bright (Text 1 P. 18)
Charteris-Black (2005: 52) believes that light metaphors can be combined with fire metaphors to give a stronger meaning since fire can be regarded as a source of lightening. The literal meaning of the word ‘beacon’, according to Longman Dictionary (2008), is “a light that is put somewhere to warm or guide people, vehicles, ships or aircraft”. So, America is described as having a beacon by which it guides other people and countries and this gives America a sort of leadership position. This metaphor compares America to a wise man whose ideas light the world in the past as well as in the present.

2. Do our business in the light of day (Text 2, P. 12)
3. Those ideals still light the world (Text 2, P. 14)
Renton (1990: 174) points out that the metaphor ‘to see the light of the day’ means ‘to be made publically’. Thus, Obama in (2) refers to business men, and urges them to conduct their business publically where it becomes easy for people to know where the economic problems lie, in a case there are such problems.

Since we have in our minds the conceptual metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING as in the sentence ‘I see what you are saying’, the light can be regarded as a source of understanding (Charteris-Black, 2005: 50). The ideals in (3) are compared to something which is a source of light by which people can see and understand things. These ideals represent the principles of freedom, independence and human rights. They represent the principles for which the ‘Founders’ of America fought and struggled to get, and, hence, these ideals still exist and upon which the American policy is based.

**Darkness**

**DARKNESS IS BAD**
4. We … emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united (Text 2, P. 17)
Blackness, as the opposite of whiteness, gives a negative evaluation and it is equivalent to spiritual ignorance, evil and Satan (Charteris-Black, 2005: 51). The above example is a combination of story metaphor and darkness metaphor where a certain period of the history of America is regarded as a chapter of a certain story and this chapter is characterized as black. The
American civil war which happened in 19th century is this dark chapter and this indicates how America has suffered from that bad period.

3.2. Metaphors of Light and Darkness in Literary Texts

**Light**

**A. LIGHT IS A HEAVY OBJECT**

1. a wedge of sunlight plunged through the window of his bedroom and struck the water’s surface, disappearing

   (Text 5, P. 1)

This is an extended metaphor where the sunlight is viewed as a ‘wedge’ and then this metaphor continues to the following expression where this wedge strikes the ‘water’s surface’. ‘Water surface’, at the same time, is compared to something that can be broken such as glass. The author compares the sunlight to a heavy metal object ‘wedge’ and then he compares the fluidity of water to something solid. He tries to show how the water becomes thick because of dirtiness, and it needs something heavy in order to penetrate it, and the sunlight is described as this heavy thing. Nevertheless, he shows that even this heavy metal cannot sink deeply in water because of its solidity and so the sunlight disappears and loses its effect. This metaphor is established to focus on how the water is dirty and dark to the extent that the light disappears in its murk.

2. that small pinpoint of light at the end of the tunnel

   (Text 5, P. 16)

Kovecses (2010: 50) states that one of our conceptual metaphors is ‘HOPE IS LIGHT’ because light is regarded as a source of life as is the case with some kinds of plants. Seeing light in somewhere could mean finding a solution for a problem or bringing an end to a bad period, because the idiom ‘to see the light at the end of the tunnel’ is used to indicate that a certain difficult or unpleasant situation is going to end (http://TheFreeDictionary). This metaphorical idiom is used with the fish at the end of the story to depict the determination of the fish to sustain life and struggle to survive. Although it has been neglected for a long time, the fish hopes that the family, specifically the woman, in one day will see the bad conditions surrounding it and feel sorry for neglecting it. As a result, she will clean the water and provide what is necessary for the fish.

**Darkness**

**A. DARKNESS IS A PROBLEM**

3. in the black hole of familial carelessness

   (Text 5, P. 15)

According to Charteris-Black (2011: 278), a hole is usually used metaphorically to indicate a dark place where the light cannot reach there and this is to give a negative ethical evaluation. In this metaphor, the problems of the family are described as a hole which the fish may fall in as a victim of the family’s mistakes.

**B. DARKNESS IS UNIVERSE**

4. he was lost in the eternal roar of an isotropic universe

   (Text 5, P. 9)

5. The secret goldfish draws close to the center of the cosmos

   (Text 5, P. 15)

In these two examples, darkness is compared to ‘universe’ in (4) and to ‘cosmos’ in (5). There are many differences between the terms ‘universe’ and ‘cosmos’; nevertheless they are usually seen as synonyms. A ‘universe’ refers to the space in general, while ‘cosmos’ is used to refer to the space as a system and as an order. ‘Universe’ is used to indicate how the fish is confused with the dirtiness and murk of the tank in a way that it cannot see anything, as though it is lost in a large place and cannot find its way. On the other hand, the word ‘cosmos’ is used to draw
attention to the objects found in the tank (the figurine, the filter etc.) and to compare them to the entities found in the cosmos (stars, planets, etc.) which is seen as a system containing all these entities in an orderly way.

Conclusion
From the previous analysis, the following conclusions can be obtained:
1. Metaphors in political texts appear in a systematic way forming groups of metaphors that work all together to support a unified idea, whereas metaphors in literary texts appear in a random way focusing on different concepts. This is apparent in metaphors of journey that are found in political texts in a systematic way comparing the political process of America with a journey, whereas literary texts use only one journey metaphor that has a random meaning.
2. Metaphors in political texts often have positive meaning and focus on those concepts that have positive interpretations such as LIFE, BIRTH and LIGHT. In contrast, metaphors in literary texts often give negative meaning and focus on concepts associated with bad or negative things such as DEATH, DARKNESS and PROBLEMS.
3. Metaphors in political texts are mainly used for persuasive purposes and politicians use metaphors to provoke an emotional response on the part of the hearer. Metaphors in literary texts, on the other hand, are mainly used to give more hidden descriptions and details, and this can be reached only by making comparisons and connecting the information in the contexts with each other. This gives these metaphors an aspect of ambiguity.

About the Authors:
Dr. Sabah Sleibi Mustafa is a professor of Linguistics and translation and is currently Head of the Department of English at the College of Languages, University of Baghdad-Iraq. His main areas of interest are translation, syntax, morphology, and language teaching. He is also an editor of the advisory board of the Arab World English Journal

Sattar Hussein is an MA holder and his main areas of interests are translation, stylistics and language teaching. He is currently working in the Iraqi Ministry of Oil and is responsible for preparing training courses for the staff of the ministry. His thesis tackles metaphor in English, shedding light on how this rhetoric tool can be used differently by different people to produce a variety of functions.

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Strategies of Learning English Writing Skill by Indonesian Senior High School Students

Junaidi Mistar  
English Education Department, Graduate Program  
Islamic University of Malang, Indonesia

Alfan Zuhairi  
English Education Department, Graduate Program  
Islamic University of Malang, Indonesia

Firman Parlindungan  
English Education Department, Undergraduate Program  
Islamic University of Malang, Indonesia

Abstract  
The research addresses three research objectives: (1) to identify learning strategies of writing skill used by senior high school students in Indonesia, (2) to measure the extent of use of the strategy categories, and (3) to study the differences in the use of the strategies by successful and less successful learners. The subjects of the study were 766 second year senior high school students in East Java, Indonesia. They were asked to complete a questionnaire of strategies of learning writing skill and a self-assessment. The results of the data analysis using Principal Component Analysis yielded twelve components with an initial eigenvalue greater than 1, explaining a cumulative variance of strategies 57.68%. The component matrix was rotated using Varimax with Keiser Normalisation Method and the resulting factors were then treated as posteriori strategy categories and named self-monitoring, language-focusing, planning, metacognitive affective, cognitive compensation, self-evaluating, social process-focusing, authentic practicing, meaning-focusing, vocabulary developing, metacognitive commencement, and mental processing strategies. All of these strategies were used at the moderate frequency level. Finally, successful learners reported using the strategies more frequently than less successful learners did.

Keywords: language learning strategies, writing skill, writing strategies, strategies to learn writing skill
Introduction

Interest in studies directed at identifying and classifying learning strategies of second/foreign language learners did not emerge until the mid 1970s. At first the attempts came mainly from literature reviews or studies in the area of second language learning, rather than foreign language learning. Stern (1975) initiated them by drawing up a list of ten strategies that good language learners employ in their learning, including planning, active, emphatic, formal, experimental, semantic, practice, communication, monitoring, and internalization strategies. Then, using Stern’s list as a framework, Rubin (1975) identified that good language learners are willing and accurate guessers, are not inhibited, have a strong drive to communicate, monitor their own speech and the speech of others, and focus on meaning as well on form. Similar studies are then carried out by other researchers (Chesterfield & Chesterfield, 1985; Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978). In the later development, the studies covered not only good but also less good language learners with cognitive psychology paradigm as their underlying theoretical basis (O’Malley, Chamot, Stenwe-Manzanares, Russo & Küpper, 1985) resulting in the classification of strategies into metacognitive, cognitive, and social. This area of research is even more popular when Oxford (1990) provided a detailed classification of language learning strategies, which she then converted into a readily-used questionnaire called Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL).

A great number of studies using Oxford’s SILL are then carried out around the world and these studies can be classified into three categories. The first are studies attempting to reveal the use of strategies descriptively, such as Merrifiled (1996) in French, Oxford and Ehrman (1995) in the United States, Lunt (2000) in Australia, Wharton (2000) in Singapore, and Mistar (2001a) in Indonesia. Most of the studies reveal that the learners are moderate users of the strategies. The second are studies treating learning strategies as a predictor of learning success as measured either by language proficiency or achievement tests. Within this category are studies by Dreyer and Oxford (1996) in South Africa, Mistar (2006) and Setyadi (2004) in Indonesia, and Park (1997) in South Korea. These studies come up with a conclusion that learning strategies correlate significantly with learning success. The last category are studies attempting to find factors that may affect the use of learning strategies. Motivation, proficiency level, course status, gender, career choice, cognitive styles, personality, and length of study are found to affect the use of strategies (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990; El-dib, 2004; Lee & Oxford, 2008; Mistar, 2001b; Yang, 2007).

The current trend is studying the skill-based language learning strategies. In the case of strategies to learn writing, two studies carried in Europe are to mention. One is by Kieft, Rijlaarsdam, and van den Bergh (2006), who studied the effectiveness of adapting writing-to-learn task to different writing strategies (planning writing strategy and revising writing strategy) when teaching literature to 113 tenth-grade high school students in Netherlands. The result showed that a course adapted to the planning writing strategy is more effective for almost all students to improve literary interpretation skill. The other one is a study by Torrance, Thomas, and Robinson (1994), who investigated the writing strategies of graduate research students in the social sciences in UK. They divided the subjects into three categories; planners, revisers, and mixed strategy writers. The planners showed higher productivity than the two strategy writers. The conclusion of the study is that planning can be effective for some students, but planning alone will not guarantee for writing success. In Africa, moreover, Boudaoud (2013), investigating constructive planning strategy in writing used by English students at the University
of Constantine, Algeria, yielded that outlining strategy, particularly cognitive and metacognitive, affect not only a better logical organization of ideas in writing, but also a better overall writing quality.

In Asian context, Abdullah et al. (2011) profiled writing strategies of four ESL Malay undergraduate engineering students of a local private university in writing English. It revealed that the skilled and unskilled students shared common writing strategies mainly cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies to generate ideas in essay writing. Chen (2011), moreover, correlated writing strategies and writing achievement among Chinese non-English majors. The results indicated that pre-writing strategies and revising strategies positively correlate with students’ writing achievements. Finally, in Middle East, Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012) studied EFL students’ writing strategies in Saudi Arabian ESP writing classes. The result indicated the use of two strategy categories, process-oriented writing strategies and product-oriented writing strategies. Moreover, it showed that 95.9 % of the participants mixed the two kinds of strategies.

Based on the studies reviewed above, it is clear that, while studies on general strategies of learning a second/foreign language have been carried out in a mountainous number around the world, studies that specifically focus on strategies of learning writing skill are still limited. Moreover, most studies are carried out among university students and none is done among senior high school students. It is in this context that the present study is carried out and it addresses three research problems: (1) what strategies do Indonesian senior high school students use in learning writing skill of English?, (2) how do they use the identified learning strategies?, and (3) is there any difference in the use of the identified strategies by successful and less successful learners?.

**Research Method**

Using descriptive and ex-post facto designs, the present study was participated by 766 second year students of science department of eleven senior high schools in East Java, Indonesia. They studied English for four hours a week as a compulsory subject in the context of English as a foreign language and had been learning it formally for five years, three years in junior high school and two years in senior high school. The ultimate goal of its teaching is to equip the students with the command of communicating oral and written English. Thus, the instructional process is carried out by focussing on the four language skills, including speaking, writing, listening, and reading. The teaching of grammar and vocabulary is carried out in the context of teaching the language skills.

The subjects were asked to complete two research instruments, a questionnaire of strategies of learning writing skill and a self-assessment. The questionnaire consisted of seventy items prepared in the Indonesian language. The reliability index of the data from the questionnaire as measured by using Cronbach’s Alpha method (Pallant, 2011) was .935, indicating very high reliability. Moreover, the self-assessment contained 10 items asking the students to self-assess their writing performance. To each item, they had to respond by circling 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 indicating how well they were able to perform a writing act with 1 being ‘not at all’, 2 ‘with much difficulty’, 3 ‘with some difficulty’, 4 ‘with very little difficulty’, and 5 ‘easily’. Self-assessment data have been found to be reliable as they correlate significantly with language proficiency (Bachman & Palmer, 1989). Goldburg’s study (2013) on the relationship between the actual L2 writing ability and the self-assessed writing proficiency supports the reliability of self-assessment data.
The gathered data were analyzed statistically using SPSS 20. First, the data were factor analyzed using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to produce a posteriori taxonomy of strategies. Before having PCA, the suitability of the data for factor analysis was checked in terms of its Barlett’s test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (Pallant, 2011). The analysis found that the KMO index was .967 and the Barlett’s Test of Sphericity was significant at the .000 level indicating that the data were factorable. The identified factors were then named based on the underlying strategy items that provided high loading. When an item provided high loadings to more than one factor, a decision was made regarding with which factor the item was best grouped. Moreover, a descriptive analysis by computing mean scores was also employed to measure the intensity of use and it is considered low when the mean is between 1.00 and 2.44, moderate between 2.45 and 3.44, and high between 3.45 and 5.00 (Oxford, 1990). Finally, independent samples t-tests were performed to answer the question of the difference in the use of strategies between successful and less successful students. In this case, students scoring 36 or more in the self-assessment were grouped as successful learners, while those scoring 25 or less were considered less successful, leaving out those scoring between 26 and 35.

Results and Discussion

Results

Question 1: What strategies do Indonesian senior high school students use in learning writing skill of English?

The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) discerned twelve factors with an initial eigenvalue 1 or greater explaining a cumulative variance of 57.68% (see Table 1). Factor 1 got high loadings (more than .3) from ten strategy items and it accounted for 33.44% of variance of learning strategies of writing. The items mainly dealt with correcting mistakes by reading, rewriting, and noticing mistakes. It also included strategies to be aware of and correct which words or grammar rules give the greatest trouble, strategies of reading text regularly when writing to check the satisfaction of the work, strategies to remember the meanings of words or the patterns by writing them, and strategies to make sure that each sentence was accurate and perfect before writing another sentence. Therefore, this factor was named self-monitoring strategies because there is tendency, from the underlying items, that students somehow use the monitor system to correct their work.

Factor 2, in addition, explained 4.41% of the variance. Six strategy items provided high loadings to this factor, including such strategies as thinking about rhetorical steps, the use of language features, and communicative function of the text types when writing, writing various kinds of texts, such as descriptive, narrative, news item, etc. Moreover, Factor 2 also consisted of strategies of having attention to feedback given by teacher or friends, and strategies of having attention to the use of transition signal within paragraph to show unity of idea. As such, this factor was described as language-focusing strategies.

Table 1. The factors of strategies of learning writing skill and their variance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Strategy Category</th>
<th>Variance (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Self-Monitoring Strategies</td>
<td>33.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Language-Focusing Strategies</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Planning Strategies</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Metacognitive Affective Strategies</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Cognitive Compensation Strategies</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factor 3 accounted for 2.98% of the variance of strategies to learn writing skill and obtained high loadings from seven items that chiefly dealt with pre-writing strategies, such as reading resources to collect information before writing, preparing for a writing plan, doing mind-mapping to generate and cluster ideas, and creating an outline for the whole content and organization. Moreover, such strategies as trying to have a clear argument before writing, writing right away when the argument and the structure of ideas is clear also contributed to this factor. Since these strategies involved activities prior to writing process, this factor was called planning strategies.

Factor 4 obtained high loadings from five strategy items and it explained 2.55% of the variance of learning writing skill. This factor involved strategies allowing students to control their personal feelings when writing, such as trying to relax whenever they feel afraid of using English in writing and giving themselves a reward or treat when they do well in writing. In addition, metacognitive awareness such as thinking about their progress in learning, having clear goals for improving their writing skill, and trying to find out how to be a better writer also provided high loadings to this factor. Thus, it was described as metacognitive affective strategies.

Factor 5, moreover, was called cognitive compensation strategies which explained 2.25% of the variance and consisted of five strategy items. Two of them were cognitive in nature, including strategies of analyzing English words by dividing them into parts and trying to find patterns in English. The other three strategies were compensatory, including making up new words when not knowing the correct ones in English, and using words or phrases with similar meanings in English or even in the first language.

Factor 6 also obtained high loadings from five strategy items and explained 2.02% of the variance. This factor was described as self-evaluating strategies because it dealt greatly with revising process of writing, such as strategies of having revision to improve the clarity, the style, and the content of the writing. Moreover, the layout of the content and the grammar were also the focus of revision.

The rest were factors that explained less than 2% of the variance each. Factor 7, for example, explained 1.88% of the variance with nine strategy items mainly concerned with social aspects of learning such as discussing the topic with others, asking friends or teacher to correct, and asking for examples of how to use a word or expression in English providing high loadings to this factor. Moreover, strategies of focusing on the writing process also contributed high loading to this factor. These strategies included using pictures or other visual aids in writing, thinking about differences between English and Indonesian, and keeping editing while writing. As such, this factor was defined as social process-focusing strategies.

Factor 8, moreover, accounted for 1.77% of the variance which covered four strategy items. This factor mainly dealt with the practice of writing, such as writing letters or messages to
friends, writing notes or reports in English, as well as writing articles for bulletin or school magazine. Therefore, factor 8 was described as authentic practicing strategies.

Next is factor 9 that explained 1.66% of the variance with five strategy items providing high loadings. The items were enormously concerned with meaning-based strategies, like trying to connect shorter sentences into longer sentence to clarify meaning, trying to use a lot of vocabularies, deleting or changing a word, a phrase, or a sentence when the meaning is not clear, trying to make use of complex grammatical structures, and memorizing proverbs or beautiful expressions to enhance and improve the writing. As a result, this factor was said to be meaning-focusing strategies.

Factor 10 was described as vocabulary developing strategies. This factor explained 1.61% of the variance which covered five strategy items about vocabulary exposure, such as remembering a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used, using new English words in sentences so that they can be remembered easily, using the English words in different ways, writing new English words several times, and trying to use correct punctuations when writing.

Factor 11 accounted for 1.58% of the variance which was loaded by five strategy items about metacognitive commencement strategies. Within this factor were strategies of planning writing schedule, finding ways to use English, noticing if nervous when to write, jotting down a few words and then working up notes into an essay, and thinking carefully what to achieve in writing.

The last one, factor 12, explained 1.49% of the variance. This factor was described as mental processing strategies with four strategy items providing high loadings to it, including writing the main ideas first as a guideline, writing ideas bearing in mind, writing sentences to apply certain rules, and writing new material over and over. The complete presentation of the strategies is enclosed in Appendix 1.

**Question 2: To what extent do they use the identified strategies of learning writing skill?**

The result of the descriptive analysis of the use of each strategy category as well as overall strategies is displayed in Table 2. The table shows that the intensity of use of overall strategies was at the moderate level (M = 3.03), suggesting that the Indonesian senior high school students sometimes used all of the reported strategies. Further inspection of the use of each strategy category revealed a similar finding, i.e the students used the strategies at the moderate level, with eight strategy categories being used with a mean score higher than 3.00 and the other four strategy categories being used with a mean score lower than 3.00. In this case, metacognitive-affective strategies (M = 3.34) and self-monitoring strategies (M = 3.31) were the top two strategy categories used the most frequently and metacognitive commencement strategies (M = 2.85) and authentic practicing strategies (M = 2.48) were the two strategy categories with the lowest frequency of use. The mean score of use of authentic practicing strategies was even almost at the low range of use.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Intensity of use of strategies of learning writing skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Affective Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Monitoring Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Process-Focusing Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Evaluating Strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 3: Is there any difference in the use of strategies of learning writing skill by successful and less successful learners?

The result of the comparison to find the significance of the difference in the use of the twelve strategy categories is presented in Table 3. As the table shows, the differences in the use of strategies by the successful and less successful learners range from .42 (the lowest difference) for social process-focusing strategies to .72 (the highest difference) for vocabulary developing strategies. The independent t-test analyses indicated that the successful learners used the twelve categories of the strategies significantly differently from the less successful learners. All of the differences were significant at the .000 level (two-tailed test) with higher mean scores being reported by the successful learners. It implied that the successful learners used the twelve groups of strategies more frequently than the less successful learners did.

Table 3. The difference in the use of strategies of learning writing skill by successful (N=174) and less successful learners (N=214)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Categories</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Monitoring Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>10.568***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language-Focusing Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>9.958***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>8.984***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Affective Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>9.592***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Compensation Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>10.347***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Evaluating Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>9.160***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Process-Focusing Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>6.542***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Practicing Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>8.995***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning-Focusing Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>9.758***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Developing Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>10.737***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Commencement Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>6.679***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

The present study reveals twelve posteriori taxonomies of strategies of learning English writing skill that altogether explained a cumulative variance of 57.68%. This indicates that the instrument used in the present study is able to reveal more than a half of the total variance of strategies of learning writing skill.

Out of the twelve strategies, the first one, self-monitoring strategies, could explain about one third (33.44%) of variance of strategies of learning writing skill. This implies that performance in writing to a large extent depends on how the learners employ self-monitoring mechanisms in their learning. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) describe that monitoring is an internal system of learners to process information consciously. The editing function of the monitor exists when students are trying to edit the writing and correct ungrammatical sentences.

The second category found in this research was described as language-focusing strategies which explained 4.41% of the variance. In his earlier research Mistar (2011) also found the instance of the use of form-focusing strategies, by which the learners pay a great deal of attention to linguistic aspects of English learning. This finding implies the necessity of having explicit or implicit form-focused instruction to improve students’ writing skill. The form-focused instruction should also cover the teaching of text-structure which is found to significantly affect the writing performance of Arabian learners of English (Amer, 2013). Lighthbown and Spada (2001) argue that form-focused instruction can give advantages for students in terms of both speed and efficiency of learning, as well as in terms of proficiency.

Then, planning, metacognitive affective, cognitive compensation, and self-evaluating strategies may be clustered into a group of strategies that explain around 2.5% of variance each. All together, the four strategy categories explain 9.8% of the variance. As long as the planning strategies are concerned, the present study supports previous findings. Planning strategies have been found to be effective to improve literary interpretation skill (Kieft et al., 2006) and writing achievement (Chen, 2011). Similarly, Torrance et al. (1994) called learners who used a great deal of planning strategies as planners as opposed to revisers and found that planners showed higher productivity in writing than revisers and mix strategy users. Surprisingly, however, Johnson, Mercado, and Acevedo (2012) found pre-task planning did not have any significant effect on lexical and grammatical complexities and had only minor effect on writing fluency by Spanish-speaking learners of English.

Metacognition and affective strategies also play roles in learning to write. Nunan (1999) defines metacognitive strategies as “learning strategies that encourage learners to focus on the mental process underlying their learning” (p.310). In the present study, metacognitive strategies were found to cluster with affective strategies. Saville-Troike (2006) explains that affective factors in the forms of attitude, motivation, and anxiety level significantly influence second language learning and teaching. In the present study, the learners were found to relax when being afraid of using English in writing and to give self-reward when doing well in writing as affective strategies that lower their anxiety level.

Regarding with cognitive compensation strategies, Anitah et al. (2008) define that cognitive activities may consist of all activities that take place in the brain in order to acquire a foreign language. Relating this definition to the micro- and macro-skills of writing proposed by
Brown (2007), it can be said that cognitive strategies can promote micro-skills of writing which deal greatly with word, patterns, and meaning which work absolutely in the brain of the writer. The cognitive strategies, however, vary among learners as they may employ different language processing strategies (Cohen & Macaro, 2007). Thus, teachers should be aware of and understand differences in cognitive processes of the students so that they can provide teaching-learning activities that suit to the students’ cognitive strategies. The compensatory elements, moreover, are in the form of looking for words in the first language and finding synonyms in the target language when being stuck in writing. That the learners use their first language in writing English has also been explicated in a study by van Weijen, van den Bergh, Rijlaarsdam, and Sanders (2009).

Then, concerning about self-evaluating strategies, the present study is consistent with that of Mistar (2011) that the learners employ self-evaluation strategies to learn a new language as a separate category of learning strategies. This taxonomy is quite different from Oxford (1990), who illustrate that self-monitoring and self-evaluating strategies are under metacognitive strategies. In addition, Kieft et al. (2006) and Chen (2011) refer these strategies as revising strategies. That some students prefer the use of revising strategies is also admitted in Torrance et al.’s study (1994), in which they group the subjects into those who prefer planning, those who prefer revising, and those who like to do both planning and revising.

The last group of strategy categories found in the present study consists of strategy taxonomies that each explains less than 2% of variance of strategies of learning writing skill. Within this group are social process-focusing, authentic practicing, meaning-focusing, vocabulary developing, metacognitive commencement, and mental processing strategies. As far as authentic practicing strategies are concerned, Brown (2007) recommends that teachers provide as much authentic writing tasks as possible and this stands as one of the nine main principles of teaching writing skills he proposes. Moreover, the emergence of meaning-focusing strategies in the present study is consistent with that of Mistar (2011). The use of vocabulary developing strategies, furthermore, will develop the learners’ competence in micro-skills of writing in which they focus on graphemes and orthography patterns of English as well as macro skills of writing in which they focus on contextual use of vocabulary items. Thus, explanation and exploration of meanings (Harmer, 2007) may be pursued to support learners’ use of vocabulary developing strategies. Then, the metacognitive aspects of writing are also found in the pre-writing stage. Finally is mental processing strategies such as writing what is thought. Oxford (1990) subsumes mental processing activities as part of memory strategies.

In terms of the frequency of use of strategies, the present study found that metacognitive affective strategies obtained the greatest mean score indicating that the students used metacognitive affective strategies in learning writing skill the most frequently. This is interesting because these strategies are part of indirect strategies (Oxford, 1990) and they are supportive in nature, i.e. they "provide indirect support for language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation and empathy and other means" (Oxford, 1990:151). The fact that the students use indirect strategies more highly than the direct strategies such as mental processing strategies, meaning processing strategies and language processing strategies that Alnufaie and Grenfell (2012) call process strategies may stand an explanation for the relatively poor result of teaching writing skill in Indonesia. The data of students’ self-assessment revealed that those who thought themselves less successful in learning writing outnumbered those who thought successful.
The low use of authentic practicing strategies seems also to be related with the context of English teaching, in which English is a foreign language. As a result, the availability of authentic media for writing like letters, bulletins, magazines, and notes were limited. Brown (2007) pointed out that authenticity in teaching writing is about emerging classroom writing as a real writing act. If writing in classroom is taught to enable students to interact through written forms, they will be able to communicate through writing in educational, business, or personal setting (Weigle, 2002). As such, providing authentic writing practice in classroom is obligatory.

The last point to comment is the finding that successful learners tend to use the strategies more frequently than the less successful learners. This finding is consistent with the findings of several other studies, though they deal with learning English in general. Mistar (2006), for example, found that the use of learning strategies was the best predictor of English proficiency among Indonesian university students. Park (1997) also came up with a conclusion that learning strategies affected learning proficiency significantly among students of English in a Korean university. In Palestine Khalil (2005) found that the overall learning strategy use was affected by the learners’ proficiency level. Similarly, Wu (2008) found that high proficiency and low proficiency learners in Taiwan used different strategies. In the context of learning writing skill, Chen (2011) found that pre-writing strategies and revising strategies positively correlate with students’ writing achievements. Thus, the present finding implies that trainings of the use of writing strategies should be designed for less successful learners so that they will be able to use the strategies as much as the successful learners do. Expectedly, they will then be able to perform as well as their counterparts, the successful learners. To this point, practices to write authentic pieces of writing such as notes, messages, and articles should be prioritized as the use of authentic practicing strategies was found to be the the least.

Conclusion

This study investigated the categories of strategies of learning English writing skill by Indonesian students of English and it yielded twelve strategy categories that accounted for 57.68% of strategy variance with self-monitoring strategies being the most explaining factor (33.44%) and mental processing strategies the least explaining factor (1.49%). All of the strategy categories were reported to be used at the moderate level (M=3.03) with metacognitive affective strategies being the most frequently used strategies (M=3.34) and authentic practicing strategies being the least frequently used strategies (M=2.48). Finally, successful learners were found to use all of the twelve strategies more frequently than less successful learners did. These findings call for classroom strategies-based instructions to be specifically designed for developing the writing skill of the less successful students.

About the authors:
Dr. Junaidi Mistar is a senior lecturer at English Education Department, Islamic University of Malang, Indonesia. His research articles mainly concerned with strategies in learning English and classroom assessment have been published in Melbourne Papers in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, AJELT Hong Kong, Korea TESOL, and TEFLIN Journal, Indonesia.

Dr. Alfan Zuhairi is a lecturer at the English Education Department, Islamic University of Malang, Indonesia. He earned his doctorate degree from State University of Malang, Indonesia. His research interest concerns with language learning strategies and language attrition.
Mr. Firman Parlindungan is a non-permanent lecturer at the English Education Department, Undergraduate Program, Islamic University of Malang. He has completed his masters degree from the Graduate Program of English Education Department, Islamic University of Malang, Indonesia.

References


Appendix A Posteriori Taxonomy of Strategies of Learning English Writing Skill

Factor 1: Self-Monitoring Strategies
1. I read my writing and correct mistakes.
2. I rewrite my composition by correcting the mistakes that I notice.
3. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
4. Before I consider my text as finished, I read it again to be certain it is worth reading for someone else.
5. I try to be aware of and correct the words or grammar rules that give the greatest trouble.
6. I read my text regularly when writing to check whether I am satisfied with it.
7. I try to remember the meaning of words or the patterns by writing them.
8. I check if each sentence I write is accurate and perfect before I write another sentence.
9. I constantly check the grammar in my writing.
10. I write more than one draft before handing in the final product of the essay.

Factor 2: Language-Focusing Strategies
1. I think of rhetorical steps of the text when writing in English.
2. I think of the use of language features of the text when writing in English.
3. I think of communicative purposes of the text when writing in English.
4. I write various kinds of texts in English (descriptive, narrative, news item, etc.).
5. I pay attention to the use of transition signals within paragraph to show unity of ideas.
6. I pay attention to feedback given by my teacher or friends about my writing.

Factor 3: Planning Strategies
1. Before writing, I do mind-mapping to generate and cluster my ideas.
2. Before writing, I create an outline for the whole content and organization.
3. I always make a writing plan before I start to write.
4. Before I start writing, I read about the topic and collect information from different sources.
5. I try to have my argument clear before starting writing.
6. I start writing right away after I have a clear argument.
7. I like to start writing when both ideas and structures are clear in my mind.

Factor 4: Metacognitive Affective Strategies
1. I think of my progress in learning English writing.
2. I have clear goals for improving my English writing skill.
3. I try to find out how to be a better writer of English.
4. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English in writing.
5. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in writing.

Factor 5: Cognitive Compensation Strategies
1. I analyze English words by dividing them into parts that I understand.
2. I try to find patterns in English.
3. I make up new words if I do not know the right one in English.
4. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
5. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Factor 6: Self-Evaluating Strategies
1. I do revising to improve the clarity of my writing.
2. I do revising to improve the style of my writing.
3. I do revising to develop the content of my writing.
4. When revising, I focus on the layout of the content.
5. When revising, I focus on grammar as well as ideas.

Factor 7: Social Process-Focusing Strategies
1. I discuss the topic of writing with others (my teachers, my classmates, etc.).
2. I ask my friends or my teacher to correct my writing.
3. I ask for examples of how to use a word or expression in English.
4. I use pictures or other visual aids to get ideas in English writing.
5. I think about the differences between English and Indonesian to avoid making mistakes.
6. I interrupt myself when I notice that I have made a mistake in writing.
7. I stop after each sentence or paragraph to relate ideas together and get more new ideas.
8. When I revise, I rearrange sentences and paragraphs to make ideas clear.
9. I keep editing until I finish writing the whole passage.

Factor 8: Authentic Practicing Strategies
1. I write letters to my friends in English.
2. I write messages to my friends in English.
3. I write notes, letters, or reports in English.
4. I write for wall magazines, bulletins, and school magazines in English.

Factor 9: Meaning-Focusing Strategies
1. I delete or change a word, a phrase, or a sentence when the meaning is not clear.
2. I try to connect shorter sentences into longer sentences to have the meaning clear.
3. I try to use a lot of vocabularies.
4. I try to make use of complex grammatical structures.
5. I memorize proverb or beautiful expression to enhance and improve my writing.

Factor 10: Vocabulary Developing Strategies
1. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
2. I use new English words in sentences so that I can remember them.
3. I use the English words I know in different ways.
4. I write new English words several times.
5. I try to use the correct punctuations when writing.

Factor 11: Metacognitive Commencement Strategies
1. I plan my schedule so that I have enough time to write in English.
2. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
3. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am writing.
4. When I am going to write a text, I jot down a few words and then I work up my notes into an essay.
5. Before I start writing, I think carefully of what I want to achieve and how I am going to approach it.

Factor 12: Mental Processing Strategies
1. I write the main ideas first as a guideline.
2. I write what I am thinking about.
3. I write sentences to apply certain rules.
4. I write new materials over and over.
Arab National Identity Crisis: Political Strategies and The National Unity Conflict in Munis Arrazzaz’s *Alive In The Dead Sea*

**Ahmad Mohd Alkouri**  
School of Language Studies and Linguistics  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

**Raihanah M.M.**  
School of Language Studies and Linguistics  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

**Ruzy Suliza Hashim**  
School of Language Studies and Linguistics  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

**Abstract**  
This paper explores the conflict between the Arab political strategies with its nation in order to identify the struggle of the Arab nation with the state system (nation-state) and the Arab nation’s struggle for its unity. The concepts of new nationalism and old nationalism are used in the analysis in order to expose the conflict between the ethnic nationalism *Haweyya Qawmeyya* and the new political nationalism *Haweyya Wataneyya*. These two aspects of the nationalist struggles highlight the crisis, known as Arab Spring that afflicts the Arab world today. It is argued that the suppression of the political struggles to assert a new civic state identity collides with the original ethnic identity. Drawing from the novel of Munis Arrazzaz’s *Alive In The Dead Sea* that shows the protagonist’s struggle with two forms of nationalist ideals, we illustrate how the novelist foreshadows the Arab national unity crisis with its political strategies and the current conflict that beleaguer the present Arab world.

**Keywords:** Munis Arrazzaz, Arab National Identity Conflict, Arab Nationalism, *Haweyya Qawmeyya, Haweyya Wataneyya,*
Introduction

Munis Arrazzaz was a prominent writer from Jordan and a son of a nationalist leader in Albaath Party; the leading party of Iraq and Syria. In his first novel Alive In The Dead Sea (1982), Arrazzaz points out a sensitive issue that could be a main cause of conflict between Arab politics and the national interests. The issue that Arrazzaz problematises in his novel is significant due to the conflict between the political ideology of the State towards nation-building ideals and the nationalist ideology. This nationalist ideology refers to the Arab national identity that indicates a common identity of all nation-states of individuals from different Arab nations and nationalists based on mutuality of the Arab culture irrespective of geo-political boundaries. These two types of identities, one based on political ideology and another grounded on mutuality of ethnicity of Arabs have created a great tension in the Arab identity. Therefore, this paper examines the differences between the political national identity and the cultural national identity as presented in the novel. Furthermore, it discusses the consequences of the conflict between both ideologies. How is national identity constructed in the narrative? How is the notion of national identity different from that of the Arab identity? These questions will form the basis of the discussion into Arrazzaz’s Alive in the Dead Sea.

Munis arrazzaz and the sarab National Identity

Previous scholarly studies on Arrazzaz reveal the political inclination of his novel. Arrazzaz’s novel portrays intellectuals, aside from the political leaders and nationalists, as showing more reality and consistency to the fractured Arab national identity. As Qutaiba Alhabashneh (2008, p. 8) comments, “It exposes a relationship between politics and literature”. In addition, Nazih (2001, p. 87) states on the comic style used in the novel that “Munis Arrazzaz’s humor is directed at the bitter and hard circumstances of the national struggle ever since the beginning of the century.” Besides, Arrazzaz was well known as a political critic as Alhabashneh (2008, p. 31) extends his views that the novelist “was a political writer in Al-ra’y newspaper”. Abdullah Redwan’s Ase’lah fee Arrewayah Al-Urduniyyah (2002) highlights the representations of political oppression, and the nationalist struggle for the Arab unity in Munis Arrazzaz’s writings. Similarly, Nazeeh Abunedal, (2001, p. 24) considers Arrazzaz as prominent in expressing the idea of “freedom” and the struggle for the “unity of Ummah”. While these scholars have collectively pointed out the politics that is the focus of Arrazzaz’s novel, they have not presented the crux of Arab crisis which arises from the conflicting ideologies of the many nation-state systems in the region that divides and disintegrates the collective Arab nation.

Primarily, an important issue in the foreground is the origin of the Arab nation. The first premise to understand is that the Arab nation is considered as one Muslim nation, or as scholars identify it, “the overwhelming majority of Arabs are Moslems” (Carmichael, 1943, p. 148). Thus given the religious sensibilities of the majority, the collectivity of the people as described within Islam is as well significant. As Barakat Halim (1993, p. 348) asserts, “the Arab world [is] a single unit rather than as a number of nation-states”. The Muslims are defined within Islamic parameters as being part of a unified Ummah, or one united nation. Historically, the Arab nation was a united nation under the Muslim khalifah for more than a thousand years. However, the colonial invasions of the Arab world had left the Arabs divided into many separated political entities based on the division of colonial power that broke up the Arab Muslim world map. The collective Arab nation became several autonomous countries, each with its own set of governance and administration which ultimately created a fragmented Arab nation. Zubair Hasan states that, (1998: 51) the Muslim world today “stand divided”. Post-colonial Arab States
became a copy of its former colonizers with the management of these countries imitating the Western governance. M.Ghayasuddin (1986: 6) expands on this issue, “the west has managed to keep the power of Islam divided and defused”. Therefore, these different forms of governance, instead of unifying the Arab world based on shared ideals, language, history, religion, and culture, have created a sense of identity estrangement between members of the otherwise collective Arab nation. In other words, the sense of Ummah, or a collective identity based on mutuality of faith in Allah (SWT) as seen from an Islamic perspective, is frail in the current Arab peninsular.

This fragmentation is obviously expected as an impact of the colonial practice of divide and rule which makes the management of different Arab states easier. As a consequence, the collective Arab ethnic identity or Haweyya Qawmiyya, has become a state-based identity, or Haweyya Wataneyya. The latter exists because it is entirely based on a particular nation-state which is dependent on the political sovereignty of the independent State. Therefore, this is a direct copy of the western view of the concept of nation-state. Thus despite the religious commonality of this region, the Arab nation’s colonial legacy has erased the sense of brotherhood and fractured the Ummah mind-set among the people. As Steve Tamari (1996:1) explains “Like other peoples around the world, most speakers of Arabic did not identify themselves as belonging to a particular national group until quite recently. Modern Arab nationalism is a product of 19th- and 20th-century transformations”. As a result, the Arab identity had experienced a silent crisis since the period of the Arab states’ independence from colonial invasion. The term “silent crisis” is used to highlight that the dissatisfaction is not acted upon but lies seething beneath governance of normalcy. The Arab nation longs for a return to the old unanimity.

In addition, the struggle that the Arab people are experiencing is rooted in the numerous figure heads that compete for the independent sovereignty of an otherwise mutual landscape. As Rami G. Khouri (2008) argues:

> Led by presidents and rulers of sovereign states, sub-national ethnic and tribal leaders, and local militias and warlords, these identities and forces compete for the allegiance of a predominantly Arab population in the Middle East that has not had the opportunity to freely express its political sentiments or affirm its identities for many decades, perhaps even centuries. (p. 42)

The conflict between the Arab political authorities and the nation and nationalists is rooted deep since the postcolonial era and the end does not appear imminent. That conflict leads the Arabs’ national identity to an unprecedented crisis. As seen in fiction, Arrazzaz’s first novel Alive In The Dead Sea (1982) represents this viewpoint where he depicts the conflict between the ideology of the nation for the Arab unity and its contradiction with the political ideology of state identity. Arrazzaz’s novel is uncannily visionary because he predicts the unrest that has sparked in many Arab nations which can be attributed to the tensions arising from the contradictory ideologies.

The Arab model of modern situation is somewhat dissimilar from a Western model. However, Benedict Anderson’s (1983) renowned concept of the “imagined community” is somewhat applicable to the Arab context. Anderson (1983: 6) defines nation as “an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.” In his illustration of a nation, Anderson further explains that albeit the people of a nation can never fully know or meet all the members, they might think of each other as communities sharing some similarities. This concept corresponds with the notion of Haweyya Qawmeyya which presents the collective Arab
identity. Khalil Rinnawi (2006) comments that the imagining of new sense of community in the Arab world is developed based on "new" Arab historians and intellectuals of the Renaissance Al-Nahda period. For this new sense of community to emerge, people must see themselves as "groups who live parallel to other groups" where they share religion, history, language, customs, values, and so forth. Most people who belong to these groups will never know, meet or even really understand the people in their parallel groups, but they imagine that they are a community with a "deep, horizontal comradeship" (Rennawi, 2006, p. 8). Yet when the imagined sense of commonality is fractured by contesting nation-state values, the collectivity is both hindered and flawed.

In Alive In The Dead Sea, Arrazzaz depicts the protagonist Enad Ashahed as an individual championing for the collective identity of the Arabs and Arraed as an authoritarian campaigning his political agenda. The analysis in this paper uses them as the key instruments to position and identify the Arab national identity crisis today. It is significant to introduce the protagonist’s position in the novel before the main discussion on the two concepts of Political Identity and Ethnic Identity begins. Firstly, the story describes the protagonist Enad as someone who insists on the Arab unity as a crucial solution to the Arab identity. He escapes Jordan for Lebanon due to the oppressive authority with the hope that the new place will give him the freedom to champion his cause. His dream of Arab unity drives him to start his journey with Lebanese authoritarian Major Arraed who initially welcomes Enad’s mission. Araed subsequently gives up the idea of Arab unity and asserts his own political agenda which causes Enad to be entrapped in another state system that privileges the state identity and rejects the collective ethnic identity.

**Assertion Of Ethnic Identity (Haweyya Qawmeyya)**

Enad knows the Arabs are one nation but the strategy of “divide and rule policy” (Akhtar Hussain Sandhu. 2009) is applied to maintain the fragmentation and divide the nation into several nations. Enad feels a strong sense of attachment to the Arab unity as he says: “the country of unity is the home of all Arabs alike” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 202), thus allowing him to find a new “home” in Lebanon as promised by Arraed. Therefore, his decision to assert the Arab national identity based on ethnicity is part of his believe in the Haweyya Qawmeyya of the Arabs which he thinks is the ideal form of collective identity in which Arabs should return.

As previously stated, Enad’s unconditional belief of Arab unity regardless of the political borders drives him to be exiled to Lebanon. In this sense, Enad does not recognize the modern geographical borders of the Arab nation-states and puts his faith in the original Haweyya of Arabs, the ethnic identity. In other words, Enad considers his belonging to the national identity based on ethnicity, but not based on the political borders drawn by colonization. His idea of being an Arab as an individual with the aspects of the entire Arab ethnicity allows him to be a member of that collective Arab ethnicity. Milton Esman (1994, p. 27) in Ethnic Politics, defines the substance of ethnic identity as “The set of meanings that individuals impute to their membership in an ethnic community including those attributes that bind them to that collectivity and then distinguish it from others in their relevant environment”. It is this ‘collectivity’ or ‘Haweyya’ that ‘binds’ Enad as an individual to the Arab community despite its disintegration due to geographical demarcations.

United in their objective to resist the enemies and to assert collective identity, Enad and his cousin Methgal bond together in the fight against the Israeli attack. As Enad says; “A sound of bomb shells. We ducked down...that was near...I whispered: no this was launched by us...you don’t know military” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 72). The conversation directs the situation from the battle field to expose the sacrifice of individuals to win over the enemy. Enad and Methgal are
not trained for military service, but they do fight together in the battle field against the attack of Israel. As Enad states; “If I am still alive I will record this day and tell my child about the sacrifice of his father” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 73). The narrative clearly exposes the sacrifice of an individual’s life for the sake of the entire nation’s freedom. Both Enad and Methgal are members of the bigger group that resist colonial invasion and reject outsider interference by asserting and only accepting the Arab national identity. As a result, Enad’s participation in the Lebanese Fight with Israel is a clear indication of his principles of Arab ethnic unity. Although Enad is a Jordanian, his voluntary act to fight for Lebanon is testimony to his ideological standpoint regarding ethnic national unity. His sense of belonging to the collective Arab nation is in keeping with his loyalty to the Arab nation. Enad’s views of his identity is akin to how a sociologist describes “the ‘core’ of ethnicity” that which is situated “in the myths, memories, values, symbols and the characteristic styles of particular historic configurations.” (Anthony D. Smith. 1994, p. 50). Hence, ethnic nationality in the case of Enad has more importance and assertion compared to the political nationalism or the state nationality.

A fundamental belief in Enad’s mind is the necessity to have unity among the Arab nations given their shared ethnicity. Enad as a poet attempts to write a novel on the Arab’s world conditions; however Methgal criticizes the “fragmented structure of the narrative”, for which Enad replies: “You say fragmented? Of course fragmented… isn’t the human… Aren’t I… Aren’t you… fragmented? Aren’t we?” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 222). The answer from Enad explains the individual attachments to the larger Arab ethnicity which is akin to Brown’s definition of ethnicity as an “instinctual bond” (1994, p. xii) which cannot be explained by rationality. Therefore, this ethnic bond does not consider the political identity of state sovereignty.

Another episode that illustrates the individual’s belonging to an ethnic group and the exclusion of the Other by resisting colonization is when Enad and the Lebanese Mariam, guard the sea from the outside interference of Israel. Enad says; “They say that Rashedieh came under heavy attack with bomb shell…Tyre too… But Mariam is guarding the sea…” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 141). Both Enad and Mariam target one dream of freedom and unity regardless of the political borders, despite being from Jordan and Lebanon, respectively. This ‘Other’, in this case the Israelis and their invasion of Lebanon, inadvertently reunites the two characters based on the mutuality of their Arab identity (Gellner, 1982). Enad and Mariam thus are symbolic of the two states of Lebanon and Jordan, and their mutual struggle against Israel is akin to a return to the original identity of the Arab nation as they stand together against a common enemy regardless of their political sovereignty.

Contradiction and Confrontation
In asserting ethnic identity and Arab unity, efforts by a nationalist may appear in conflict with the political ideologies and strategies of the Arab nation-states. Enad’s belief in nationalism involves his rejection of the state-system of nepotism. Enad understands the need for a paradigm shift vis-a-vis Arab politics towards enhancing a collective national identity. He condemns the Arab political strategies as seen in an episode in the narrative during a ceremony held by the Jordanian government; “I loathe the minister of culture. He sits there on his chair that he sees as an imperial seat. I only see it as a toilet seat which he got because of our machine guns and not his education or university degree” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 208). Enad condemns the political authorities for their nonchalant attitude towards individuals who, in Enad’s point of view, have sacrificed their lives to remain loyal to the Arab identity.

In addition, politics is used as a tool to assert the state-led identity at the expense of Arab unity.
Enad’s view of ethnic identity opposes the authoritarian reaction to the individual right of asserting the ethnic national identity. Enad’s poem on this issue is censored due to its questionable content. As the minister explains to him, “the one who objected to the poem was an employee in the Department of Censorship” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 109). This censorship exasperates Enad as he questions the curbing of freedom in the society. Enad’s actions thus is rooted in his need to assert his rights in the society especially loyalty towards his Arab nationhood.

However, Enad’s uncompromising mission of uniting the Arab people based on ethnic commonalities inadvertently has unintended repercussion especially when dealing with others. For instance he refuses to keep a maid in his home thinking she might be a spy to the authorities: “I dismissed the maid. She may be a member of the intelligence department” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 62) Enad’s decision to dismiss the maid is due to his fear of the political authoritarians to block his ideas of Arab unity. Albeit understandable, Enad believes that in the return to the unity as an origin of the Arab ethnic identity is the main cause that would consolidate the Arab power.

**Political Identity (Haweyya Wataneyya)**
The Arab political strategies which followed to maintain the state ideology after independence are oppression and suppression to the nation. Accepting the fact that the Arab nation becomes fragmented and divided will only serve the political authorities for their longevity in leadership. As Jean-Pierre Filiu (2011, p. 7) comments, the Arab regimes “were breaking records of longevity”. Therefore, implementing the new nationalism that serves the state interests is the main cause of the national interests of the entire Arab nation. Concerning the point of the hidden agenda of the Arab political practices with its nation will divulge the silent crisis of the Arab national struggle as the narration reveals. Therefore the following analysis imposes the political strategies of Arabs in order to assert the state political identity instead of the ethnic national identity of Arabs.

**Assertion Of Political Identity (Haweyya Wataneyya)**
The role of government is to lead the nation and manage the opposition parties; Arraed teaches Enad about the nation and about the leader of the country whom he deems as an authoritarian. Enad says, “He lectured me on the differences between negative and positive times of the ruling government and its oppositions” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 103). Arraed does his job of initiating the strategies of the state as a political entity. Arraed desires to change Enad’s mindset towards the state identity since Enad’s exile to Lebanon with the hope of pursuing the ethnic identity for the sake of Arab unity. Arraed refers to the ideology and strategies the governance should follow to rule the country especially when it has an opposition party. Therefore, according to Colonel Jayne A. Carson (2003, p. 2), “Nation-building is the intervention in the affairs of a nation state for the purpose of changing the state’s method of government.” This refers to various strategies the authoritarians should use to lead the nation in such way to serve the state ideology. Arraed elucidates to Enad about the necessity to build the nation according to the present situation of Lebanon as a state among the Arab states. In that sense, Arraed tries to convince Enad of his role as an authoritarian in leading the country though it causes destruction of the Arab unity based on the ethnic attachments. From this point, Arraed begins to change his direction away from Enad’s mission of Arab unity.

Decidedness, manipulation, and oppression are the main strategies of Arab leaders to rule their nations. Arraed’s mindset has fundamentally permitted all the possible ways and strategies
weather legal or illegal to maintain his leadership and position as an authoritarian. For example, he is a politician in Lebanon who occupies the “fourth ranking position after the president” while being aware that the leadership “needs decisiveness” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 240) and should have manipulative manner. To illustrate, Arraed asks Enad a simple question, (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 240):

- If I plotted against you…and you were the president, would you sentence me to death?
- He answered in childish foolishness: Of course not. You are my friend…we went through things together, and…
- I answered immediately: “…go away from here; you are not fit to be a man of the state”.

The conversation between Arraed and Enad leads to the strictness and sharpness of Arab leadership which can never allow a friendship or other ties to destroy the authority. Besides, Arraed confesses the importance of decisiveness for the sake of the authorities’ longevity. As Dina Shehata (2011, p. 1) comments, the Arab leaders’ longevity in administration as exemplified by the Egyptian leader Husni Mubarak: “For almost 60 years, Egyptians have celebrated Revolution Day on July 23, to commemorate the day in 1952 when Gamal Abdel Nasser and the Free Officers overthrew the monarchy to establish a republic.[…]For the 18 days from January 25 to February 11, when Mubarak finally stepped down, millions of Egyptians demonstrated in the streets to demand, as many chanted, ”isqat al-nizam,” "the fall of the regime." Jean-Pierre Filiu (2011, p. 8) provides a reason widely practiced in the Arab authoritative states as a result of the ideology of decisiveness, “this dynastic institution led to the coining of the concept of jamalaka—literally “repumonarchy”, an amalgam between “republic” and “monarchy”—to describe the transmission from father to son of the supreme authority even with a republican constitution.” However, Arraed with his intention continues his strategies that maintain the longevity of these political figures and their power-centeredness.

The Arab authority, as Arraed represents, takes over the leadership and uses self-rule and centeredness to rule. The conversation shows the necessity of autocracy in leading-positions Arraed (Arrazzaz, 1982,) says:

Those talkative intellectuals are only born to babble in cafes like women…not to lead the nation…we are the ones who make history because we are decisive and firm. As for them, they only write history. (p. 239)

The Arab authority simply implies the decisiveness as the main way to lead the nation. Manipulation, firmness, strictness, decisiveness and oppression are the mainstream skills and strategies of the Arab politics to lead the nation.

The assertion of Arraed’s view of the political identity drives him to use multiple ways and strategies against Enad to stop his assertion of Arab unity. The following episodes elucidate Arraed’s plans and strategies to destroy Enad as an individual who asserts the Arab unity Haweyya Qawmeyya.

Firstly, the discussion of political national identity and assertion of the state identity works against the national interests of Arab nation. His own confession exposes the assertion of the authority on the importance of political national identity while denying the nations’ demands for an ethnic-based national identity. As Arraed says: “I said to myself, I have to mould this Enad otherwise – another authoritarian- Abdulhameed will be angry with him” (Arrazzaz. 1982, p. 90). It is clearly a starting mission of the State authoritarian Arraed toward the exiled political Jordanian Enad. The word ‘mould’ indicates to Arraed’s un-acceptance of Enad’s mission and
current state of mind. Arraed needs to reform Enad to match the state’s rules and identity formation. Therefore, the ideology is entirely different between Enad as an individual and the authoritarian Arraed. The narration exposes two different ideologies between them to reveal the conflict between the nation’s will and the politics’ will. Delanty (1996, p. 3) summarizes the issue of new and old nationalism: “Taking up some of Rex’s suggestions, the main difference can be said to consist of the fact that the new nationalism is primarily a nationalism of exclusion, while the old nationalism was one of inclusion.” (See Hobsbawm, 1991, 1992a, 1992b; Salecl, 1993; Ignatieff, 1994; Judt, 1994). The new nationalism in the Arab world has taken place as Arraed implements the state territory and focuses only on the Lebanese nation. Then, Arraed excludes Enad as an alien or otherwise have to form him to be a member of the new national identity of Lebanon.

The first episode starts when the Lebanese authority realizes that Enad’s mission might affect their positions or ideologies in the country. Major Arraed as an authoritarian tries to mould Enad to be lenient and open-minded in order to accept the state’s rules and visions. Arraed feels the leadership is based on the leader’s ability of decisiveness and strength with oppression as opposed to Enad’s way of intellectuality and theories shown in this dialogue: “Despite Enad’s negativity and idealism he envies me because I am decisive and firm. So, shall I envy his intellect? I don’t think so” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 239). It seems that Enad’s idea of Arab nationalism and unity is based on ethnicity and has no place in Lebanon; it runs contrary to the new civic nationalism as a political state system. As Rex (1996) argues the same idea of new nationalism and its fragmentation to communities. He states that;

This new cultural nationalism differs from the older kinds of nationalism in that it is not about cultural superiority, but is about preserving differences. The colonial or social imperialist idea of nationality has been replaced by one that stressed the incompatibility of cultures and the inability of the welfare state to provide for all. The new nationalism is a nationalism of social insecurity and discontent. (p. 3)

Therefore, Major Arraed in that sense serves the country’s political identity. Although they both belong to the same Arab ethnicity, same religion, same language, and same culture or at least close cultural aspects, Arraed places his loyalty to Lebanon rather than the Arab race.

Secondly, various tactics are used by Arraed to ensure that Enad subscribes to the Lebanese state ideology. Bodyguards are used to keep Enad under surveillance. The authorities use a new style of habituation and disciplining towards Enad to make him obedient and follow the government policy. Arraed says; “I ordered my men to shoot his car. Then he agreed to keep my men as bodyguards all the time with him. My men were professionally shooting up and down the car but not his body. I indoctrinated him deeply with the scary feeling” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 90). The Lebanese authority as a state authority in the Arab map tries to assert its own specific identity. Arraedd’e strategy plays an effective role to prevent Enad’s mission of Haweyya Wataneyya. Arraed’s plan is deviously executed. Thus, the authority never leaves a chance or even a hope to a nationalist to emerge a new way of civic nationalism of Arabs based on the nation-state system. Meanwhile, the Arab authority emphasizes the political nationalism.

Thirdly, Arab politics uses manipulative plans as part of its strategies and ideologies to maintain power and control the state even though it destroys the national interests. The following is Arraad’s confession by forcing the nationalist Mariam, who fights the Israeli, to write a fabricated letter to trap Enad since he deeply admires her nationalistic resistance and loves her (Arrazzaz, 1982):
I instructed to arrest his friend Mariam. He came to me as I expected... I called an inspector and slapped him harshly in front of Enad and shouted loudly: “free her immediately”. Before Enad left the place another inspector came and put a big file on the table - exactly like how I planned - suddenly there were some pictures of Mariam naked in a compromising position. Besides, a letter in her hand writing, cursing the president and accusing him of insanity....and describing Enad Ashahed –here is the view point- as foolish and idiotic and now is the proper time to exploit him to ‘serve our plan’ because I trapped him easily in my love. (p. 91-92)

This could be a clear sign of the authority’s strategies against the nationalist in the Arab world. Mariam never committed act of any betrayal. However, Arraed entangles the relation between Enad and Mariam knowing they are nationalistic to the Arab nation and in specific Enad believes in Mariam’s conception of resisting the enemy to assert the identity. The purpose of this deceitful manipulation is to push the individual Enad to change his principles of ethnic identity and trust the authoritarian Arraed’s formation of state identity. Finally, the authority achieves what they want through whatever means to assert the new nationalism as political national identity. 

Fourthly, in order to assert the political identity and progress of the state, many attempts are successfully implemented by Arraed, though it may oppose the national unity of the Arab nation. The following scene shows the end of Enad’s mission and his entire struggle and sacrifice when Arraed was having a meeting with the chief detective from Jordan “who previously tortured Enad and imprisoned him” (Fahad Salameh, 1997, p. 9-10). Enad comes to realise that the country of unity is no more. He is shocked with the incident and became unable to accept it. The sight makes Enad doubt his senses and consciousness: “Meyeballes protrudes, belying my sight. I said to myself, I must be in a dream. I shouted inaudibly, p. But the chief is a detective officer in the enemy sister-state!” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 13-14) The confusion of consciousness is the product of the sudden change in positions, lack of principles in determining enemy camps from friendly ones. This makes individuals unable to differentiate between reality and illusion. That episode explains the contradiction between the individual and the authority which can be said in different words; the crisis between the Arab nation and its politics.

Finally, the last scene of the political crisis in the Arab world is when “Arraed said lustfully: do you still with your squinting-look, see the priorities of revolution and not those of the state? The chief (from Jordan), by the priorities of the state is my friend. Go, Apologize to him and I will forgive you” (Arrazzaz, 1982, p. 14) Arraed is loyal to his state more than to any other concerns including that of the collective Arab unity. Arraed serves his state and plays his role as an authoritarian to achieve sovereignty to his country Lebanon. He thinks that the ethnic attachment to the collective Arab nation should be abolished and a new nation based on the political border of the state of Lebanon should be strengthened. As Eriksen, (2001, p. 45) comments; “ethnicity as something that can be changed, constructed or even manipulated to gain specific political and/or economic ends”. Therefore, the civic identity based on state and its nation formation is the main structure of political ideology in Arraed’s mind. He looks at his nation-state as an entity to build and structure according to the country’s rules and conditions.

In summary, Arraed views the state as an entity that is concerned with the political and geographical borders irrespective of the collective Arab interests. Arraed’s vision of his state of Lebanon is as an independent entity that develops its own nation albeit part of the Arab nation. Accordingly, Walker Connor (1994, p. 22-66) argues that the nation building focuses on “assimilation into the larger society and the eradication of ethnic peculiarities,” therefore, Connor believes that “in world history it had produced more nation-destroying than nation-
Connor’s view indicates to the nations in the world as being destroyed rather than built due to the ignorance of the ethnic groups’ ties and bounds in the one hand. On the other hand, nations are split and divided due to the political strategies and policies to build the state irrespective of the Arab nations’ interests. The example for that is the Arab nation identity crisis until now.

Enad’s journey with the authority drives him finally to be manipulated and oppressed by the Lebanese authority. This manipulation is to change his personal interests and values. In that sense, the situation indicates a clear conflict between the political national identity and the ethnic national identity. As Miller explains, the issues of political intentions are in opposition to the will of the ethnic community. Miller (1997) explicates,

Scholars have long detailed, and for the most part accepted, a dichotomy between civic (or political) and ethnic (or cultural) nationalisms. The first asserts the primacy of political ideals in the composition of a national identity; the second posits the ethnic group as the fundamental basis of nationhood. (p. 10)

Enad Ashahed as a symbol of the Arab nation presents the resistance and assertion of the national ethnicity. The oppressed Arab national masses start when confronted with its own authority. The scenes of blood and death are shown as a spreading plague that infected the angry nation as the Arab Spring shows every day. However, the real defense of the Arab authorities to the nation is brutally dreadful. Therefore, the strategies of the authorities are to destroy the nationalists. The authority’s assertion on the political national identity comes first. Therefore, the ethnic national identity- especially for Arabs- is smashed by the Arab state policy. Finally, the civic identity which cannot fit the Arab nation, is taking place through the time and periods of autocratic regimes instead of the Arab ethnic national identity. In the end, the individual suffers and pays the price for the political will of the State driven authorities.

4. Conclusion

What Arrazzaz tries to reveal in his novel is that Arab politics and the nation state system have caused the Arab state’s fragmentation and weakness. Copying the western nationalism concept has led the Arab state to be split into many nations. Ghayasuddin (1986, p. 4) in the forward of his book The Impact Of Nationalism On The Muslim World states that “The political fragmentation of the Ummah was achieved by the imposition of the nation-state system. If despite this, the disintegration has remained peripheral, it is because of the political culture of the Muslim masses, which has resisted the breakdown of their traditional societies.” The influence of the Nation-state system on the Muslim nation is widely adopted by the Muslim political authorities. The Muslim nation has fallen apart into many different states with different ideologies in operation. This has led to a deterioration of brotherhood or ummah, as each state is concerned only with itself. Zubair Hasan (2003, p. 51) states that: “…the position of the Muslims in the world today is not very elating. Economically they are weak and vulnerable and politically they stand divided.” Arrazzaz through his fiction demonstrates that the authority of Arab states’ practices is the main crisis of Arab national identity. Therefore, the cruelty of the authority’s oppression after the creation of the state system in the Arab region has made the Arabs backward, ruining their lives, and leaving the Arabs in dissolution and catastrophe. The current Arab revolutions prove the vision of Arrazzaz regarding the crisis of the Arab national identity.
Another important point explains the extent and degree of an Arab authority when it uses all the ways to keep itself in power and maintain ruling the country. The people who ask for their rights are humiliated. Abdel Razzaq Takriti (2011, p. 1) expresses his opinion about the present Arab demonstrations: “Something we couldn’t get hold of was preventing us from representing ourselves or defending our rights.” The blatant lack of democratic practice is the advertent result of autocratic rule. In Alive, Enad becomes exiled and struggles in Lebanon for the national rights. Although, there are many nationalists who want the freedom and the progress among the Arab nations, they still cannot get the chance to prove the right ideas they have. Finally, they found themselves living with the past only. In reality, Arab generations are still growing up with a keen awareness of two realities: that they do not have any word in choosing their leaders due to the “political oppression” (quoted in Salameh F. Shareen Audi 1997, p. 6). Thus, the Arab countries are still living the colonial present but within its own leaders. Adeel Malik and Bassem Awadallah, 2011, p. 2) comments that “the challenge for the Arab world is no different: offering greater political representation is desirable” as (Huntington, 1991, p. 21) affirms that “The Middle East region remains the world's authoritarian stronghold and has yet to experience a wave of democratization”. Enad as one of those nationalists who has left his country and travelled to another country to find the way of developing Arab nationalism and identity as one identity. Practically, the system of nation state does not fit the Arab nation. Therefore, the states have failed due to their adoption of their copied western system. In reality, the Arab demonstrations are the main evidence to prove the failure system of the nation-state. Finally, throughout the incidents between the Arab policies and the nationalist policies, the outcome of the struggle is predictable, since there is no compatibility between the individuals who resist and the political power that crushes them. This drives the individuals on the main to despondency, or turns them into outsiders and exiles, even in their own homeland. Out of the scenes of oppression and conflicts, Arrazzaz tries to expose the reality of individuals in the Arab world, the frustration and depression of Arab individuals under the hopeless autocratic regimes. Nevertheless, and because of their actual frustration in the real world, the idyllic dream of having to back the unity of one national identity remains true in many individuals up to today.

About the Author:
Ahmad Mohd Alkouri is an English lecturer who has experience in teaching to the local and international students. He obtained his master in 2006 from UPM Malaysia and currently attached with UKM for PhD. His writing focuses on the Arabic literature in English especially the postcolonial era. Engaging the identity and nationalism as portrayed by Arab novelists become his main target as well as the social, economic side of today Arab world. At present, he is working on a research on the fragmented Arab national identity in a Jordanian novelist.

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World Englishes in the EFL Teaching in Saudi Arabia

Dr. Ali Mohammad Al-Asmari
Community Service and Continuing Education
King Khalid University, Abha, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

M Shamsur Rabb Khan
Department of English, College of Science and Arts,
King Khalid University, Abha, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Abstract
Teaching English as Foreign Language (EFL) in the universities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is limited within the traditional boundary of Standard American or British English. Since EFL curriculum in higher education is strictly rule-governed the scope for other varieties of English is neither recognized nor encouraged. This does not mean that there is no scope for including World Englishes into EFL teaching. The experiences in the EFL teaching show that non-native speaker (NNS) populations of KSA need efficiency in English language for either job purposes or for communicating with other NNS populations, or pursuing higher studies. The young Saudi learners, who use English as means of communications for teaching, trade, tourism, politics, and media, exhibit keen interest in learning Englishes other than the standard format. This paper takes an overview of the English language learning in KSA. It investigates the status of World Englishes and how it will contribute to enhance students’ awareness if the EFL teaching takes into consideration other forms. It discusses the need for World Englishes in learning and teaching EFL at the university level for making a case for understanding other varieties of English. The paper shows the possible drawbacks in incorporating World Englishes into the classroom EFL teaching. It also shows how the World Englishes can be infused into the teacher’s training and EFL teaching programs. Finally, the paper, after examining the healthy trends in other countries, recommends for including the World Englishes into EFL curriculum in order to motivate Saudi learners to explore the possibility of going beyond ‘only American or British variety’.

Keywords: World Englishes, EFL, curriculum, KSA American English, British English, NNS Population, Varieties of English
Introduction

English has emerged as the major foreign language to be taught in schools, colleges and universities in the Middle Eastern region, especially in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) (Liton, 2012). In recent decades, KSA has experienced unprecedented social, economic and political development. In order to meet the developmental needs, the Ministry of Education introduced English as a foreign language (EFL) in school curriculum in 1925 (Al-Ahaydib, 1986). The development of EFL teaching in KSA is based on two policy documents that were envisioned to clearly define the aims and objectives for EFL. The documents show the objectives thus: “to equip the students with at least one of the living languages, in addition to their native language; to help them acquire knowledge of arts and sciences from other communities; and to help them take part in the service of Islam and humanity” (Al-Hajailan, 2003).

This paper takes an overview World Englishes in EFL teaching in KSA. It explores the possibility of including World Englishes in the EFL curriculum. The paper also assesses the benefits and significance of bridging the gap between English that Saudi students learn and the World Englishes that is exploited around the world.

English in Saudi Arabia

As against the second language varieties that are institutionalized in India and Nigeria, the English varieties in KSA and Japan are primarily performance based (Alshumaimeri, 1999). This is significant because the role and functions of English in the educational, administrative, and socio-cultural context of KSA where it is used as a NNS variety, is quite different. In practice, there is a big difference between performance varieties of English and that of institutionalized varieties (Kachru, 1992).

The fundamental features of the performance based English varieties contains: (a) a nativization process of the registers and styles has been put in place; (b) in the socio-linguistic context of a country, varieties have a wide range of uses; (c) they should possess a range of register and style; and (d) they should have a body of nativized version of English that has developed as localized variety containing formal and contextual characteristics (Kachru, 1992). Because of their distinctive features of these fundamental features, Indian English, Ghanaian English and Nigerian English are the varieties known all over the world.

In KSA, English has a sound and a perceptible presence in the Saudi educational system because of some distinct features: English is taught and learnt as EFL, and as discussed before, English is essentially a performance based variety. Given the urgent need for it, EFL, in the first place, is used as a means for communication, diplomatic exchanges, bilateral trade, and tourism. Above all, English is a medium of instructions in educational institutions and universities in KSA. Second, KSA is a leading country in the Middle East in employing a large number of foreigner teachers, doctors and other professionals who stay here for a long time. In educational institutions, hospitals and business establishments, Saudi people need to communicate with the NNS of English from countries, for example, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Philippine, and Sri Lanka (Alshumaimeri, 1999). Above all, English language is a medium of instruction for various courses in the BA program, for example, medical science, other science subjects, engineering, business administration, information science, and diploma courses of intensive English. At present, English language proficiency is one of the eligibility criteria for admission in programs like medicine and dentistry, and in higher degree, the need for English language is prerequisite. However, Saudi students as well as a great majority of foreign teachers from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sudan are unaware of World Englishes, and hence, seek to imitate native accent like those of Americans and British, which they consider as Standard English.
Saudi students, on the other hand, believe that gaining proficiency in Standard English is the ultimate goal and these foreign teachers are well short of a native speaker’s efficiency, hence they lack confidence.

Teaching EFL at the university level in Saudi Arabian is limited within the traditional boundary of Standard American or British English (Alshumaimeri, 1999). Since EFL curriculum at school level and in universities is strictly rule-governed, the scope for other varieties is yet to be recognized. The EFL teachers are asked to follow the prescribed curriculum while designing teaching strategies both for classroom instructions and evaluation. Scholars and students who have gone to the US and other western countries under the King Abdullah Scholarship Program have helped in shaping this mindset among Saudi students and academics. The academic environment of KSA, therefore, is totally unaware of varieties of English such as Malaysian English, Philippine English, Indian English, and Singaporean English. In such a situation, enabling the students to learn the desired levels of proficiency in English language is not only an unrealistic goal but is also a contributing factor in the stigmatizing the patterns of local users (e.g. teachers and students), which may lead to a “culture of complaint” rather than “a culture of confidence” (Bolton, 2012).

**Status of World Englishes in Saudi Arabia**

Kachru (in Quirk and Widdowson, 1985) has done the characterization of English, on the basis of how it is communicated all over the world, into three coordinated circles: the Inner circle, the Outer circle, and the Expanding circle (see Figure-1). Under the Inner circle come the countries, for example, Britain, USA, Canada, and Australia, which are treated as native speakers. Those who represent the Outer circle use English as a second language, and where it is given official recognition. For example, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Nigeria, Philippines and Singapore come under the Outer Circle. Brazil, Egypt, France, North and South Korea, Indonesia, Japan and Saudi Arabia come under the Expanding circle. In these countries English is uses as a foreign language.
KSA comes under the Expanding Circle where English is taught as foreign language (Kachru in Quirk and Widdowson, 1985). In KSA, English language varieties can basically be categorized as performance varieties (Kachru, 1992). Saudi EFL teachers are mostly trained in native speaking (NS) environment that affects English language teaching in their home countries. The NNS Saudi teachers inculcate American or British or Australian English in classroom teaching.

This does not mean that there is no scope for including World Englishes into EFL teaching. It is has been observed that the focus of EFL teaching of NNS communities is to prepare them for using English for academic and job purposes or for communicating with other NNS communities in the absence of NS communities. For instance, the Saudi learners use English as means of communications for trade, tourism, politics, and media (Alshumaimeri, 1999). Young Saudi learners show keen interest in going beyond the standard format. Broadening the classroom EFL teaching, therefore, will contribute to enhance students’ awareness of other forms of English. Learning and teaching EFL at university level in Saudi Arabia has reached a point where there is a need for subtle change from the traditional EFL teaching policy towards World Englishes, and should look beyond ‘only American or British variety’. In principle, NSS varieties of English differ from NS varieties, which pose a challenge in the teaching of English language.

Since EFL curriculum in higher education is strictly rule-governed the scope for other varieties of English is not recognized. In the English curriculum of KSA, a single set of grammatical patterns and basic vocabulary forms are prescribed (Strevens, 1992). McArthur (2003) observes that Standard English is generally considered “the variety most widely accepted, understood, and perhaps valued within an English speaking country.” Today, along with China, Greece, and Brazil, KSA is credited to have the continuously expanding numbers of English learners in the world (Crystal, 2003). English curriculum in Saudi universities is heavily loaded with linguistics and translation as the core subjects. The role and functions of English language are believed to be determined by the people’s attitude towards it. There is a positive feeling among the people of KSA towards English. A great majority of Saudi population believes that English is very important to the future prosperity of the country, and that this language is required in various domains of development. For example, a number of empirical studies carried out in the last two decades on the Saudi people’s attitude toward English language in general and learning it in particular show a high percentage of acceptance to it (Saudi Gazette, December 11, 2012).

Need for World Englishes

The numerous studies on the need for World Englishes focus on the basic features of national or regional Englishes, giving due importance to the linguistic details of self-determining varieties of Englishes (Bolton, 2012). Globalization has changed and continues to change the English language (Sacks, 2002; Steger, 2003; Friedman, 2005) in the spread of English across Arab culture, increasing number of NNS, the emergence of other varieties of English, the communication among NNS, and conditions for admission into medicine and dentistry. Kachru (1985) states that English language encompasses “a unique cultural pluralism and a linguistic heterogeneity and diversity”. There is, therefore, a need for English language learners to be ready for communication with the speakers of those varieties of English that are different from their own (Jenkins 2006). Moreover, a contextual change towards assimilating other varieties would
have a positive effect on learners’ ability to acquire English because it would enhance their
confidence level and encourage them to communicate in the target language (Cook, 1999).

Another positive factor is the rapid growth of the Saudi Arabian economy during the last
two decades, which is no longer entirely dependent on oil revenues. In addition, KSA is playing
a major role in supporting the world economy by contributing the international organizations.
Due to this, the development of the Saudi economy has fetched international recognition and
significance, making it a growing market for Asian and European countries. This has given rise
to an opportunity for KSA to maintain a sound diplomatic relationship with countries of both NS
and NNS. Economic as well as diplomatic relations, therefore, pose an urgent demand for human
resources who are well versed in English language.

Without doubt, English is considered as a tool for modernization, advancement, and
technological transfer, a viable means of invigorating and developing the economy of a nation.
Besides, as a vehicle for global communication, it helps in incorporating advancement in science
and technology into the national economy. Hence, keeping the growing significance of
globalized nature of economy in mind, the policy-makers and other stakeholders in KSA are well
aware of the importance of English, which can play a big role in the development of the country
vis-à-vis international relations and scientific-technological advancement (Saudi Gazette,
December 11, 2012).

Graddol’s (1997) points out three major issues closely related to the idea of “world
standard English”. First, there is a possibility that English would be broken into many different
languages. Second, there is a possibility that the American and British English would be taken as
models of standard. Last, there is a high prospect for the emergence of a new world standard
English. Graddol, rejecting David Crystal’s idea of a Global Standard English, envisions a
“polycentric” prospective for English standards. In support, Graddol presents various reasons
including the economic and socio-political changes for global spread of English (Bolton, 2012).

Visible Drawbacks

Given the socio-cultural background, it would not be viable for KSA for using the Inner
Circle Standard English as the medium of classroom instructions. Widdowson (1994) observes
that Inner Circle Standard English “is not only a means of communication but also a symbolic
propriety of a community, expressive of its identity, its conventions and values.” Another visible
drawback is the possible “nativization” of English in KSA, which is often followed by the
“Englishization” of homegrown language, and which could further pave the way for complicated
forms of linguistics patterns, e.g., lexical alteration, code-switching and code-blending, and
discourse and syntactic transformations. It seems likely that academics in KSA have been
reluctant to put World Englishes into practice, knowing that though the greater recognition
bestowed upon it in Asian and African countries in recent times, myriad obstacles for applied
linguistics still exist in areas such as pedagogic principles and practices. The official attitude
plays an important role, for example, academics in Hong Kong and the Philippines have begun to
admit local varieties of English and reject American or British varieties. In contrast,
educationists, students and officials in KSA wholeheartedly follow and welcome the American
English as the sole standard. Hence, the official rejection of local English has surely affected the
spread of World Englishes in this country.
On the global level, a very subtle problem is the center-periphery supremacy, which is termed as “English language industry” (McArthur, 2001). It affects, like any other commonwealth country, KSA since it relies heavily on textbooks and academic publications from the US and UK, the two countries possessing and controlling academic text publishing industry. Another visible drawback is the sheer neglect of literature and heavy dependence on only-linguistics approach in academic curriculum of universities in KSA, a country that follows the US and UK in teaching applied linguistics in its EFL curriculum, which failed to consider bridging socio-political vacuum through neutral applied linguistics. For example, there is not a single literature course from level one to ten of the BA English Program at the prestigious King Saud University, and hence lack of local literature like that of “Indian Writing in English” shows the outcome of such a one-way approach. EFL teachers both in the Expanding Circle as well as Outer Circle encounter various obstacles in terms of facilities, conditions, and resources for further research in the academic environment in KSA similar to those in the western institutions. Academics of EFL in the Expanding Circle find it difficult to have a say in major publications and journals.

**Infusion of World Englishes**

If World Englishes is infused in teachers’ training programs, it will help change the learners’ opinion towards the language and prepare them to realize the distinction between two the languages. Brown (1993) has shown the benefits of infusion of World Englishes into the TESOL programs. Kachru (1988) offers three fundamental components: (a) that there exists a repository of models for English, (b) that putting in place the localized varieties have realistic bases; (c) and that English is the language of all regions and peoples. The perspective of World Englishes needs to be introduced in teacher training programs since it helps eliminate linguistic bigotry and ethnic jingoism (Skutnabb-K, 1988). There is a need to create a class of English learners, who could pay attention to other varieties e.g., Indian English or Philippine English (Phillipson, 1992). A mutual collaboration and cooperation among English institutions in NNS countries can help share key information related to their localized varieties. The infusion of World Englishes into EFL programs can help local as well as expatriate teachers to be familiar with other varieties that are used all over the world. Also, there is a need for new varieties of teaching models and methodologies to infuse international intelligibility into Saudi learners.

During the last fifteen years, the infusion of World Englishes, alongside national languages and local languages, into the public places of the major cities of the world has received greater attention. Ross (1997) has pointed out the example of a Milanese suburb, where a hairdresser's shop is called *Smart Set*, a pub is named as the *Wonder Bar*, a designer shop has a name *Noblemen*, and a car park reads *Wind Parking Garage*. McArthur (2000) observes that in a survey of street signature in Uppsala city of Sweden and Zurich of Switzerland it was found that about 45% of Uppsala visual graphics and 58% of Zurich visual graphics used some kind of English, which is either bi- or multi-lingual signature. Under the Uppsala visual graphics, the signage varied between English-only or Swedish-only, English and Swedish, English and French, English and Italian, English, French and Swedish, Turkish/Arabic, and Turkish/Arabic and Swedish. Other notable works on the use of English in the signage of Expanding Circle cities include the studies of Schlick (2002) on Udine of Italy, Ljubljana of Slovenia and Klagenfurt of Austria, Dimova (2007) on Macedonia and MacGregor (2003) on Tokyo. In the studies mentioned above, English language signage is used to varyingly describe ‘creativity’.
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(MacArthur, 2000), ‘prestige and wealth’ (Dimova, 2007), ‘prestige, style and modernity’ (Ross, 1997), and ‘an extension of Japanese’ (MacGregor, 2003).

The infusion of World Englishes into TESOL programs can encourage the future teachers of English to learn and evaluate with utmost zeal as to how this language is used in various parts of the world. It can open up a new landscape of learning for them into which they can see that there are other varieties in addition to gaining knowledge about various models and methodologies of teaching (Brown, 1993). Moreover, it will help future teachers of English to broaden the repository of language varieties they have already learnt. Lastly, more research studies should be carried out to support future teachers of English, who can put in place novel approaches and strategies to better the universal distinctness of their varieties of English. Hence, the infusion of World Englishes into TESOL programs in KSA will surely be a significant step (Alshumaimeri, 1999).

There has been an increasing recognition to the World Englishes among academics and linguists of Asian and African countries that are under the Outer Circle. The academics in the US have shown interest to come up with clear acknowledgement to the growing importance of World Englishes. However, the academics in Europe, unlike those in the US, have yet to endorse the World Englishes with a positive feedback.

**Recommended Classroom Instruction**

In the classroom instructions, there is a need for the English language teachers to meticulously plan their teaching situations (McKay, 2002). First, they should determine the instructional goal, which must be based on that situation and should give due acknowledgement to the learners’ current English usage (El-Sayed, 1991). Second, English teachers should expose learners to other varieties of English in order to create future academics, who could be well-versed in World Englishes (Matsuda, 2003). Third, teachers can design instructional tasks that help motivate Saudi learners to learn other Englishes and interact with those who communicate in other varieties of English. Last, they should adopt a balanced approach whereby they must show cultural sensitivity to the situational diversities in which English is learnt and used’ (McKay, 2002).

In the Saudi EFL Classrooms, teacher can rise awareness through instructional activities and tasks by following reflection literacy, which aims at creating an understanding of reading and writing among Saudi learner (Han,2003) The EFL teachers can help the students develop analytical sense to lean other varieties of English spoken around the world. More importantly, teachers can introduce global setting in which English is used for creating a deeper understanding of the English in Saudi class room context, cultural sensitivity is very important and EEFL teachers are little recusant to plan lessons that are focused on culture. The students are shy or uncomfortable in when they are exposed to culturally and religiously sensitive contents such as dramatic video clips with music and semi-nude women (Mekheimer, M.A.A. & Dosri, H. A., 2011).

In a paper, Kachru and Nelson (1996) have examined the measures and approaches that can be adopted to put in place the World Englishes in the language classroom, advising several visionary techniques, which might be applied in teaching English over different educational environment, which includes teaching of new literature in English, teaching of discourse pragmatics and multicultural education. Brown (2000) has conducted a survey to explore the resources for teaching and research in the field of World Englishes, suggesting various areas of teaching techniques and agenda for applied linguistics research. With reference to applied
linguistics research, he suggested to focus on empirical studies of attitude development and change, textual studies on multicultural communities and longitudinal studies of values and attitudes, and which also includes research on areas of World Englishes that can help in second language acquisition. In addition, similar instructional research, which should focus on the comparative classroom-based studies, and which includes assessment of learning/teaching materials, on the three circles can be taken. Brown (2000) recommends a proactive role for the scholars of World Englishes in exhibiting leadership skills, designing texts and curricula, publishing papers, and organizing conferences and workshops to disseminate information to the English language professionals worldwide (Matsuda, 2002).

In the Saudi classroom instruction, English language teachers need to make it clear before learners that prescribed English variety is just the one variety and motivate them to introduce idioms and phrases of their native language for enriching the conversational dialect of English with colorful and creative elements” (El-Sayed, 1991). Both learners and teachers can have access to the International Corpus of English, which offers learning materials on various regional and national varieties of English. The learners and teachers can also watch TV Channels of NNS countries that telecast news and other programs in English language, for example, NDTV (www.ndtv.com) from India in which the anchors communicates in Indian English. Lastly, English language teachers need to impart instructions by focusing on motivational and intercultural skills which will support learners to be able “to communicate intelligently and learn a wide range of similar expressions from their native language (Jenkins, 2006).

Conclusion

As an Expanding Circle country, Saudi Arabia can adopt their own variety of English (Arabinglish or Saudinglish, for example), not just American English. Like Hinglish as in India or Singlish as in Singapore (Al-Abed et al, 1996). The policy making bodies can adopt a balanced approach to give space to other varieties of English (Alqurashi, 2011). Teachers in KSA, as they come from different cultural backgrounds, can implement World Englishes in EFL classroom instructions (Ibrahim, 2010). Today, the linguistic experiences of young learners in particular are becoming increasingly diverse, and, in this context, their linguistic worlds are not limited to physical space alone, but it roam about electronic space, educational travel and migration, holiday tours, media awareness and involvement, knowledge of popular culture, and the virtual space of the Internet (Bolton, 2012). One of the most exciting range of current research in the field of English language are those that are concerned mainly with the perilous arenas between and within particular linguistic communities, in which the usage of English is placed in proximity with other international, national, regional, and local languages. For a variety of social and historical reasons, the dividing line between Outer Circle and Expanding Circle contexts have become obscured vis-à-vis global contexts.

About the Authors:
Dr. Ali Mohammad Al-Asmari is Assistant Professor of TESOL and Vice-dean of Community Service and Continuing Education, King Khalid University, Abha, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

M Shamsur Rabb Khan is senior lecturer, Department of English, College of Science and Arts, under King Khalid University, Abha, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
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The Effectiveness of Feedback on EFL Libyan Writing Context

Najwa Alsayed Omar
Az Zawiya University, Libya

Abstract
Research suggests that as an important component of language, FL learners’ writing skill can be greatly enhanced by teachers’ comments particularly in the form of written feedback on students’ written products. This research was carried out to examine how effect is teachers’ feedback on writing error correction in EFL context. It seeks to identify the differences between two kinds of written feedback (coded and uncoded feedback) and students’ perception towards written feedback provided by their teacher. The research applied both qualitative and quantitative approaches employed on ten Libyan third year students. Data collection involved two writing essays, administration of questionnaire for students and interviews with four students. The findings of the research showed that students improved on their essay writing by committing lesser errors after receiving written feedback from their teacher on the submitted essays, but the coded group recorded more improvement in correcting the errors than the uncoded group. Further findings from the questionnaire and interviews revealed that the entire participants (four students) had a positive perception towards giving and receiving feedback. The study suggested that effective approaches on how to give suitable written feedback on students’ written essays should be considered by EFL teachers in classroom.

Keywords: coded feedback, correction feedback, uncoded feedback, perception, writing.
The Effectiveness of Feedback on EFL Libyan Writing Context

Introduction
Learning how to write is an important skill for ESL/English Foreign Language (EFL) learners. It is a challenging activity which requires a lot of thinking, planning, revising and editing (Murray 2004). In general, errors in grammar and rhetoric when writing are the most common errors committed by EFL students; they know what ideas to write about, but their knowledge of the target language to produce a comprehensible piece of writing is still insufficient. Teachers and researchers are keen on finding ways of teaching writing more effectively to motivate students to improve their written work. Feedback on students’ writing is one of the essential parts in teaching and learning writing in an EFL context (Williams 2001, Ferris 2002, Harmer 2001) as it helps learners to recognize their errors which subsequently lead to an improvement on their writing skills.

In this study, the term ‘feedback’ embraces the notions of “correction”, “marking”, “evaluation” and “responding”. It includes what Kobayashi (1992, in Kyoungrok 2010) terms as “correction feedback” which refers to the editing type and “evaluative feedback” with reference to the judging type. Feedback, whether it is given through corrections or comments, has the purpose of supporting students’ learning. Race (2005:95) cited four purposes for feedback: (1) It should help students to make sense of their work in some way, (2) It should clarify the need of learning by showing the students what they should be trying to achieve; what the outcome of their work should look like, (3) It should enhance students’ willingness to learn, and finally yet importantly, (4) Feedback should motivate the students to develop their skills. EFL writing teachers should use appropriate written feedback in order to get effective students’ reaction. This goes through motivating students to use their teacher’s written feedback.

Types of Written Feedback
According to the article entitled “A typology of written corrective feedback types”, Ellis (2009) distinguished between direct and indirect feedback. Direct feedback refers to highlighting the errors and providing the correct forms to the students. That is, the correct form is given in place of an incorrect form. Ellis (2009) stated that direct feedback has advantages because it provides the students with explicit guidance about how to correct their errors. However, Hedge (2000:98) argued that “the dangers of its spoon-feeding effect are that learners overlook their own role in the correction process and may become passive”. This is because students can just mechanically copy the ready-made correction without figuring out the reasons. On the other hand, indirect corrective defined as “providing feedback on student errors without giving the correct forms or structures” (Lee 2004: 286). Ellis (2009) had further divided the indirect feedback into coded and uncoded error feedback. When using the coded feedback “the exact location of an error and the type of error involved is indicated with a code” (Bitchener et al. 2005:193). However, for such feedback to be effective and to avoid misinterpretation of the codes, learners must understand what the codes mean, and such feedback must be consistent with and accustomed to the codes (Bartram & Walton 1991; Ferris 2002). The uncoded feedback can be seen as the teacher’s provided feedback in the form of underlining an error, circling or placing an error in the margin leaving students to detect as well as correct that error (Bitchener et al. 2005).

In the Libyan classroom context, teacher’s feedback on students’ written essays in English is a significant component of the writing classroom teaching and it is the teachers’ responsibility to mark and correct their students’ essays (Fatima 2010). The teacher provides feedback through writing brief comments on students’ writing or sometimes no comments at all, thus marking and
grading their writing. The teachers’ superficial treatment of students’ essays could actually impede students’ ability to write accurately. In addition, students mostly pay little attention to teacher’s feedback; the students are not asked to follow the feedback by rewriting their essays and then submitting them for re-examining. Thus, correction feedback provided to Libyan students must meet the condition of effective feedback in which they must be able to decode it, internalize it and use it to make judgments about their work (Nicol 2009).

Related Studies on the Effect of Error Feedback
The study by Nabei and Swain (2002) was conducted in the context of Japanese schools and the findings indicated that teacher feedbacks are often infrequent under ESL, thus hindering the interactive facet of ESL learning, which leads to slow progress on the part of the students. Nabei and Swain (2002) explored the effect of recast feedback in ESL classroom in relation to the learner’s responsiveness, awareness and understanding of the conditions of the secondary language being taught. The advantage of the study is that it relied on a case study as its primary research design is indicative of the details that are necessary in designing a competent ESL education programmes. Hyland (2003) focused on the written feedback given by teachers to ESL students in order to promote writing development. Under these conditions, the positive attribute of her review was that it identified the problems with traditional feedback mechanisms. For example, feedback focused on grammar correction is often discouraging and unhelpful to ESL students. The justification behind this is that ESL instructors often lack the necessary skills to explain the student’s problems while the students often lack the skills to understand the use of written feedback. Another positive attribute was that she supported her assertions with empirical data as well as relevant literature from other scholars who explored the domain of feedback and ESL education. As for the research gap in the study, after identifying both the positive and the negative attributes of feedback in ESL education, she was not able to identify how the strengths of using feedback can be utilized to overcome its detrimental aspects.

Based on the fact that revision has an essential role to produce good writing, Truscott & Yi-ping (2008) conducted a study which examined the effects of error correction during the revision process. The researchers compared the first and second draft of the students writing to see if the student’s improvement was achieved during revision or not. The first group “underline group” had their errors underlined and used this feedback in the revising the tasks while the other group “control group” did the same tasks without feedback. Their findings confirmed that correction helped students to reduce their errors in writing.

Bitchener and Knoch (2009) examined whether accuracy in the use of two functions of the English article system improves over a ten-month period as a result of written corrective feedback. Specifically, it investigated the effect of targeting two functional uses of the English article system: the referential indefinite article ‘a’ for referring to something the first time (first mention) and the referential definite article ‘the’ for referring to something already mentioned (subsequent mention). In this research, writing essay was as an instrument to assess the students’ accuracy in using two English article (a, the) for five times. In each of the five pieces of writing, the students were required to describe what was happening in a given picture and they had thirty minutes to complete each description. It was concluded that the students who received written corrective feedback outperformed those who received no feedback in all four post-tests even though all groups developed differently over time. The enduring effect on accuracy over a ten-
month period is an evidence of the potential for focused written corrective feedback to help learners acquire features of a second language. Concerning learners’ perception on correction feedback, Lee (2009) examined ESL students’ perspectives on teacher feedback. The findings indicated that the students' perception of feedback mechanisms often depends on the manner by which the ESL teacher conducts both assessment and feedback mechanisms.

The only study conducted among Libyan students was by Fatema (2010). The participants were five advanced secondary school students who have a good ability to write in English. By means of writing narrative essays, the findings revealed that Libyan students were given a feedback on the content of their writing, while the form was not given much attention. In addition, the error feedback was provided by either indicating to the position of the errors or by indicating the position and providing simultaneously the correct answer.

Realizing the gap in the previous research which focus on the ESL context, this study aims to explore the effect of coded and uncoded feedback from EFL Libyan students’ perception.

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

The current investigation was conducted as a case study which is defined as a study focusing on one “individual units; an individual student; an individual unit; a particular group; a particular class; a particular school, etc.” (Wallace1998:161). As pointed out by Tellis (1997), using both quantitative and qualitative data in a case study leads to “complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation (Tellis 1997 in Zainal 2007). Accordingly, for this case study, the researcher chose of EFL Libyan students who are joining the third year or level at the Libyan secondary school. It applied a mixed method design in which two types of data; quantitative and qualitative were collected and analyzed.

**Participants**

In this study, a total of ten English major Libyan students, third year at Almarkaziah School, Libya were the sample population. They were five males and five females aged 18 years old. Those students have a good level of vocabulary that enables them to write in English. Besides, it was the only one classroom which study in English language department at the time the data were collected. Out of the ten students, four focal students were chosen for the interview session in order to investigate their perception of using written feedback and error codes. The researcher conducted the interview with four students only because the answers given by them were almost alike, and therefore it was not necessary to interview more participants. The selection of the four students was done based on their willingness to participate in the study and their speaking ability to express their views clearly and coherently as they would be interviewed.

**Data Collection Instruments**

**Writing Essay: Two Essays**

The first set of data consists of essays written by the students, and feedback provided by the writing class teacher. Looking at the writing essay was one of the most widely used methods in examining teacher’s feedback to students’ written work (Fatma 2010, Ellis 2009, Sheen 2007, Bitchener et al. 2005, Ferris 2004, Han 2002).

**Questionnaire**
The students’ questionnaire was used to elicit information about the students’ perceptions of written feedback so as to collect the data needed to answer the second research question. The questionnaire was adapted from Fauzi (2005) and Kyoungrok (2010) due to the similar nature of the study conducted by them and the current study.

The students’ questionnaire consists of one section (seven items) requiring the respondents to rank their preferences on a scale of 1 to 5.

**Interview**

The aim of conducting the interviews was to expand on some of the topics touched on in the questionnaire. They were six structured questions concerning the participants’ willingness to receive error writing feedback, their preferences of the type of feedback and their perception toward their teacher’s feedback.

**Procedure**

**First Phase – Writing Essays and Rewriting by Students**

In this phase, the participants were required to write two drafts altogether throughout the research. The selected writing topic was given as part of their classroom writing assignment. For each essay, they were asked to write an essay of approximately 200 words and they were given about 45 minutes to write their draft and upon completion, the teacher corrected and commented on the essays. At the end of writing the essay, the teacher corrected the students’ writing in two ways. First, the teacher divided the students into two groups randomly: the coded corrective feedback group (N=5) and uncoded corrective feedback group (N=5). Secondly, the teacher used underlining and error codes for the coded group only and underlining for the uncoded corrective feedback group. The aim of this phase was to identify which was the more effective method (coded or uncoded feedback) in improving the students’ writing. The purpose for this comparison was to answer the research question one.

The researcher has explained to the teacher how to use codes based on checklist that was given to him (see appendix A for the checklist) . The teacher then had explained the error codes before the tasks were given. He had used those codes to correct two preliminary writing tasks to make sure that the students understand what these codes mean. The current study used revision codes adopted from Chitravelu (1995) as most of his codes are abbreviations of the error types (spelling- SP, tense- T) which would make the students understand and remember easily what those codes mean when the teacher respond to their essays and when they have to revise their work writing the second draft.

Once the teacher had commented on the students essays, the essays were returned to the students for revisions. The rewritten essays were then collected at a time and date convenient to the students. Each of the students at both groups (coded group =5 and uncoded group =5) wrote the two essays, giving a total of forty essays. The teacher was required to correct the revisions to see if the students had understood the written feedback. The researcher then conducted an analysis of the teacher’s feedback in order to identify the impact of written feedback in improving the students’ writing.

**Second Phase – Distributing The Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was administered in a single sitting. The students were present in writing class and were given an hour to complete the questionnaire.

**Third Phase – Conducting The Interview Sessions**
The interviews were conducted with each participant individually face-to-face and taped using an audio-tape recorder to ensure that all relevant information was not missed out so that accurate data was obtained. The interviews were conducted in English and each participant was interviewed at different times so that they would not discuss the answers.

**Method of Data Analysis**

**Writing Essays**

The data obtained from the writing tasks were subjected to a statistical analysis including percentages which were generated through the aid of the Microsoft Excel. They were presented in frequency distribution tables.

**Questionnaire**

The data collected from the participants’ responses to the questionnaire survey was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages that are computed using Microsoft Excel. They were presented in the form of frequency distribution tables. Descriptive statistics were calculated to find the frequencies for each of the questionnaire items.

**Interviews**

They were recorded and transcribed immediately in order to avoid missing any important point. The data was first analyzed individually. It was built on theoretical generalizations out of the process of attempting to explain, interpret and render meaning from the interviews as stated by Neuman (2006) which was taken into account in the current study.

**Results**

To address the first research question, a comparative measure design was used. The goal of these analyses was to compare the differences between the coded and the uncoded groups in terms of the number of errors marked. In order to identify the differences, the researcher counted the total numbers of errors made by the students in each category of linguistic items in the two groups’ writing. Table 1 compares the improvement results obtained from the analysis of the each groups’ essays writing (first draft and second draft).

**Table 1 Overall Improvement of Coded and Uncoded Errors Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Errors code</th>
<th>Improvement on first essay</th>
<th>Improvement on Second essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coded group</td>
<td>Uncoded group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>85.1%</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WF</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cap</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coded group</th>
<th>Uncoded group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>92.8%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WF</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cap</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen from the results displayed in the table above, the coded group achieved more improvement in correcting errors than the uncoded group. The coded group made a marked difference in the total number of errors in spellings, punctuations, tenses, and incorrect words. For instance, the coded group made 85.1% improvement in the first essay and 92.8% in the second essay in spelling errors while the uncoded group made less improvement (57.1% in the first essay and no improvement in the second essay). In terms of punctuations, the coded group was better since the percentage of improvement made by the coded group in their first essay is 75.8% and it increased to 86.6% in the second essay. However, the results revealed that the uncoded group students made 17.3% reduction in errors in the first essay and they recorded more errors which led to no improvement related to punctuations in the revised drafts.

In case of word choice and word form, the students in the uncoded group made less improvement than the coded group. For example, the uncoded group students were not able to correct errors and made more errors in the revised drafts regarding word choice in writing. They also retained the same errors (0.0%) in the first drafts and the revised versions of writing. On the other hand, the coded students group achieved 77.7% as improvement in the first drafts in terms of word choice and 25% in the second or revised drafts of writing.

However, both the two groups made improvement in the number of errors made in using tenses, capitalization, unclear words and space in the new paragraph. For example, in the first versions, the improvement made by the coded group is 100% and 86.9% in tenses and capitalization respectively and the uncoded group students’ improvement is 20% and 45.1% in the same categories. In addition, the two groups made good improvement in terms of unclear words especially in the first writing, i.e. 71.4% by the coded students group and 66.6% by the uncoded student group.

Further analysis showed that both groups made clear improvement (100%) in relation to the number of errors (singularity/plurality) in the two essays. On the contrary, both groups had difficulties improving the misused word category, i.e. in the second versions, the coded group students increased the errors from 7 to 13 while the uncoded students group retained the same errors without correcting them in the revised drafts.

Analysis of the Students’ responses to the Questionnaire and Interviews Questions

1. Would You Like to Get Feedback on Every Writing Essay?

The results for this item shows that the majority of the respondents (n=7) 70% reported that they like to get feedback on every written essay while (n=3) 30% of the students stated that they do not like to get feedback on every written essay. This shows that majority of the students believe that written feedback is important to improve their writing. This finding mirrored the qualitative findings from the interviews conducted with four students who expressed their willingness to receive errors in their writing. Participant “1” (P1, second group) answered the question in a direct way. He considered that teachers should indicate errors. As stated by “P1”,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>#</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>//</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>^</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“this would help him to know every mistake that he made in writing and then improve it”.
Participant “2” stated that “absolutely help me to know all my mistakes that I did when write and try to correct it”

2. The Students’ Perception of Teacher’s Use of Correction Codes
The participants’ responses revealed that the teacher does not use correction codes as indicated by more than half of them (70%). This is also further corroborated by the interviews results as all the participants agreed that the teacher never uses such error codes when he corrects their writing essays.

3. Students’ Perception of Teachers’ Written Feedback
Ten items in the question 4 measured information on the students’ perception of teachers’ written feedback, and the students’ responses to these items revealed the following results.

Table 2 The Students’ Perception of Teachers’ Written Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>S.A (1)</th>
<th>A (2)</th>
<th>Un (3)</th>
<th>D (4)</th>
<th>S.D (5)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I think it is important for teachers to correct students' written errors.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The different teachers I have had, gave feedback to my writing in different ways.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teacher's correction on my writing helps me learn and improve my writing.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. When the teacher used marking codes and symbols when marking my writing he/she explained the codes and symbols first.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I believe that application of symbols (e.g VT: Verb Tense, Sp: Spelling, Pro: The selection of Pronoun) is quite useful.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It is more helpful to give clear, direct instructions about my writing errors than suggesting a correction.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I always pay close attention to my teacher's</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
written feedback on my writing.

9. I do not make the same errors once the teacher corrects them.

10. I think it is better to write the feedback in the margins than at the end.

As can be seen from the results in Table 4, most of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the questionnaire items. However, only a very small percentage of the respondents stated that they were unsure, disagree and strongly disagree. It is apparent from the results that 70% (7 out of 10) of the students like to get written feedback and they do not have any fear of having their writing evaluated (item 1-2). This reflects how the students are aware of the importance of teachers’ feedback as a way to learn how to write better or to enhance writing skills in English. In addition, more than half of the students 60% strongly agreed that teacher’s correction of their errors in writing helps them to learn and improve their writing (item 4). In terms of error codes and symbols, there is a clear trend from all of the students that the application of symbols (e.g. VT: Verb Tense, Sp: Spelling) is quite useful (item 6). 60% of the students strongly agreed with the use of codes and 40% agreed with using them. A possible explanation of this could be that the students have found error codes efficient and easy to understand. Further analysis showed that 50% (n=5) of the students strongly agreed and 40% (n=4) agreed that they would not make the same errors once the teacher corrected them (item 14). This is also revealed by the findings obtained from the students’ interview responses. They all preferred their teacher to use error codes when he/she corrects their writing essays. P1 preferred error codes because it helps him to know the mistakes carefully. He explained “that is different maybe one day the teachers just show me the mistake and I do not know what this mistake or why, I know it’s wrong but I don’t know how to write the right way, so I prefer they use codes because help me know the errors carefully”. P2 also preferred that the teacher uses error codes to know his mistake simply. The same view was expressed by P3 who said the error codes help her to know her mistakes easily and never do them again in the next writing. Besides, error codes help P4 to understand the mistakes easily.

In addition, the interview results revealed that some of the error codes were difficult to be understood. P1, P2 and P3 stated that “SP” which means wrong spelling, is an easy code to understand. The question mark code “?” which means something is not clear, was considered as an easy code to be understood for P1 but not for P2 and P3. P1 pointed out that if the teacher uses error codes many times, it will help him to understand what they are used for.

4. The Extent to Which the Students Read their Teacher’s Written Feedback

Questionnaire item 5 that elicited information on the extent to which the students read the teacher’s written feedback revealed 60% of the students seem to be interested in reading the entire teacher’s written feedback. This indicates that students are aware of the importance of knowing their errors, and they hope to improve their writing abilities.

5. The Extent to Which the Students Pay Thoughtful Attention to their
Teacher’s Written Feedback
The responses to this item showed that many of the students are interested in paying thoughtful attention to their teacher’s written feedback. This is indicated by the high number of students who have given thoughtful attention to all, and also most of teacher written feedback, i.e. 60% have given thoughtful attention to all, and 20% to most of the teacher’s written feedback. However, only a small number of the respondents reported that they do not pay attention to any of the teacher’s written feedback. These findings could be related to the findings regarding the extent to which the students read their teacher’s written feedback, i.e., 60% of the students have read the entire teacher written feedback.

6. The Students’ Perceived Level of Understanding the Teacher’s Written Feedback
The result indicated that many of the students have problems understanding teacher written feedback. This is because half of the students (50%) reported to have understood only half of the teacher written feedback. This could be due to the legibility of their teacher hand writing as he wrote between the sentences. Whereas, only small number of students (30%) indicate that they have understood all the teacher written feedback. However, two students (20%) reported that they only understand little of their teacher feedback. This could be that the students did not pay attention to their teacher when he/ she explain the feedback given on their essays.

7. The Students’ Perceived Improvement in Their Writing
The result showed that more than half of the students (60%) think that they have improved a lot in writing. Furthermore, three of the students (30%) feel that they had improved moderately, i.e., they have been able to correct about half of the errors in their essays. In addition, two students (20%) see that they have improved little in writing. These findings indicate that written feedback could play a good role in improving the Libyan secondary students’ writing. Based on the interviews results, all the interviewees stated that teacher’s written feedback helped them to improve their writing and they found that error correction helped them to remember the previous mistakes that they made and avoid repeating them in the next writing. P1 stated "yes, it helps me a lot". P2 said, "yes, sure help me, because make me know what is problem and then correct it". The same view is expressed by P3 and P4 who said the teacher error correction helps them to understand the errors that they made.

Discussion
The findings proved that error correction helped the students to reduce their errors in writing in which they received teacher’s correction, and that the effect is valuable. Our major findings revealed that there are benefits of error correction found on the students’ revised drafts since all the students who had received correction on the errors in their first and second drafts were more successful in reducing their errors during revision. Thus, the findings of the current study are consistent with the findings obtained by many previous researchers such as Ashwell (2000), Chandler (2003) and Ferris (1997) in which error correction has a positive effect on improving students’ writing accuracy whatever was the type of correction. In identifying the most effective methods (coded or uncoded feedback) in improving the students’ writing in the current study, the findings indicated that coded feedback was more effective. This could be seen by the decrease in the number of errors in the coded group for which feedback was given. The coded approaches to feedback may allow learners to better concentrate on problematic issues without being weighed down by too much information and too many errors to process. This differs from what Lee’s study (2004) of coded feedback revealed. The researcher raised various issues regarding the
effectiveness of error codes. She thought that students’ real understanding of the error codes was questionable, especially when the codes were taken from different sources. She also mentioned the possible frustration learners can experience when they try to interpret the codes while correcting their errors, as well as the teachers’ time availability when they have to categorize a wide range of errors using codes.

Regarding students’ perception toward corrective feedback, the findings of the study were similar to the findings of other previous studies which demonstrate that students positively perceive written corrective feedback and believe that it is useful to help them improve their writing. The participants strongly prefer to receive corrective feedback on all their errors in writing. This is well supported by Ferris (2002) who noted that writing accurately engaged ESL students’ attention as they asked for correction feedback. The positive perception helps students to fully and thoughtfully attend to teachers’ feedback on their errors in writing. The findings showed that the participants paid thoughtful attention to their teacher’s explanation of their errors, and recognized the value of such written feedback in helping them improve their writing. This is consistent with the findings of several previous studies which revealed that students valued their teachers’ written feedback on their errors and ask their teachers to correct their errors. Otherwise, they might have been frustrated if this did not happen (Ferris 1995, Ferris & Roberts 2001).

In terms of error codes and symbols, there was a clear trend from all the students that the use of symbols (e.g T: Tense, Sp: Spelling) was quite useful which indicates that this type of written feedback is realized to be more useful and workable based on the students’ needs. A possible explanation of this could be that the students found error codes efficient and easy to understand. Similarly, findings from previous studies reported that the use of error codes and symbols was rated noticeably higher than error correction. Proud & Gatbonton (1996), for instance, found that students preferred this type of feedback, but only when their teacher gave them enough information on how to make use of the correction codes. However, this does not support the findings of Fatima’s (2010) research which presented a contradicting point of view. In her research, she reported that the teacher’s use of codes or symbols made the students unable to understand the types of correction.

This study has contributed to the existing literature about the effectiveness of feedback on students’ writing. Specifically, this study made contribution to pedagogical practices in EFL contexts as the idea of giving written feedback can be adopted by teachers to enhance their teaching methods, which, in turn, would help them to guide their learners more effectively to enhance their written literacy skills. In addition, the study was also significant because students need to be accurate when writing particularly in the academic and professional contexts. The importance of writing skill for students calls for changes to be made to the teaching practices of writing and the use of written feedback. Moreover, careful consideration of the nature of writing feedback may make it possible to understand the effect of feedback on improving writing. This study tried to discover how much the improvement the students made in their writing based on the feedback given by the teachers. This was very important since the teachers need to know if their feedback benefits the students. If it is so, then their efforts would have been worth it. However, if most of the students do not show any improvement, then the teachers have to consider more effective ways of giving written feedback to their students.
Conclusion
The purpose of the present study was to determine the effects of written feedback on EFL Libyan secondary school students’ writing. Generally, the findings of the study showed that teacher’s written feedback is useful and helpful to promote students’ writing. The results indicated that corrective feedback was effective in decreasing the students’ errors. The findings also enhanced our understanding of written feedback as a method in improving the writing ability among EFL students. It revealed the students’ general satisfaction with coded feedback and their strong preference of receiving written feedback on all of their written errors.

The findings suggested a number of ideas for further research. Firstly, the study was conducted in one Libyan school so the findings could not be generalized to other Libyan schools. Thus, the study should be replicated to include as many secondary schools as possible in Libya in order to provide more information about the whole Libyan EFL context of teaching and learning writing skill. This will help to gain more detailed findings to ascertain the actual writing correction practice in Libyan secondary school. Furthermore, the results of this study cannot be applied to EFL children who study English at primary school levels because these learners have different characteristics and needs concerning accuracy in writing. Therefore, further research examining the effect of written feedback on primary school students’ writing needs can be conducted. In addition, the findings of the present study did not indicate any long-term effects of teachers’ feedback on students’ writing. Therefore, future research should concentrate on the investigation of written feedback including multiple essays over a longer period of time. Finally, and more broadly, research is also needed to determine the FL teachers’ perception of written feedback and other approaches such as face-to-face oral feedback, conference, peer review, guided-self-evaluation, and electronic feedback.

About the author:
Najwa Alsayed is a lecturer at Az Zawiya University. She holds a MA in applied linguistics from University Kebangsaan Malaysia. She has experience in teaching different EFL courses as academic writing and literature. She is interested in TESOL pedagogy.

References


The Effectiveness of Feedback on EFL Libyan Writing Context

Omar


**Appendix A**

Marking Code Used to Assess Writing (Chitravelu 1995)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Type of error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC</td>
<td>Word Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WF</td>
<td>Word Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cap</td>
<td>Capitalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Unclear word/sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Omit this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(singular/plural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>//</td>
<td>Paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>^</td>
<td>Add a word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>