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Team of this issue

Editor
Prof. Dr. Khairi Al-Zubaidi
Executive Director
Arab Society of English Language Studies

Associate Editor
Dr. Robert Arthur Coté
Center for English as Second Language
College of Humanities, University of Arizona, USA

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Dr. ANASSE Khadija
Faculty of Letters and Humanities, University Ibn Tofail, Kenitra, Morocco

Dr. Laila Al Salmi
Early Childhood Education, Colleague of Education, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat - Sultanate of Oman
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article Title &amp; authors</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team of this issue</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minding the Gap in Vocabulary Knowledge: Incidental Focus on Collocation through Reading</td>
<td>3-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thamer Alharthi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Effect of Pair Writing Technique on Iraqi EFL University Students' Writing Performance and Anxiety</td>
<td>23-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salam Hamid Abbas &amp; Shaymaa Abdulbaqi Al-bakri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language Anxiety of EFL Students: Examining the Effect of Self-Efficacy, Self-Perceived Proficiency and Sociobiographical Variables</td>
<td>38-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elias Bensalem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity, Ideology, and Language</td>
<td>56-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Literature Review of Theoretical Anchors and Empirical Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majd Sarah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Effect of ECRIF Strategy on EFL Seventh Graders’ Vocabulary Learning and Retention</td>
<td>70-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basma Issa Ahmad AlSaleem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of EFL Teachers at King Abdulaziz University</td>
<td>92-107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regarding the Effectiveness of Cambridge University Press’s Train the Trainer Course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Karen Roy, Sabitha Rahim &amp; Aishah Yaqoub Khojah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Exploratory Study on Students’ Reading Interest Development through Independent Reading-Retelling Activity</td>
<td>108-117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusma Noortyani</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling Difficulties Faced by Arab Learners of English as a Foreign Language</td>
<td>118-126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oudah S. Alenazi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Syllabuses: Definition, Types, Design, and Selection</td>
<td>127-142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabah Salman Sabbah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of Kagan Models in Minimizing Disruptive Behaviors and Academic Achievement among Jordanian Fourth Graders</td>
<td>143-156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adwan Mohammad Bani Hamad, Haytham Moussa Barahmeh, Nabeel Moussa Barahmeh &amp; Sameera Jamil Al- Hassoun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beata Lewis Sevcikova</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does Curriculum Help Students to Develop Their English Competence?</td>
<td>175-185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Case in Indonesia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwi Poedjiantutie, Fida Akhyar, Deviy Hidayati &amp; Fajriyah Nurul Gasmi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of First Language in the Classroom: Non-native EFL Teachers’ Beliefs in Teaching English to Adult Learners in Bilingual Context</td>
<td>186-199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ifitkhar Ahmad, Noor Raha Mohd Radzuan &amp; Muhammad Sabboor Hussain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation between Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate in the Indonesian EFL Context</td>
<td>200-217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yana Shanti Manipuspika</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Effects of Learning and Communication Strategies Instruction on Economics Undergraduates’ Oral Communication Ability in Thailand</td>
<td>218-233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mintra Puripunyavanich &amp; Kittitouch Soontornwipast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Frequency Effect on Reading Comprehension and Recall</td>
<td>234-250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia Nouri &amp; Badia Zerhouni</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Overseas Students’ Perspectives on Benefits and Limitations of English Language Learning and Teaching between China and Thailand</td>
<td>251-261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singhanat Nomnian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Use of Humour in EFL Classrooms: Comparative Conversational Analysis Case Study</td>
<td>262-282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahar Ali Fadel &amp; Abdullah Al-Bargi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL University Teachers’ Professional Development in the Thai Context</td>
<td>283-297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sureepong Phothongsunan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Use of Humour in EFL Classrooms: Comparative Conversational Analysis Case Study</td>
<td>289-314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houria CHOHRA&amp; Souâd HAMERLAIN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension Strategies among EFL Learners in Higher Learning Institutions</td>
<td>315-328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamza Al-Jarrah &amp; Nur Salina binti Ismail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing Usage of Scientific Formulae for Students less Proficient in English language in an Undergraduate Class: a case study in Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>329-351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anjum Afruzoe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Evaluation Model of Teaching Practicum of Pre-Service EFL Teachers at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training in Higher Education</td>
<td>352-363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syamsudarni &amp; Sahraini</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Effects of a Creativity Training Program on Students’ Initial Perceptions of Creativity: The Case Study of Mohamed First University, Morocco</td>
<td>364-378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohamed DIHI &amp; Abderrahmanane BOUAMRI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Saudi EFL Adult Learners’ L1 to Address Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety</td>
<td>379-396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khaled Besher Albesher, Muhammad Sabboor Hussain &amp; Aisha Farid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Students’ Perceived Self-efficacy and its Relationship to their Achievement in English Language Proficiency</td>
<td>397-413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammad Saleem, Muhammad Ali &amp; Radzuwan Ab Rashid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing Mentoring Quality: The Tri-spheric Ecological Approach to Mentor Selection (TEAMS)</td>
<td>414-428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachid Moussaid &amp; Badia Zerhouni</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vowel Instruction for Spelling Enhancement of Arabic-speaking Learners of English</td>
<td>429-440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marinette S. Ishizaki</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Review: A Concise Introduction to General American Pronunciation. Segmented Features</td>
<td>441-444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author: Rastislav Metruk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewer: Yevgeniya Karpenko</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Minding the Gap in Vocabulary Knowledge: Incidental Focus on Collocation through Reading

Thamer Alharthi
Department of European Languages and Literature
King Abdulaziz University
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
The present study seeks to contribute to our knowledge of the effectiveness of reading in the incidental learning of collocations. The study also addresses the question whether out-of-class exposure such as watching TV, listening to radio or music, reading English books and using social media plays a significant role in the learning of collocations. The research participants were 46 Arabic-speaking young adult EFL learners. They were asked to read a modified text containing 10 pseudo-word collocations and to verify that all were unfamiliar to them. One week later, they read a text containing the actual 21 target collocations, which had been selected on the basis of appearing in instructional materials and a reference corpus, as well as of frequency. Participants were then asked to complete a meaning-recall cloze test in the form of a gap-filling task in which the 21 target collocations were embedded in sentences. Subsequently they were administered a self-report survey about any incidental exposure to English. The analysis of the quantitative results revealed that the target collocations can be learned incidentally through reading although the level of mastery was limited. The survey data showed a positive correlation between the learners’ knowledge of collocations and activities such as watching TV, listening to radio and reading English books. The study also confirmed that collocations are particularly difficult for adult EFL learners and is thus an aspect of vocabulary knowledge in need of further empirical investigations.

Keywords: collocation, EFL, incidental learning, pseudo-words, reading

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Introduction

It is well established that vocabulary knowledge and its learning play a vital role in second language (L2) development. There is broad consensus that there are many aspects of a word to know, as Nation (1990, 2001) points out, who to date has provided the best specification of such word knowledge, said to include collocations, grammatical functions, and associations among other components of word knowledge such as meaning, appropriateness and frequency. It is also useful to think of the depth of knowledge required to master these aspects of word knowledge in order to gain a more complete picture of the vocabulary knowledge required of learners. Regarding just one of these components, research shows that much language consists of sequences or chunks of words which operate as multi-word units, and as Moon (1997) argues, much of the input that we experience is comprised of formulaic sequences that cannot be understood simply by looking at the individual lexical items they are composed of.

Research into single vocabulary items that intermediate and advanced learners acquire has shown that they are learnt under conditions incidental to self-conscious learning (Brown, Waring, & Donkaewbua, 2008; Day, Omura, & Hiramatsu, 1991; Elley 1989; Horst, Cobb, & Meara, 1998; Jenkins, Stein, & Wysocki, 1984; Nagy, Herman, & Anderson, 1985; Pitts, White, & Krashen, 1989; Robbins & Ehri, 1994; Webb, 2007). That is to say, more or less unconscious learning of words is predominantly done through reading or listening. One of the exciting developments in recent years is that formulaic language or formulaic sequences, a long-standing topic of discussion by language teachers, is finally attracting the attention of researchers in applied linguistics and other disciplines (Alharthi, 2015; Meunier & Granger, 2008; Nessehauf, 2005; Wray, 2002). Emphasizing this important aspect of language knowledge, Schmitt (2004) edited an informative book that summarizes the research done in the last decade in the area of formulaic sequences, itself the focus of research in the field of phraseology.

A number of different terms for various types of multi-word units have been found in the empirical and theoretical literature but the most commonly used are lexical chunks and lexical phrases (Schmitt, 2000). Related to this, a variety of multi-word units in English have been researched with L2 learners including sub-types such as collocations (the tendency for words to occur together in discourse), binomials, idioms and lexical bundles (Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Huang, 2015; Macis & Schmitt, 2016; Nguyen & Webb, 2016; Pellicer-Sánchez, 2015; Webb, Newton, & Chang, 2013). As one of the major formulaic variations and a corpus accessible aspect of phraseology, collocation is currently associated with improvements in fluency and the productive use of words (Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers, & Demecheleer, 2006; Crossley, Salsbury, & McNamara, 2015; Schmitt, 2008). In other words, these scholars assert the necessity for an L2 learner who wants to use language accurately and fluently to have knowledge of collocation as one of the primary aspects of the use of a word since “knowing a word involves knowing what words it typically occurs with” (Nation, 2001, p. 56). Collocation has received much attention from researchers for both its linguistic and its pedagogical implications, and it is thus no surprise that González Fernández and Schmitt (2015) observe that “… perhaps the most studied category in applied linguistics is collocation” (p. 95).

According to Hill (2000), two thirds of collocations are produced in spoken and written discourse and the proportion of collocations in L2 input is higher than that of single-word items.
Despite the benefits for L2 learners of having knowledge of collocations since it would help them to achieve greater levels of accuracy and fluency in L2, previous research suggests that L2 learners’ knowledge of collocations is less than their knowledge of single-word items (Bahns & Eldaw, 1993). Given L2 learners’ lack of familiarity with collocations compared with single-word items, we would expect that the acquisition of collocations tends to be slow (Altenberg & Granger, 2001; Kuiper, Columbus, & Schmitt, 2009; Laufer & Waldman, 2011) and an area of particular difficulty for adult L2 learners and consequently an aspect of vocabulary knowledge in need of further empirical investigation.

For the past decade, we have been witnessing a heated debate over two main approaches of vocabulary learning and teaching, namely intentional (i.e. directing learners’ attention to target words) and incidental (i.e. learners forming associations among words without consciously attending to learning). Regarding formulaic language, the majority of empirical studies has focused primarily on intentional approaches to the teaching of collocations and applying insights to the L2/EFL classroom (Boers, Demecheleer, Coxhead, & Webb, 2014; Chan & Liou, 2005; Jones & Haywood, 2004; Laufer & Girsai, 2008; Lindstromberg & Boers, 2008; Nguyen & Webb, 2016; Peters, 2014, 2015; Sun & Wang, 2003; Webb & Kagimoto, 2009). These studies have produced results in support of the explicit approach to promoting learners’ knowledge of collocations. However, there remain the issues of teaching all the collocations that learners will need within the constraints of a timetabled course, in other words, which collocations are worth spending time on? And how should such learning be delivered in the classroom? Besides, one might argue that the input L2 learners have been most exposed to is the language of instruction, received in a classroom. This unconscious focus on (by teachers) or experience of (by learners) classroom language is reinforced by the fact that most EFL teachers are not aware of the importance of collocations and so the conscious focus of their teaching is on individual words (Garnier & Schmitt, 2016). That is, since the majority of English instructors are L2 speakers themselves, there is the likelihood that their students’ exposure to collocations will be rather limited (Meunier, 2012). This might explain the lack of any significant effect on learners’ knowledge of phrasal verbs regardless of the type of training and hours of classroom input they have received (Schmitt & Redwood, 2011). It is worth reiterating here that collocations are learned incrementally through multiple exposures and at different rates; see Alharthi (2014) for a review of the incremental nature of acquiring vocabulary knowledge and Henriksen (2013) for a review of the learning of collocations.

Put differently, collocations as one type of contextualized word knowledge are typically implicit and difficult to explain and are likely gained from massive exposure to the target language (Schmitt, 2014). Learners need therefore to adopt other incidental approaches and be prepared for the learning of collocations outside class. Due to recent advancements in information technology, students living in the twenty-first century have shown patterns of literacy development different from those living in the twentieth century. The internet has become a familiar tool of communication and learning for today’s students. As a result, they tend to use online source materials more extensively and more frequently than before, rather than using traditional print media such as textbooks for learning English. This is especially true for electronic communication, nowadays widespread, and so EFL environments may no longer be as impoverished as they used to be. EFL learners are thus fortunate to be able to actively engage in learning outside the classroom.
and set language books, and also access language input on TV, in music videos and various forms of social media, all of which in turn may help them with learning collocations.

It is worth noting that only a few empirical studies have been published reporting strong implications for incidental/implicit learning of collocation such as, for example, Webb, Newton and Chang (2013) who reported that the implementation of aural support during a reading task was an effective approach leading to significant learning gains of collocation knowledge. In a study of incidental learning of collocation, Durrant and Schmitt (2010) found that adult learners retained information about what words appear together in the input to which they were exposed. A study by Pellicer-Sánchez (2015) reported reading to be another type of implicit task to positively contribute to the learning of collocations. She found that the knowledge of orthography was learned incidentally through reading and at a rate similar to the form and meaning of individual words. While it can be safely assumed that these studies are useful in terms of raising learners’ awareness of the incidental learning of collocation through reading and listening, it needs to be acknowledged that to date little empirical evidence has been produced to support the effectiveness of the incidental/implicit approach to learning collocations through reading. The goal of the classroom study we report in this paper was to help fill this gap in our knowledge. One important and relevant question that needs to be answered is what are the effective factors that may lead to the mastery of collocations? We shall therefore review the topics of frequency and out-of-class exposure to collocations in the following two sections.

Review of research

The effect of frequency on L2 collocations learning

A number of researchers have argued that multi-word units, i.e. collocations, formulaic sequences and lexical bundles, play a crucial role in both language use and language learning (Meunier & Granger, 2008; Nattinger & DeCarrico, 1992; Schmitt, 2004; Wood, 2010; Wray, 2002). Collocation is an integral element of vocabulary knowledge and lexis comprises the basis of any L2 English program; however, little research has looked beyond individual lexical items to explore the incidental learning of collocations in classroom-based settings. The identification of collocations is commonly explained through two approaches: the first, the phraseological approach, which is based on a free combination of semantically transparent words (e.g. Cowie, 1994; Howarth, 1998; Nesselhauf, 2005) for example, words such as powerful and strong have similar meanings, engine collocates with powerful but not with strong due to restricted co-occurrence; the second, the frequency approach, which is based on word combinations that co-occur more frequently than could be expected by chance. This approach is also known as statistical approach which involves various formulas to search corpora and identify the words that pattern together (e.g. McEnery & Wilson, 2001; Sinclair, 2004). For example, words such as support, experience, confidence, control all share mutual information scores with gain, indicating their co-occurrence, therefore gain support, gain experience, gain confidence and gain control are all collocations. This latter approach might be helpful for researchers, teachers and learners to use in research as it “requires the most objective measure to record the frequency of collocations” (Nguyen & Webb, 2016, p. 3) and is thus the type of approach that we will adopt in the present study. On the other hand, a shortcoming of the frequency-based approach is that it does not include other semantic factors such as concreteness of meaning (Walker & Hulme, 1999), congruency (Wolter & Gyllstad, 2011, 2013; Yamashita & Jiang, 2010), and transparency (Moon, 1998;
that may affect the ease with which the collocations may be learned. This approach is also beneficial as any subjectivity in identifying the target collocations is eliminated. Since frequency of occurrence has been widely accepted as one of the valid predictors of learning single-item vocabulary (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2010), it is likely that the same holds true for formulaic sequences such as collocations. For example, Peters (2014) found that there was a remarkable repetition effect with 1, 3 and 5 exposures and this led to improved learning of target collocations. These results appear to be consistent with the findings of Durrant and Schmitt’s (2009) study where adult non-natives were exposed to target collocations of different levels of frequency from the British National Corpus (BNC), whose authors concluded that learners tended to acquire more frequent collocations before less frequent ones. In a similar vein, Nguyen and Webb (2016) investigated the relationship between the learning of verb-noun and adjective-noun combinations and frequency by Vietnamese undergraduate EFL learners at three-word frequency levels. They demonstrated a clear trend in that the collocations with the lowest frequency were learned less well.

The discussion above suggests that the frequency of collocations in a given language is likely to be an important factor in the learning of collocations. The present study seeks to shed some light on frequency as a potential factor in L2 learners’ knowledge of collocations.

The effect of out-of-class exposure on L2 collocations learning

Another trend we can discern in the studies of L2 collocations is that learners’ engagement with the target language seems to be a powerful facilitator for learning collocations. Indeed, research has shown that engagement activities such as reading, watching TV and social networking in English best enhance the effectiveness of L2 speakers learning English collocations. However, it is surprising how few empirical studies have so far been conducted to examine this particular variable.

One of the few attempts to do this is Schmitt and Redwood’s (2011) study who found that certain out-of-class exposure to English, for example via extensive reading and watching English language films and TV programs, facilitated the learning of phrasal verbs. Along the same lines, González Fernández and Schmitt (2015) conducted one of the most thorough investigations of the acquisition of collocations in L2 contexts. Their results showed that activities that provide input in natural forms such as reading texts, watching TV, listening to music and using social media appeared to have a positive effect on the acquisition of collocations. Quite recently, Garnier and Schmitt (2016) made a similar case for the learning of polysemous phrasal verbs in English by 128 Chilean EFL learners. The effect of L2 engagement in leisure activities on the learning of phrasal verbs is clearly apparent from their results. Specifically, Garnier and Schmitt (2016) summarized their findings by saying “both reading and social networking seemed to promote the learning of PVs. This is good news as it suggests that it is possible to learn a lot outside the classroom, via daily activities that are engaging and enjoyable” (p. 38). While these three studies suggest that there might be instances where the L2 learners face formulaic sequences such as collocations which they have not encountered in the classroom, other sources such as watching TV programs, listening to music or radio and using social media may have significantly contributed to better knowledge of L2 speakers’ collocations. In fact, such out-of-class activities have gained in popularity among our students. Because formulaic sequences like collocations commonly occur in
informal input, these out-of-class activities are believed to be particularly appropriate for learning collocations. However, to the best of our knowledge few studies, with the exception of the above mentioned ones, have addressed the question whether out-of-class activities such as watching TV, listening to radio or music, reading English books and using social media play a significant role in the learning of target collocations. In order to tackle this issue, the current study explored how much effect these kinds of activities have on the learning of collocations.

**Aims and research questions**

The present study seeks to contribute to knowledge about the effectiveness of reading for the incidental learning of collocations by non-native English speakers. We will thus establish the relationship between the frequency of target collocations and the degree to which EFL learners know them. Basing our research on Pellicer-Sánchez’s (2015) study intended to assess collocations gains; we will include pseudo-words rather than a pre-test/post-test design. To obtain further insight into the issue of incidental learning of collocations, we will also seek to establish the effect of some other learner-internal factors on such learning. In light of the studies reported in the literature, we posed the following research questions:

1. How does the element of frequency in reading relate to the EFL learners’ incidental knowledge of collocations?
2. How does incidental learning through personal language use outside the classroom relate to the EFL learners’ knowledge of collocations?

**Context and methodology**

**Participants**

The participants in this exploratory study of incidental collocation learning were 46 Arabic-speaking young adult EFL learners recruited from two intact sophomore English classes at King Abdulaziz University (KAU), Saudi Arabia. The participants’ average age was 20 and they had two (three-hour) compulsory courses in their first year BA program focusing on reading. They share a similar educational background, that is, all study participants had considerable language learning experience since they had been learning English for at least ten years prior to the present study being carried out. At university, they learned EFL through the medium of classroom instruction, with the approach having been a communicative one but with a special emphasis on grammar. Prior to commencing their degree at KAU, they achieved the necessary minimum scores in the university entrance English examination. This test is similar to a standardized test called the Michigan Test where three main language components are measured, namely vocabulary, grammar and writing. The study participants’ overall level of competence was estimated to be between intermediate and upper-intermediate which corresponds to the level between B1 and B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR).

As the main purpose of the present research is to investigate the knowledge of collocation of EFL learners, it was necessary to choose participants with advanced proficiency levels in English. Specifically, to gain an accurate estimate of the study participants’ vocabulary proficiency and to ensure they have the ability to complete the research test, they sat Vocabulary Size Test (VST) (Nation & Beglar, 2007) and obtained a receptive vocabulary size of 5,000+ word families which
enables them to understand the running words in the test. Consequently, this brief account describes a typical language learning background for Saudi learners of English of this age cohort.

**Selecting the target collocations**

As the present study focuses on two-word collocation combinations, we decided to limit the selection to verb-noun combinations. Specifically verb-noun collocations were chosen as they are likely to be more problematic than other types of lexical collocations (Chan & Liou, 2005; Nesselhauf, 2003; Yamashita & Jiang, 2010) as well as the most frequently researched collocation type (Paquot & Granger, 2012). The initial step was to consult a range of different sources which listed the target collocations as there is no established and comprehensive list of collocations in existence to base our research on (Macis & Schmitt, 2016). Moreover, we wished to focus on high-frequency candidate items as we would like to know how familiar the study participants were with the type of collocations they would presumably have had the most exposure to. Over 44 potential target collocations were provisionally selected and included in a candidate pool from three passages in a textbook intended to be taught in the study participants’ BA course called *Pathways 3: Reading, Writing, & Critical Thinking* (Vargo & Blass, 2014) published by National Geographic Society. We focused on the collocations that were embedded in texts without being highlighted and clickable, so that there is a possibility of learning them incidentally.

After this process, a rigorous set of criteria was adopted in selecting the final list of collocations. To avoid the effect of expected selection bias, the selected collocations were then verified by checking them against collocation-specialized dictionaries, namely the *Oxford collocations dictionary for students of English* (Lea, Crowther, & Dignen, 2002) and the *Longman collocations dictionary and thesaurus* (2013). Following the procedure established by Peters (2015), only 21 verb-noun combinations that occurred in one of the above mentioned dictionaries were accepted as verified collocations, and hence included in the present study. Next, the *Corpus of Contemporary American English* (COCA, Davies, 2008) website at http://www.corpus.byu.edu/ was consulted as a reference corpus, and it was found that all 21 collocations were listed in the COCA database. To increase the level of ecological validity, two raters, who were teaching English at the time and who were also unaware of the aim of the study, were asked to confirm that the collocations selected had not been previously taught. Only lexical collocations on which the two raters agreed as unknown by students were maintained. With regard to the optimal level of linguistics difficulty, the target collocations comprised collocations of the same or higher frequency levels within the most frequent 1,000 word families, the second most frequent 2,000 word families and the third most frequent 3,000 words families from Nation’s (2012) BNC website (http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/paul-nation). We chose this new list as it represents everyday language, is regularly updated, and comprises lexical items used nowadays by native speakers than outdated lists such as the General Service List (West, 1953). For example, both the node word *friend* and the collocate *make* in the collocation *make friend*, are listed in the 1,000 most frequent band. On the other hand, in the collocation *share source*, the node word *source* is drawn from the 3,000 most frequent band and the collocate *share* is from the 1,000 most frequent band.
**Apparatus: Collocation test**

The primary goal of the present study was to establish the learners’ knowledge of the target collocations, and a meaning-recall cloze test was designed to fulfill this purpose. The instrument consisted of gapped sentences where 21 potential target verb-noun collocations were inserted into an off-line pencil-and-paper test. A meaning-recall cloze format was used in the present study due to the lack of guessing effects compared with a multiple-choice recognition format. One of the possibilities was to create a test assessing the learners’ knowledge of collocations using a translation production test similar to the one adopted in Webb, Newton, and Chang’s (2013) study. It could be argued that measuring the acquisition of collocation knowledge using a translation production format is typically a more demanding task and may be highly dependent on the knowledge, expertise and accuracy of the learner to identify and spot answers from L2 to L1 and vice versa. As a result, this type of measurement would give a misleading picture of collocation learning. Conversely, the recall cloze format has been proven to be an effective instrument as used in recent studies (e.g. Garnier & Schmitt, 2016; González Fernández & Schmitt, 2015) and ultimately the creation of another measure was beyond the scope of the current study. The study participants were provided with a target collocation embedded in a sentence of English (the participants’ FL). In this sentence, the context was left intact but contained two gaps which corresponded to each of the two content words which formed the collocation measured. The test format does not require the test-takers to choose from a list of words as in the case of an insert-the-word exercise where a list of target words is given. Therefore, to constrain the choice of the potential collocations in each blank, the first letters of the two words were supplied and marked in bold. The verbs to be completed were all in the infinitive, so participants were not restricted to using inflectional morphology. The meaning of the target collocations can be looked up with the contextually appropriate denotative meaning presented between brackets and printed underlined. The following examples illustrate the test format:

Humans tend to live with each other and **a**________c________. (Keep out from disagreement)

It was easy for him to **m**________f________with people from all walks of life. (Begin a friendship with someone)

The extended surrounding contexts were submitted to frequency analysis through the *The Compleat Lexical Tutor* (Cobb, 2017), to ensure that test-takers would not have problems reading and understanding the running words.

**Reading materials**

A methodological concern was how to include the target collocations in a rigorous test to assess the study participants’ pre-knowledge while ensuring that they would be unknown to them. In order to do so, prior knowledge of the collocations was controlled for by means of non-words (sometimes called pseudo-words). This is an effective way of controlling for prior knowledge of target invented items in advance and of ascertaining that pseudo-words are comparable to real words. This is designed to not alert study participants to any previous knowledge of the target items. We decided to include only 10 pseudo-words in a modified text to create reading materials that closely resembled authentic ones where we changed one or more letters in the second component of the target verb-noun collocations (e.g. made-*descuvory*). This was carefully
constructed to ensure the study participants would not give up indicating whether the collocate was a real English word or not. The text of the reading task was obtained from a website called Voice of America. It is a two-page narrative text modified to comprise ten pseudo-word collocations. The text narrates a fictional story that takes place in the United States and falls into the category of texts within the 2,000 most frequent words. This was considered crucial for the study participants to have a chance of comprehending it thoroughly. The pseudo-words were added without too much altering the style of the text, its nature and general structure and leaving it sufficiently spaced out so as not to be too prominent. That is, the pseudo-words were carefully distributed throughout the text which was then revised by a native speaker to ensure that it still conveyed the same content and its style was not distorted.

**Biodata survey**

A self-report survey was the second main data gathering instrument used in the present study. It aimed at finding out personal information about the study participants’ language learning experience and more specifically their amount of language exposure through incidental learning. The survey was adapted from Garnier and Schmitt’s (2016) questionnaire and consisted of 10 closed items. As McDonough and McDonough (1997) point out, “It is useful for the majority of the questions to be answered by ticking a box or circling an alternative to enable easier counting” (p. 174). Therefore, a 10-item lie scale was also implemented in order to check to what extent the study participants showed the amount and type of exposure they had had to English in their responses. The 5-point scale used for rating the participants’ frequency of using English outside the classroom was as follows: 1 = less than once a month, 2 = several times a month, 3 = once a week, 4 = several times a week, 5 = every day. It was content validated as it was professionally constructed by the second author, Norbert Schmitt, who is an expert in designing such a study. Well validated surveys are often considered acceptable without further checking of reliability, which is a bit difficult to do since it requires the instruments to be administered twice to the same participants with a gap of time. The first section includes items to gather demographic information such as the study participants’ age, number of years of schooling in which they had studied English as a FL and self-assessed proficiency in English. The second section comprised the remaining set of items which focused on opportunities to use English either socially or alone, therefore activities like extensive reading, watching English videos or TV, listening to English music or radio stations and using social networking were considered in this situation.

**Procedure and data analysis**

The current study was conducted in four sessions on KAU premises under the supervision of the present researcher over a period of three weeks (see Figure 1 for a schematic description of the study procedure).
Prior to the beginning of the sessions the study participants were informed about the nature of the study, and that the information gathered would be treated confidentially. In the first week, the participants were assigned a reading task during normal class time and were instructed to read a modified text containing 10 pseudo-word collocations for general comprehension. After reading the text, a checklist test with the potential pseudo-word collocations was administered to the study participants to confirm that they really did not know the target collocations. That is, the study participants were asked to mark the collocations that they identified as real English collocations and leave those alone which they believed were not real. The checklist tests were scored as follows: 0= incorrect and 1= correct. The outcomes showed virtually no prior knowledge and no significant differences in the study participants’ scores. A week later during session two, the study participants were provided with the authentic reading text that contained the real 21 target collocations and were informed to read it intensively to be ready to answer comprehension questions afterwards; however, there was no mention of the vocabulary test. After a 15 minute break, vocabulary tests were then unexpectedly administered to the study participants in the third session which took an hour to complete. The same procedure was adopted in scoring the vocabulary test: each item was assigned one point and missing or incorrect answers received zero, totaling 21 points for the whole test. However, accurate spelling was not required for a collocation to be marked as correct as long as the meaning definition was clear and understandable. To avoid a possible fatigue effect, the study participants were given the surveys in the final week, with the session lasting approximately 15-20 minutes.

Results
We are able to respond to research question one by using the descriptive statistics of the study participants’ performance on the meaning-recall cloze test in which they were required to supply the missing collocations (see Table 1). On closer inspection of Table 1, we can see that the study participants were able to produce only a modest learning gain, with the highest mean score gain obtained at the first frequency level with 14.68 out of 21 collocations (92.18%); 12.55 out of 21 collocations (85.43%) at the second frequency level and 9.75 out of 21 collocations (69.70%) at...
the third frequency level; see below for further discussion. The results of a one-way ANOVA showed statistically significant differences in collocation learning ($F = 32.94, p = .001$), although it represents only a very small increase which suggests that frequency of occurrence contributes very little to the successful learning of collocations.

Table 1  
**Descriptive statistics of knowledge of collocations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test scores (21 items)</th>
<th>1K</th>
<th>2K</th>
<th>3K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>14.68</td>
<td>12.55</td>
<td>9.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The total number of tested items at 1k, 2k, and 3k was 7. 1k= 1000 level, 2k= 2000 level, 3k= 3000 level.

The relatively small standard deviations also point to the small differences between the study participants’ scores at each collocation level. This is shown in Figure 2, which displays the distribution of the collocation test scores. Most study participants scored between 9 and 16 but none scored the full mark, while two individuals scored 0, which contributes to showing how hard it may be for these EFL learners to learn the meanings of verb-noun collocations.

*Figure 2. The distribution of collocation test scores*

In absolute terms, the increase in the command of collocations appears very slow and drops consistently from one thousand to the next as one would expect. It seems that higher frequencies indicate higher levels of exposure for the study participants. In contrast, they know less than half
of the portions at the third frequency level which strongly suggests that they know few collocations at this level, and consequently may have a serious comprehension deficit. Overall, it appears that the study participants’ knowledge of collocations is dependent on the frequency of a given collocation and that the collocations with the highest frequency are likely to be learned rather than the more infrequent ones.

This raises the question of what other factors, e.g. out-of-class exposures such as watching TV programs, listening to radio or music, reading English books and using social media, beside frequency, contribute to the learning of collocations. To answer this question, a Multiple Regression (MR) analysis was carried out to examine whether the above variables in combination could predict the study participants’ success in learning collocations. The MR analysis was performed with each of the predictor variables entered into the regression equation in a different order. That is, all of the orders of entry of the four predictors were performed and the effect of each variable was compared to all others.

Figure 3. Mean scores for out-of-class activities in the incidental learning of collocations

Figure 3 displays the mean scores for out-of-class activities in the incidental learning of collocations by the study participants. The findings of the self-reported survey showed that involvement with collocations in everyday communication in the target language may well be just as essential a factor as frequency of occurrence of given collocations. That is, the results indicate that the study participants seemed to be motivated to find different input activities such as listening to radio and watching TV and reading books which fall between the frequencies of “once a week” and “several times a week”. By contrast, using social media received a low frequency rating of “several times a month”.
Table 2  
*Predictor variables of correct scores in collocation test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor variable</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watching TV programs</td>
<td>correct score in collocation test</td>
<td>.276</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading English books</td>
<td>correct score in collocation test</td>
<td>.488</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the MR analyses (see Table 2) indicate that in building regression models with any four predictors, regardless of the combinations and what the orders of entry, it turned out that watching TV programs, listening to radio and reading English books together account for 53% of the variance in the collocation test performance. These findings revealed statistically significant positive relationships between watching TV programs (Beta .276, \(p < .001\)), listening to radio (Beta .343, \(p < .001\)), reading English books (Beta .488, \(p < .001\)) and participants’ test scores and indicate a positive contribution to collocation knowledge. This means that the more the study participants encounter collocations in such everyday communicative situations (watching TV, listening to radio and reading books), the more they are successful in maximizing their repertoire of collocations. However, there was a non-significant relationship between using social media and participants’ knowledge of collocations.

Discussion

A review of the current literature on L2 single-word items indicates that reading fosters both vocabulary knowledge (e.g. Horst et al., 1998) and language proficiency (e.g. Renandya et al., 1999). The findings of this study have demonstrated that although EFL undergraduate learners showed limited knowledge of L2 collocations, reading became an effective facilitator of the incidental learning of verb-noun collocations. This supports the results of studies by Durrant and Schmitt (2010), Pellicer-Sánchez (2015) and Webb, Newton and Chang (2013). The findings of the current study have also pointed to a general trend of frequency of occurrence of given collocations leading to some extent to the learning of collocations. That is, higher frequency verb-noun collocations were inevitably learned more readily by most participants than lower frequency verb-noun collocations. These results extend existing reading research to the field of incidental collocation learning by L2 learners by showing that frequency of occurrence is indeed an adequate predictor of the uptake of formulaic sequences and did account for differences in the growth of the knowledge of collocations while reading (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2015; Garnier & Schmitt, 2016; Schmitt & Redwood, 2011). Compared to the studies by Webb, Newton, and Chang (2013) and Pellicer-Sánchez (2015), where retention periods were measured in terms of pre-test/post-tests and over longer periods, the present study has the advantage of mastery of a verb-noun collocation inventory even though it lacked sufficiently precise pre-test measures when the post-test was administered one week after the pseudo-words checklist session.

A further point to keep in mind is that the study participants had insufficient knowledge of instances of collocation. It will be recalled from the literature review that growth in the knowledge of collocations tends to be slow and that L2 learners encounter a considerably lower frequency of occurrence of collocations in their L2 input (Altenberg & Granger, 2001; Columbus & Schmitt,
Minding the Gap in Vocabulary Knowledge

Alharthi

2009; Howarth, 1998; Kuiper, Li, & Schmitt, 2010; Laufer & Waldman, 2011). This would be congruent with the argument espoused by Webb, Newton, and Chang (2013) that the potential for learning the majority of target collocations incidentally is limited. The findings in the present study also provide us with the opportunity to observe how well the participants learn new verb-noun collocations in real terms. It is important to note that the success with which the study participants identified new collocations can be compared with Nguyen and Webb’s (2016) study because the settings of the two studies are similar (EFL) as is the investigation of the mastery of collocations at the first three 1,000 word frequency levels. Although the large number of tested items and the relatively easy test format of target collocations explored in Nguyen and Webb’s (2016) study were different from those of the present study, the mean scores of learning gains across the three levels of verb-noun combinations obtained in Nguyen and Webb’s (2016) study were to some extent similar to those of the present study (see Table 3).

Table 3
Learning gains in collocations, compared with Nguyen & Webb’s (2016) study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>1K</th>
<th>2K</th>
<th>3K</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current study</td>
<td>14.68</td>
<td>12.55</td>
<td>9.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean scores of the current study show the same trend as Nguyen and Webb’s (2016) study as they decrease successively over the three word frequency levels. However, the scores obtained in Nguyen and Webb’s study were slightly higher than those obtained in the present study, given the assessment measures employed in their study were designed to measure the participants’ receptive knowledge of collocations. In contrast, the testing format of the present study is open response and requires considerable knowledge of collocations. That is, participants must actively recall and produce the missing items in a given context, which in turn could have increased the difficulty of the task and have yielded even lower scores. In other words, having the 21 collocations embedded in sentences and L2 learners being unaware of the unusual combinations of these words made their task rather difficult and caused comprehension problems for them. Additionally, findings of recent collocation research use the more demanding productive tests usually reveal good knowledge of collocations, for example, 40% by Garnier and Schmitt (2016), 26% by Webb, Newton, and Chang (2013), 48% by Schmitt and Redwood (2011), and 33% by Macis and Schmitt (2016). However, a word of caution is needed in the interpretation of such studies. The conflicting findings of these studies may be attributed to differences in participants (e.g. different language competence and different L1 background), different types of formulaic sequences and different condition underlying the tasks set. Compared to these figures, the results of the current study are less encouraging and not so impressive, given that the study participants are English majors and could be expected to show similar trends in their knowledge of collocations as the college students studying for their BA in the above studies.

The conflicting results might be explained with reference to Granger’s (1998) finding that learners tend to focus on a small number of safe formulaic consequences that they felt confident producing. As Peters (2015, p. 3) notes, “… FL learners might not allocate sufficient attentional resources to the verb when they encounter verb-noun collocations.” That is, the study participants might have been familiar with the verb-noun combination organize a party, but have to draw on
limited knowledge when asked to supply the correct combination crash a party. As collocations, e.g. verb-noun combinations, are essential blocks for language use, but unfortunately problematic for learners. Thus Saudi EFL learners need to know that verbs can have different meanings when they are combined with particular nouns. One might argue that formulaic sequences, at least verb-noun collocations, tend to be less transparent and salient in language input if learners are habituated to define and process them in the form of their constituent words (Wray, 2002). There seems to be a particular morphological feature that distinguishes verb-noun collocations from adjective-noun or adverb-adjectives combinations. Along this line, Laufer (2011) found that EFL learners struggle to locate verb-noun collocations in dictionaries as they occur in a variety of inflections. She provided an example of a verb-noun collocation (to take measures) in two different forms: as they took strong measures against dangerous drivers where the collocation occurs with the verb in the past, and as measures are being taken to reduce crime in the city where the verb appears in the passive. This in turn shows that variation in morphology is often seen as a factor affecting the ability of learners to recognize or interpret a collocation. It is not unexpected that language input in FL classrooms such as in Saudi Arabia is presented to the learners by textbooks and teachers. Although there is no reason to think that the target verb-noun collocations in the current study would benefit from an explicit approach by the study participants, at least not in any systematic way, most talk in FL environments is delivered by non-native teachers. These may lack awareness of the importance of collocations and may therefore not provide a wider range of collocations in terms of their frequency of occurrence and therefore fail to help learners expand their knowledge of collocations.

The current study has also explored the influence of exposure related factors on the participants’ productive knowledge of verb-noun collocations. And yet, according to the MR analysis, watching TV programs, listening to radio and reading English books did have significant effects on the acquisition of verb-noun collocations. These findings are echoed by other research such as by Garnier and Schmitt (2016), González Fernández and Schmitt (2015), Macis and Schmitt (2016), and Schmitt and Redwood (2011). Unsurprisingly, EFL learners can be exposed to different sources of English with a potentially wide range of vocabulary including collocations needed for communicating in English. The study findings reflect the fact that the participants were aware of the importance of encountering different types of formulaic sequence such as collocations outside the classroom through incidental learning. Furthermore, research has shown that L2 learners are likely to take advantage of opportunities to interact and socialize with native speakers to practice their language which in turn has an effect on their knowledge of collocations (Garnier & Schmitt, 2016; González Fernández & Schmitt, 2015). Interestingly, the findings of the present study did not reveal that social media had a positive impact on the productive knowledge of collocations. Perhaps language input such as that provided by social media would be clearly correlated with EFL learners’ knowledge of verb-noun collocations if the latter were measured in a receptive/recognition test of collocations.

**Conclusion**

This paper investigated the degree of sophomore English majors’ productive knowledge of verb-noun collocations at three word frequency levels while reading. It also aimed at exploring the relationship between out-of-class exposure-based variables and the learning of verb-noun collocations. The findings suggest that collocations can be learned incidentally through reading
and that high frequency verb-noun collocations tend to be easier to learn than low-frequency collocations. Interestingly, the development of the knowledge of collocations is effected by the frequency of occurrence of collocations in a given context. The results from the biodata survey showed that watching TV programs, listening to radio and reading English books was positively correlated with the ability to predict learning gains in the productive knowledge of collocations.

As is the case with any study, there are a number of shortcomings that need to be noted in respect of the current study. These shortcomings are presented so that other researchers will be able to take them into consideration whenever they carry out research in the same field. Although the present study did not incorporate a pre-test in order to direct participants’ awareness to target collocations, there may be a validity concern about the use of pseudo-words. That is, it may lead some test-takers to identify pseudo-words as real words which would increase their false alarm rate. To ensure that target items are unknown to all participants, we suggest that future researchers assign and administer the test to a cohort of participants that represent the individuals who take part in the real study. Also, the target items included in the collocation test were limited to only verb-noun combinations and administered to only 21 candidates. Future studies might include more sample items and investigate the extent of learners’ knowledge of other types of collocation to reach more robust conclusions. The current study tested the productive knowledge of collocations and did not test receptive knowledge. Further studies might measure the knowledge of collocations both receptively and productively as the former resembles the receptive skills needed in reading and listening. In fact, previous research has shown that receptive knowledge of formulaic language seems to be a powerful facilitator of fluency in reading (e.g. Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Ellis, Simpson-Vlach, & Maynard, 2008).

About the Author:
Thamer Alharthi is Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. His research interests, originating from the years he spent studying at Essex University, are in the areas of vocabulary attrition, acquisition and teaching, with a specific focus on vocabulary development. He has also worked on projects exploring the role of formulaic sequences in foreign language use. ORCiD.org/0000-0002-6914-418X

References


The Effect of Pair Writing Technique on Iraqi EFL University Students' Writing Performance and Anxiety

Salam Hamid Abbas
Department of Educational & Psychological Studies
College of Education / Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences
University of Baghdad, Iraq

Shaymaa Abdulbaqi Al-bakri
Department of Educational & Psychological Studies
College of Education / Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences
University of Baghdad, Iraq

Abstract
The current study aims at finding out the effect of pair writing technique on Iraqi English as a foreign language university students' writing performance and anxiety. The sample of the study includes 78 male and female students in the Department of English / College of Education Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences of the University of Baghdad, Iraq during the academic year 2016/2017. The sample is divided into a control group with 38 students and experimental group with 40 ones. After checking the equalization of the two groups in certain related variables, the researchers conduct the experiment in which the students in the experimental group are taught writing and practice it in pairs, while those in the control group are dealt with conventionally (individually). The data collection tools employed in this study; a writing posttest and second language writing anxiety inventory, are conducted on the sample at the end of the experiment. The results achieved are statistically manipulated and discussed according to which a number of conclusions are drawn, and a set of recommendations are put forward.

Keywords: pair writing, writing anxiety, writing skill

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Introduction

Communication via English, whether oral or written, has become essential in the modern everyday life. As a productive mode of English as a foreign language in which students' language knowledge is effectively reinforced, writing represents a significant set of skills through which language learning and communication can be achieved (Weigle, 2002, p.9). Due to the requirements of the nowadays academic settings and communication situations, it is quite important for EFL students to develop effective writing skills (Defazio et al., 2010, p.34).

Writing is viewed as a basic skill of language in which students should be competent so as to achieve the aims of EFL language learning and/or academic success (Kurt & Atay, 2007, p.15). However, competency in writing requires cognitive skills as understanding, applying, and synthesizing knowledge (Defazio et al., 2010, p.34). That's why producing a written text which is accurate, organized, clear, and fluent is regarded as a challenging task (Weigle, 2002: 11).

However, writing cannot be separated from the acquisition of other EFL skills; accordingly, writing teaching in EFL programs has become more prominent and attracted more attention of scholars and researchers (Bartlett, 2003, p.39). Yet, the problem of weak EFL students' written performance is still quite common (Weigle, 2002, p.10).

Theoretically speaking, writing is supposed to be an interesting task in which students express their own ideas and interests on a certain topic. Unfortunately, due to several probable factors, "writing may instead be a laborious and even dreaded exercise of attempting to place thoughts on paper while developing mastery over the rules of writing, such as spelling, citation format and grammar"(Defazio et al., 2010, p.34). However, one possible reason for the writing shortcoming may be due to the inefficient time devoted to writing teaching and exercising or inadequate teaching techniques used (Stein et al., 1994, p.292).

Previous Iraqi related studies indicate that EFL students' written performance in general is quite inefficient (AlKarkhi 1999; Abid & Abdul Ridha 2011; Hamza 2012; and Muslim 2014). Moreover, the researchers, senior EFL writing teachers, notice that there is a real need for Iraqi EFL students not only to develop efficient communication writing skills, but also to be aware of the significance of mastering such skills. However, writing teaching in the Iraqi Academic institutions stresses students' ability to produce accurate written texts, that's why only the produced written text is evaluated by the teachers. Accordingly, writing practices may be associated with high levels of anxiety on the part of EFL students.

Aims

The study is conducted to find out:
1. the effect of pair writing technique on Iraqi EFL university students' writing performance
2. the effect of pair writing technique on Iraqi EFL university students' writing anxiety.

Hypotheses

1. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group taught according to pair writing technique and the control group taught conventionally in the writing performance test.
2. There is no statistically significant difference between the mean score of the experimental group taught according to pair writing technique and the control group taught conventionally in the writing anxiety scale.

Limits
This study is limited to Iraqi students at the English departments of the University of Baghdad (College of Education /Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences, College of Education for Women, College of Arts, and College of Languages) during the academic year 2016-2017.

Value
This study is hoped to be advantageous to EFL university instructors and students as it attempts to experiment teaching writing collaboratively as an alternate of the conventional way of instruction to develop Iraqi EFL students writing skills who are reported to be weak writers in general.

As it sheds light on the significance of anxiety as a deterrent variable in developing writing skills and its possible sources, the current study can also be of value to other researchers who are interested in experimenting more effective writing teaching strategies and investigating the possible factors affecting the development of students' writing skill.

Literature Review
Pair Writing
The increasing interest in approaching EFL teaching communicatively leads to a greater attention being paid to collaboration in EFL classes. One of the most common phases of which is pair work (Hawkey, 2004, p.8). It is stated to provide generous opportunities for practicing the real use of the target language in various tasks (Storch, 2005, p.169).

Pair writing is the practical manifestation of pair work in writing classes. Pair writing is viewed by Storch (2005, p.154) as a situation in which two students interact with each other to accomplish a writing task. It is a technique by which students' involvement in the learning task might be effectively enhanced which, in turn, enables and supports students to challenge and authentically practice the target language.

In this context, one of the merits of EFL students working in pairs is that it stimulates students to think and work independently without waiting to be instructed by the teacher. It also creates a safe educational environment in which students feel relaxed as they share the responsibility of carrying out the task Pair writing is also reported to allow students to be mutually supportive (Harmer, 2001, p.116).

Related Literature indicates that working in pairs may help students enhance their critical thinking skill which is one of the basic requirements of effective writing (Adams & Hamm, 1996, p.146). As writing involves a great deal of high level thinking, pair writing helps EFL students to model and learn various strategies of thinking (Carson & Nelson, 1994, p.18). Moreover, it is likely to help students get used to listen and/or read critically and give corrective feedback (Honda, 2011, p.52).
In pair writing, students are also expected, through communication, to support and enrich the linguistic competence and performance of each other. This situation is called 'peer learning' which is described as "an active way for pairs to learn from and with each other" (Boud, 2001, p.3).

In EFL writing classes, pair writing may help students acquire EFL and develop language skills through contextualized and meaningful interaction. This is in correspondence with the current orientation toward a more student-centered communicative instruction (Tsai, 1998, p.26). Related literature highlighted the possible positive effects of pair work in the EFL settings on students' mastery of language skills in general and writing in particular (Rollinson, 2005, p.24). As EFL students are expected to speak and write a lot in pairs, this interaction, even if it involves deviant forms of English grammar, is likely to have its significant positive effects, not only on students' writing, but on their language skills in general. Moreover, it may support students' motivation and engagement as they "taste the joy of being able to communicate in English" (Honda, 2011, p.47).

Although writing is usually viewed as an individual practice in which a student attempts to express his/her own ideas and thoughts, attention is being increasingly paid to pair writing as it initiates authentic communicative situations within a safe learning environment (Willis, 1996, p.23). In contrast to individual writing which involves no interaction of students with each other, pair writing strategy may also develop students' speaking skill as it maximizes the amount of a student's speaking to a classmate (Harmer, 1991, p.114). Furthermore, individual writing is usually a product-oriented teaching, while pair writing tends to be more process-oriented teaching. In individual writing, teaching usually over emphasizes the accuracy of the written text language. This may have destructive effects on students' learning and motivation (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p.143).

Students collaboration in writing was first called for by Kenneth Bruffee who reported that pair writing exercise fruited quite better written texts than those produced by individual students (Bruffee, 1973:636). This is supported by the findings of several later studies among which are Clifford (1981), Adams and Hamm (1996), Storch (2005).

In addition to produce better writing, pair writing is reported to significantly improve participant students in different language and linguistic areas. It is also stated that pair writing reinforces students' academic motivation and engagement in the writing tasks as students are usually interested in collaborative tasks (Raja & Saeed, 2012, p.156). However, Pair writing stimulates students to willingly participate in the writing task as they are usually interested in sharing their ideas and working collaboratively with class mates. The difference in students' language mastery levels may also have its advantages in peer learning. Moreover, through pair writing, students get used to give, receive, and make use of feedback. However, the work in pair writing may be slow and, due to pair mates' different thoughts, it is difficult sometimes to make decisions (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2014, p.255).

Most of the related studies report that pair writing significantly affects students' ability to produce written texts with a certain level of acceptability; yet, the merits of pair writing exceed acceptable output as it encourages students to adopt this strategy as a habitual and enjoyable protocol for performing. It reinforces mutual accountability in learning and working and enhances the sociability of students (Diatue, 1986, p.389).
Writing Anxiety

Since writing requires a certain level of linguistic competence, range of vocabulary items, and writing conventions, EFL students are likely to feel anxious when being engaged in writing tasks. Due to its proved harmful impacts on EFL learning in general, and developing students' writing skills in particular, writing anxiety has become one area of interest for EFL scholars and researchers (Negari & Rezaabadi, 2012, p.2579). Writing anxiety is viewed as the negative feeling of students associated with the practice of writing. It is reflected in students' tendency to avoid writing practices and/or develop negative feelings or attitudes to associate writing such as nervousness (Atay & Kurt, 2006, p.110).

Writing Anxiety may be defined as a student's "fear of the writing process that outweighs the projected gain from the ability to write" (Tsui, 1996: 121). It is defined by Daly & Miller (1975, P.242) as the tendency of language students to approach or avoid writing practices.

Writing anxiety is one type of situation-specific anxiety or a language –skill-specific type of anxiety specific to writing (Bline et al, 2001, p.71), as other types may include test anxiety, math's anxiety, speaking anxiety..etc. In this sense, writing anxiety should not be confused with the general personality trait of anxiety, rather, it is restricted to any situation in which writing is involved especially if it includes some sort of evaluation (Tadesse, 2013, p.8).

Writing anxiety, or 'the terror of the blank page' as referred to by Donald M. Murray (Murray, 1968: 70), is not restricted to EFL students at the early stages of language learning or those with poor mastery of language skills, rather it may be experienced by students in different educational levels with different levels of language efficiency ( Reigsted, 1985: 69 ). As stated by Witse (2001, p.2), writing anxiety may begin at any stage of language learning and be a long-lasting complication.

In the product-based programs of EFL writing teaching which requires students working individually, the feedback and evaluation of students' written texts are usually done by the teacher. This normally makes writing " a highly challenging and demanding skill and creates within students negative affective attitude towards writing" (Jahin, 2012, p.63). Moreover, in such programs, students usually carry out their writing tasks individually without being supported, aided, and encouraged by classmates. This may increase the difficulty of writing tasks and the level of anxiety and other negative affective variables (Yang, 2011, p.148). Highly anxious writers are reported to avoid any task that may involve writing as they view writing as a bothersome task or punishment. During writing, they are likely to feel tense, nervous, and worry and this usually affects their writing which is reported to be noticeably shorter, syntactically inaccurate and less fluent (Faiglry et al., 1981, p.10).

Writing anxiety may seriously block students' thinking and so significantly affect their writing performance (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p.89). Accordingly it may have significant negative effects on students' writing skills development. Students with higher levels of anxiety tend to produce written texts that are lower in accuracy, organization, quality and quantity (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996: 31).
It is reported that writing anxiety negative impacts exceed the quality of students written texts to include their behaviors while writing, self-efficacy, attitudes toward writing, and all the phases of writing process (Faigley et al., 1981, p.12). These negative effects may also exceed students' achievement to include their motivation (Kurt & Atay, 2007, p.12).

However, several studies report different possible sources of writing anxiety. These sources may include the students writing competence, efficiency of preparation for the writing practice, the worry of being evaluated and judged by the teacher and classmates, and the nature of feedback given by the teacher (Ozturk & Cecen, 2007, p.220).

Method

Due to its nature and aims, the current study adopts the non-randomized control group pretest/posttest experimental design. In this design two or more groups are involved. After checking their equalization in a number of possible effective variables including the dependent ones, the groups involved are randomly assigned as one control group and experimental one(s). During the experiment, only the experimental group(s) receives the independent variable. However, at the end of the experiment, all the groups involved in the study (control and experimental) are to be post-tested in the dependent variables and the data collected is statistically manipulated and discussed to either accept or reject the hypothesis (or hypotheses) of the study. (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p.98).

Table 1
The Experimental Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Writing Performance + Writing Anxiety</td>
<td>Pair Writing Technique</td>
<td>Writing Performance + Writing Anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population and Sample

Third-year students at the English departments of the University of Baghdad (College of Education / Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences, College of Education for Women, College of Arts, and College of Languages) during the academic year 2016-2017 represent the population of this study. From third year students at the Department of English / College of Education Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences, section B (38 students) and section D (40 students) are randomly selected to represent the sample. The total number of the sample is 78 male and female students.

Equalization

To ensure that the study is likely to achieve accurate and indicative results, the equalization of the two groups involved in this study is checked according to a number of variables that may cause a variance in the participants tested performance.
Therefore, the equalization of the two groups is checked according to writing pre-test scores, intelligence, and writing anxiety.

The data required for equalization checking is collected by employing a writing performance pre-test, Raven's progressive matrices intelligence test (RPM), and a writing anxiety scale. The manipulation of the data achieved through conducting the three instruments by t-test for two independent samples formula reveals that there are no statistical significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the checked variables. The computed t-test values are found 0.651, 0.985, and 1.075 for writing performance in the pre-test, intelligence test, and writing anxiety respectively which are all lower than the tabulated t-test value 2.0 (see table 2).

Table 2
The Equalization of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Writing Pre-test, Intelligence, and Writing Anxiety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Pre-test</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18.32</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>0.651</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19.20</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33.23</td>
<td>9.12</td>
<td>0.985</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31.25</td>
<td>8.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Anxiety</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>86.11</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>1.075</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>87.24</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instruments of the Study
Writing Post-test
To achieve the aims of the study, the participants' writing performance should be accurately evaluated. For this purpose, a writing test is prepared in which the participants are asked to write a composition of no less than 250 words on a topic suggested by them. The compositions of the participants are to be scored according to the analytical rubric suggested by Brown (2007). By this rubric participants' writing performance can be evaluated on five components; namely, content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Each of these components is evaluated on a scale of 1-4. Accordingly, the scores achieved in the test can range from 10 to 40. (See Appendix A).

Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI)
This inventory is adopted from Cheng, Y.S. (2004). It consists of 22 items to be responded to according to a five-point Likert scale (strongly disagrees, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree). These five points are graded 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively. (Appendix B).
Face Validity
To achieve face validity of the study instruments, data collection instruments are exposed to two juries of experts. The scoring rubric of the writing test is exposed to 10 experts in Teaching English as a foreign language, while the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) is exposed to 12 jurors in the field of educational psychology. However, mostly all the jurors in both fields agree on the suitability of both instruments to the aims and sample of the current study.

Pilot Administration
To help the researchers check the clarity of the SLWAI items and compute its reliability, 35 third year students the Department of English/College of Education-Ibn Rushd who are not included in the study sample are randomly assigned to conduct the pilot administration.

Statistical Analysis of SLWAI
The construct validity of the SLWAI can be evaluated through conducting statistical analysis of the inventory items to check the patterns of correlations between the scores achieved by the individuals responding to the inventory items (Trochim et al., 2015, p.159). This procedure aims at evaluating the effectiveness of each item in the inventory. The statistical analysis involves computing the discrimination power and item-total correlation of the SLWAI. The statistical analysis sample includes 100 third year students who are randomly selected from the Department of English/ College of Languages/ University of Baghdad.

Item Discrimination Power
Computing the item discrimination power helps to determine the necessary power of each item to discriminate between individuals who have the trait indicated by the item, and those who do not have it. To compute the discrimination power, the scores achieved by the individuals in the statistical analysis sample are divided into an upper and a lower groups. T-test for two independent samples is utilized to check the difference between the mean of the scores in each group. T-test values are found to range between 2.21 -13.12 all of which are higher than the tabulated t-value.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Range of Computed t-values</th>
<th>Computed t-value</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
<th>Degree of Freedom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLWAI</td>
<td>2.21-13.12</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item- Total Correlation
Pearson Correlation Formula is employed to check the correlation between the score of each item in the SLWAI and its total score. This procedure is done to check the items' homogeneity and their likelihood to measure what they are intended to measure (Anstasi, 1976, p.209). However, all items in the SLWAI are found to have statistical significance.
Table 4

Ranges of Pearson Correlation Coefficients of Items in SLWAI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Range of Pearson Correlation Coefficients</th>
<th>Computed Pearson Correlation Coefficients</th>
<th>Level of Significance</th>
<th>Degree of Freedom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLWAI</td>
<td>0.234-0.411</td>
<td>0.196</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reliability

Checking the Reliability of a data helps to determine the amount of confidence with which the results achieved through the instrument are dealt with (Gronlund, 1976:105). However, checking the reliability can be done by different procedures among which Alpha Cronbach represents one of the most common procedures. Using Alpha Cronbach yields reliability equivalent 0.86. Accordingly the SLWAI is regarded reliable since its reliability equivalent is higher than 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994, p.256).

The Experiment

The experiment is started with the beginning of the second semester of the academic year 2016/2017 and lasted for 15 weeks. Both experimental and control groups are taught writing by one of the researchers and assigned two writing lesson periods weekly. Moreover, both groups are given the same number and topics of writing tasks and trained to write by following five phases, namely; ideas generation, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing. However, during the experiment the participants in the control group are asked to practice and accomplish the writing tasks individually, while experimental group participants are asked and trained to do this in pairs.

Directly at the end of the experiment period the post writing test and SLWAI are conducted on the participants in both groups.

Results

The data collected through the two instruments is statistically manipulated by utilizing t-test for two independent samples to find out the significance of the differences between the means of the scores of the two groups' participants. Below is a discussion of the results achieved.

Results Related to the First Hypothesis

The experimental and control groups' mean scores in the writing post-test are 32.21 and 23.45 respectively. The computed t-test value 4.786 is higher than the tabulated value 2.0. (See table 5).

Table 5

T-test Value of Students' Scores in the Writing Post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing posttest</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32.21</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>4.786</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23.45</td>
<td>9.11</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the writing performances of the participants in the two groups in the post-test. Since the mean score of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group, the difference is in favor of the former. Accordingly, the first null hypothesis is rejected.

To decide on the effect size value of pair writing technique on experimental group participants' writing performance, Eta-squared ($\eta^2$) is utilized and results a value 0.96 which indicates that the effect size of this independent variable is strong.

**Results Related to the Second Hypothesis**

The means of the scores achieved by the participants in the experimental and control groups in the SLWAI are computed and found 80.45 and 84.32 respectively. The computed value of t-test 2.51 is higher than the tabulated value 2.0 as shown in table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t- value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLWAI</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80.45</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>84.32</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-test results indicate that the difference between the scores achieved by the participants in the two groups in the SLWAI is statistically significant. Again, this difference is found in favor of the experimental group since its mean score is higher than the control group's one. Thus, the second null hypothesis is also rejected.

The value of Eta-squared ($\eta^2$) is computed to find out the size value of the effect of the independent variable (pair writing technique) on participants' writing anxiety. It yields a value 0.47 which indicates that the independent variable has a weak effect size.

**Conclusions**

According to the results achieved in this study, it is concluded that;

1. pair writing technique has a positive effect on developing EFL students' writing performance.
2. pair writing technique can be used effectively to reduce EFL students' writing anxiety which may seriously hinder students' development of writing skill.
3. the positive effect of pair writing technique is found to be greater on developing EFL students' writing skill than on reducing their writing anxiety.
4. the positive effect of pair writing is not restricted to the quality of writing, but it also positively affects the quantity. This is indicated by students' written compositions which are found to be not only better in quality but also longer in size.
5. in addition to practice writing, students indirectly practice speaking and communication as they interact in pairs to accomplish pair writing tasks.
6. Pair writing involves indirect peer reviewing as each student reviews his/her pair mate sentences and ideas. This provides additional opportunities for learning from the feedback given, although the case of students giving inaccurate feedback is still possible.

**Recommendations**

In the light of the results and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are set foreword:

1. Due to its beneficial effect in EFL learning, collaborative learning in general and pair writing activities in particular should be initiated in the EFL classroom.
2. EFL writing teachers should seek to enhance their students' learning by employing various approved teaching techniques.
3. EFL writing should not be taught separately. It is more useful to employ techniques that promote integrative practice of different language skills.
4. Since pair writing moves a great deal of responsibility of instruction and interaction from the classroom teacher to students, EFL writing teachers need to work hard to structure and initiate suitable pair writing tasks and train their students to be actively engaged in such tasks.
5. Due to the noisiness and movement result from students' interacting in pairs; control of the class may be lost. Accordingly, writing teachers should give greater attention to keep order and avoid possible destructive behaviors of students. This can be achieved by carefully monitoring the writing pairs and setting certain rules and time limits for pair writing task completion.
6. Shy and unmanageable students or those who prefer to work independently should be encouraged to do pair writing tasks because, as a collaborative learning technique, pair writing trains students to work collaboratively, accept the different ideas of others, and get used to lead and to be led.
7. EFL writing teachers should promote their students' ability to analyze their own writing as readers to be aware of their personal writing needs.
8. In pair writing activities, the EFL classroom teacher should be wise concerning the amount of intervention he/she makes in pair students' interaction.
9. Suitable topics should be chosen for students to write on in pairs. Topics about personal life and experiences, for example, are more suitable for individual writing tasks.
10. It is always useful to encourage students to reflect on the pair writing task experiences they have so as to increase their awareness of the beneficial effects of collaboration and to help classroom teachers improve the tasks they prepare for their students.

**About the Authors:**

**Dr. Salam Hamid Abbas** received his PhD in methods of TEFL in Baghdad University 2005. He works as a professor at the University of Baghdad, College of Education/Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences and teaches at both under and post graduate levels. Dr. Salam’s main research interests are within the scope of EFL teacher training and education, language assessments, variables affecting EFL learning, and developing EFL writing skill.

**Dr. Shaymaa Abdulbaqi Al-Bakri** was awarded her Ph.D. in 1998 by the University of Baghdad in English Language Teaching & Curriculum. Her scientific rank is a professor and she works in...
the College of Education/Ibn Rushd for Human Sciences - University of Baghdad. She has special interest in ESP, EFL curriculum, Learning Styles & Strategies, Teacher Development, and Thinking Skills.

References


The Effect of Pair Writing Technique on Iraqi EFL


**Appendix A**

**Writing Performance Scoring Scheme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Performance Description</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content (C)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>The topic is complete and clear and the details are relating to the topic</td>
<td>3 x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The topic is complete and clear but the details are almost relating to the topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The topic is complete and clear but the details are not relating to the topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The topic is not clear and the details are not relating to the topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization (O)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Identification is complete and descriptions are arranged with proper connectives</td>
<td>2 x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Identification is almost complete and descriptions are arranged with almost proper connectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Identification is not complete and descriptions are arranged with few misuse of connectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Identification is not complete and descriptions are arranged with misuse of connectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar (G)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very few grammatical or agreement inaccuracies</td>
<td>2 x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Few grammatical or agreement inaccuracies but not affect on meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Numerous grammatical or agreement inaccuracies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Frequent grammatical or agreement inaccuracies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary (V)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Effective choice of words and word forms</td>
<td>1.5 x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Few misuse of vocabularies, word forms, but not change the meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Limited range confusing words and word form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very poor knowledge of words, word forms, and not understandable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics (M)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>It uses correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization</td>
<td>1.5 x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>It has occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>It has frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>It is dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix B**

**Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>While writing in English, I am not nervous at all.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraint.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I don’t worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I tremble or perspire when I write English compositions under time pressure.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraint.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write compositions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraint.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I am afraid that the other students would deride my English composition if they read it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I would do my best to excuse myself if asked to write English compositions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I don’t worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when write English compositions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I am afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I am not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreign Language Anxiety of EFL Students: Examining the Effect of Self-Efficacy, Self-Perceived Proficiency and Sociobiographical Variables

Elias Bensalem
Languages and Translation Department
Northern Border University
Arar, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
The present study aims to explore the link between foreign language anxiety (FLA) and self-efficacy, English self-perceived proficiency, and three sociobiographical variables (gender, knowledge of a third language, and experience abroad) among 261 Arabic university students learning English. Data were collected using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) and an Arabic version of the Foreign Language Self-Efficacy Scale (Torres & Turner, 2016). The findings revealed that this sample of Arab English as a foreign language (EFL) students experienced an average level of anxiety with female learners suffering more from anxiety than their male counterparts. Regression analyses revealed that self-efficacy, self-perceived proficiency in English, and gender were predictors of FLA. The results suggest that participants who were self-efficacious and felt more proficient in English were significantly less likely to suffer from FLA. However, even though knowledge of a third language and experience abroad were correlated with FLA, they had no effect on participants’ anxiety.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, experience abroad, foreign language anxiety, self-efficacy, self-perceived proficiency, sociobiographical variables

Introduction

There is a consensus among many researchers that affective factors such as anxiety and self-efficacy, along with other variables, play an important role in second or foreign language (FL) learning (e.g., Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Affect has been found to influence learning, with positive affect enhancing achievement and negative affect inhibiting achievement (Bandura, 1986; MacIntyre, 1999). While anxiety as an independent construct has been widely researched (e.g., Bailey, 1983; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Ohata, 2005; Pappamihiel, 2002; Williams & Andrade, 2008; Young, 1991) the construct of self-efficacy is still quite underexplored in the domain of second and foreign language acquisition (Shi, 2016). Increasing students’ self-efficacy is important since it enhances learning experiences and is linked with higher achievement (Byer, 2001). Furthermore, learner’s variables such as gender (e.g., MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002; Arnaiz & Guillén, 2012; Dewaele, 2007; Park & French, 2013), knowledge of a third language (Dewaele, 2007, 2010; Dewaele, Petrides, & Furnham, 2008; Thompson & Khawaja, 2015), experience abroad (e.g., Allen & Herron, 2003; Coleman, 1997; Shapson, Kaufman, & Day, 1981), and self-perceived proficiency (e.g. Arnaiz & Guillén, 2012; Dewaele & Al Saraj, 2015; Liu & Chen, 2013; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Sparks & Ganschow, 2007) may have an impact on achievement in another language. Since these variables are inter-related (Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997), there is a need to explore their relationship with anxiety. Analysis of the connection between anxiety and other learner characteristics can unveil the type of language learners who are more prone to feeling anxiety vis-à-vis on second language learning and communication, allowing for a more in-depth understanding of the variables provoking FLA (Tóth, 2007). Therefore, the aim of the present study is to examine how FLA is related to five learner variables: self-efficacy, English self-perceived proficiency, gender, knowledge of a third language, and experience abroad. These independent variables may interact with each other to provoke anxiety situations.

Literature review

Foreign language anxiety

Horwitz et al. (1986) have defined the phenomenon of FLA 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” (p. 128). Horwitz et al. (1986) have identified three types of anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is defined as “a type of shyness characterized as fear of, or anxiety about communicating with people” (p. 127). It is related to an individual’s level of anxiety when interacting with other speakers. Many studies have concluded that communication apprehension is a major source of anxiety (Al-Saraj, 2014; Arnaiz & Guillén, 2012; Horwitz et al., 1986; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Young, 1990). Test anxiety is defined as “the type of performance anxiety resulting from a fear of failure in an academic evaluation setting” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). It refers to anxiety that students experience in an exam situation. Tests are a source of anxiety (Koch & Terrell, 1991; Ohata, 2005; Young, 1991). Fear of negative evaluation refers to the “apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.128). Negative evaluation involves fear from being evaluated by the instructor as well as by peers (Aida,
Foreign Language Anxiety of EFL Students: Examining the Effect

Young (1991) avers that learners tend to experience classroom anxiety provoked by different factors including learner and teacher beliefs about language learning, teacher-learner nature of interactions, and classroom management. Several studies (e.g., Abu-Rabia, 2004; Al-Saraj, 2014; Brantmeier, 2005; Yan & Horwitz, 2008) have emphasized the role of the teacher in either increasing or decreasing the levels of anxiety among students.

**Self-efficacy**
Self-efficacy refers to individuals' "judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1997, p. 391). This means that individuals’ success in completing a given task is determined by their level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). In other words, people with high levels of self-efficacy have better performance than people with lower levels of self-efficacy. Therefore, Mills, Pajares, and Herron (2007) posit that learners' level of self-efficacy can be a predictor of success in completing tasks. Students may experience different levels of self-efficacy depending on their perception about the level of difficulty of a specific task (Torres & Turner, 2016).

Bandura (1997) argues that there is a correlation between FLA levels and self-efficacy beliefs. Learners with lower levels of self-efficacy tend to experience higher levels of anxiety because they underestimate their ability to learn a foreign language. His claim was supported by several empirical studies. In a study involving Turkish students learning EFL, Cubukcu (2008) reported a negative correlation between the participants’ self-efficacy and FLA. Learners with lower levels of self-efficacy had higher levels of FLA while students with lower anxiety had higher levels of self-efficacy. Within the same vein, Matsuda and Gobel (2004) aver that self-efficacy, FLA, and motivation are interrelated. Learners with higher levels of confidence experience lower anxiety levels. Consequently, they gain the ability to be high achievers in foreign language learning. Conversely, learners with lower levels of confidence tend to doubt their ability to learn a foreign language.

**Self-perceived proficiency in the foreign language**
Self-perceived proficiency in the FL has been found to be one of the predictors of FLA (e.g. Arnaiz & Guillén, 2012; Dewaele & Al Saraj, 2015; Liu & Chen, 2013; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Sparks & Ganschow, 2007). Learners who feel proficient in the target language typically experience lower levels of FLA, while those who perceive themselves less competent tend to exhibit higher levels of anxiety. In their study, Dewaele and Al Saraj (2015) reported that self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of anxiety among Arab EFL students from different countries. Participants who felt more proficient in oral English were significantly less likely to suffer from FLA in English. However, there has been concern about the validity of self-perceived competence measures (DeKeyser, 2006). Anxiety may bias learners’ perception of their true proficiency as reported by research. In their experiment involving Anglo-Canadian students learning French as a second language, MacIntyre, Noels and Clément (1997) found that students’ self-perceived proficiency of French was influenced by their anxiety; anxious students underestimated their proficiency while less anxious students overestimated their proficiency in French.
Foreign Language Anxiety of EFL Students: Examining the Effect

**FLA and gender**
Research conducted on the impact of gender on FLA has yielded inconsistent results. Some studies found evidence that male students exhibited higher levels of anxiety than their female peers (Campbell & Shaw 1994; MacIntyre et al., 2002). Other studies reported opposite results as female students scored higher on FLA than their male counterparts (Arnaiz & Guillén, 2012; Dewaele, 2007; Park & French, 2013). Some researchers have found that gender had no effect on FLA. Alshahrani (2016) did not find gender differences in FLA among tertiary Arab EFL students in Saudi Arabia. The same results were reported by other studies (Aida, 1994; Dewael et al., 2008; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Kao & Craigie, 2010; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004).

**FLA and multilingualism**
Research examining the correlation between FLA and multilingualism has been scant (Thompson & Lee, 2013). A few studies have linked multilingualism and lower levels of FLA than bilinguals (Dewaele, 2007, 2010; Dewaele et al., 2008). For learners who manage to reach a high level of competence in a third foreign language, anxiety ceases to be an issue (Dewaele, 2010). Dewaele (2007) found that learners who learned more languages seem to carry little anxiety. Trilinguals exhibited lower levels of anxiety in their second language. This could be attributed to the fact that “trilinguals and quadrilinguals have become better communicators as a result of their multilingualism, and that their self-confidence, as well as their self-perceived competence has grown as a result” (Dewaele, 2007, p.404). These findings were corroborated by the results of a more recent study by Thompson and Khawaja (2015) involving Turkish university students. The researchers reported that multilingual learners of English had lower levels of anxiety than their bilingual counterparts. Cenoz (2013) asserts that lower levels of anxiety are due to the fact that learning additional languages grants multilinguals a broader linguistic repertoire and more experience. Multilingualism also helps acquire better communication skills (Dewaele, 2010). Santos, Cenoz and Gorter (2015), however, aver that the evidence is still limited. Therefore, the relationship between FLA and multilingualism should be further explored.

**FLA and experience abroad**
Several studies found that experience abroad decreases the level of FLA (e.g., Allen & Herron, 2003; Coleman, 1997; Shapson, Kaufman, & Day, 1981). In a more recent study, Thompson and Lee (2014) found that experience abroad helps reduce FLA among Korean learners of English as a foreign language. The impact included different facets of FLA: English class performance anxiety, confidence in communicating with native speakers of English, and fear of ambiguity. Thompson and Lee (2014) assert that when exploring the impact of experience abroad on anxiety, language proficiency level should be considered. In other words, having experience abroad may not decrease FLA without a certain level of foreign language proficiency. Allen and Herron (2003) posit that the relationship between study abroad and affective variables, such as motivation and anxiety, and linguistic gain, is complex. They contend that further research is needed to “investigate whether linguistic and affective outcomes are maintained after SA [study abroad]” (p.383).
In summary, several variables that are linked to FLA have been identified in the research literature. There were mixed results since some variables seemed to have different impacts on FLA. Some researchers have called for further research as the puzzle of the characteristics of anxious foreign language learners is still incomplete (Dewaele & Al Saraj, 2015). Thus, the purpose of this study is twofold. The first is to examine the level of anxiety in a group of male and female Saudi university students and find out whether their level is similar to the level of other foreign language learners reported in previous studies. The second aim is to investigate how FLA is related to the following variables: self-efficacy, English self-perceived proficiency, knowledge of a third language, and experience abroad. No research has yet, to our knowledge, combined these variables with FLA especially in the Saudi EFL context.

The following research questions will be addressed:
1. What are the anxiety levels of EFL students? Do male and female students experience similar anxiety levels?
2. Are there effects of self-efficacy, English self-perceived proficiency, and other learner variables (gender, knowledge of a third language, and experience abroad) on FLA?

Methods

Participants
The participants of this study were 261 Arab EFL students enrolled in lower intermediate, intermediate, upper intermediate and advanced English courses in three public universities in Saudi Arabia. Table 1 provides basic information about the participants. The majority were male (n = 144) and aged 18-22 (n = 240). Approximately 63% of participants have learnt French as a third language. Most of participants (76.6%) were majoring in languages and translation. The rest were majoring in other areas of study, namely business administration, computer science, and human resources. All participants self-rated their proficiency in English on a scale from 1 to 10 for listening, speaking, reading and writing. The same scale was used in previous studies (e.g., Dewaele et al., 2008; Santos, Cenoz & Gorter, 2015; Thompson & Lee, 2013). The average scores are reported in Table 2.

Table 1 Summary of Participants’ Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>55.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18-22</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23-38</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-English</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year in college</td>
<td>Freshman (first year)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 *English Self-perceived Proficiency Levels*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening (max = 10)</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking (max = 10)</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>2.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading (max = 10)</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing (max = 10)</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (max = 40)</td>
<td>24.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instruments**

Two instruments were used in this study: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), designed by Horwitz et al. (1986) and Foreign Language Self-Efficacy Scale (FLSES), developed by Torres and Turner (2016). Both surveys were pilot-tested prior to the onset of this study experiment.

**Foreign language anxiety scale**

An adapted version of FLCAS was used to measure anxiety levels among participants. The phrase *foreign language* was replaced with *English language* because participants in the current study were EFL learners. FLCAS is a self-reported measure of learners’ anxiety in the foreign language classroom created by Horwitz et al. (1986). It is the most commonly used scale to measure FLA. It consists of 33 statements. Each item on the scale is rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The mean scores in the FLCAS range from 33 to 165, with lower scores representing lower anxiety and higher scores representing higher anxiety. Twenty-four of the items are positively worded; nine are negatively worded. The scale has been shown to be reliable with an alpha coefficient of .90 and above (e.g., Sevinç & Dewaele, 2016; Thompson & Khawaja, 2015). In the present investigation, the FLACS yielded a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient reliability index of .88. This figure reveals high internal reliability.

**FL self-efficacy scale**

To measure students’ self-efficacy, an adapted Arabic version of Torres and Turner’s (2016) Foreign Language Self-Efficacy Scale (FLSES) was employed. The items comprise statements about the students’ confidence to perform tasks related to the major skills of FL.
learning (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). There are 4 items for each sub-scale, for a total of 16 items. A rating scale of 0–100 where 10 = not able to do the task at all, and 100 = able to do the tasks very well, was used, in increments of 10 following previous self-efficacy studies. Bandura (2006) asserts that self-efficacy scales should range from 0 to 100 due to research demonstrating that these scales are more appropriate for psychometric measures. The mean scores in the FLSES range from 10 to 100, with low scores indicating lower self-efficacy and high scores indicating higher self-efficacy. Torres and Turner’s (2016) reported high alpha coefficients for all subscales with an average of .91.75 (Cronbach’s alpha) for their 24-item scale. The scale used in this investigation had an internal consistency score of $\alpha = .96$.

**Results**

This section presents the findings for each research question.

*Research Question 1*: What are the anxiety levels of EFL students? Do male and female students experience similar anxiety levels?

To measure the level of FLA among the participants of this study, means and deviations for participants’ responses to each FLACS item were calculated (see Table 3). The mean anxiety score for all participants was 93.04 ($SD = 19.60$). As displayed in Table 4, the range of scores in the present study was 48-152. Following Arnaiz and Guillén's (2012) scale, participants had three levels of anxiety. The overwhelming majority of students (88.12 %) experienced low to average levels of FLA. About 28% had low levels of anxiety and about 60% experienced medium levels of anxiety. Only 12% of students suffered from a high level of anxiety (see Table 4).

**Table 3 FLA scores on FLCAS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I don’t worry about making mistakes in language class.*</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I tremble when I know that I’m going to be called on in English class.</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. It frightens me when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>1.329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It wouldn’t bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.*</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the English course.</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>1.254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Bensalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.*</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.*</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I often feel like not going to my language class.</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.*</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.</td>
<td>2.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.*</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.*</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.  
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.  
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.*  
33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven’t prepared in advance.

*Items are reverse-coded

Table 4 Anxiety levels for participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>Level of FLA</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48-79</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-117</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>60.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118-134</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The descriptive statistics associated with male and female participants’ FLCAS scores are reported in Table 5. To examine differences between the male and female groups on the FLCAS scores, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The independent-samples t-test indicated that scores were significantly higher for the female participants ($M = 100.30, SD = 19.17$) than for the control group ($M = 87.14, SD = 17.95$), $t(259) = 5.38, p < .001, d = .71$. These results suggest that female participants suffered higher levels of FLA than their male counterparts.

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics of FLCAS Scores for Males and Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>87.14</td>
<td>17.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100.30</td>
<td>19.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>93.72</td>
<td>18.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2: Are there effects of self-efficacy, English self-perceived proficiency, and sociobiographical variables (gender, knowledge of a third language, and experience abroad) on FLA?
Tables 6 presents the correlations between self-efficacy and each of the selected learner variables - gender, knowledge of a third language, experience abroad, and English self-perceived proficiency – and total FLACS score. Results of Pearson correlation reveal that all of the pairwise correlations established are either significant or very significant.

Self-efficacy had the largest correlation with FLACS score. In fact, there was a moderate negative correlation between FLA and self-efficacy, $r(259) = -0.459$, $p < .001$. Students who experienced lower levels of FLA tended to have higher levels of self-efficacy. In other words, the more positive the learners’ self-perceptions were, the lower their scores on the anxiety scale.

English self-perceived proficiency had the second largest correlation with FLACS score. An inverse relationship was found between students’ anxiety scores and their English self-perceived proficiency, $r = -0.40$, $p < .001$. This result indicates that the higher a learner’s English self-perceived proficiency was, the lower his/her anxiety levels. Similarly, English self-perceived proficiency had the largest correlation, a moderate one, with self-concept score $r = 0.50$, $p < .001$.

Gender had the third largest correlation with FLACS score as well as with self-concept scores. The magnitude of the relationship between gender and the two constructs is weak ($r = -0.33$, $p < .001$, $r = -0.33$, $p < .001$).

Participants’ knowledge of a third language was also significantly correlated with FLACS score, $r = -0.19$, $p < .005$). Participants who have learnt a third language had a tendency to experience lower levels of FLA than their peers who have learnt only two languages (Arabic and English).

Finally, there was a significant weak correlation between experience abroad and FLCAS scores ($r = -0.13$, $p = .026$). This correlation suggests that participants who traveled to English speaking counties experienced lower levels of anxiety than participants who have not traveled.

Table 6 Differences in anxiety on self-efficacy, English self-perceived proficiency, and selected learner variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1 Anxiety</th>
<th>2 Gender</th>
<th>3 Knowledge of a third language</th>
<th>4 Experience abroad</th>
<th>5 English self-perceived proficiency</th>
<th>6 Self-efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Anxiety</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Knowledge of a third language</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Experience abroad</td>
<td>-.13*</td>
<td>-.31**</td>
<td>-.037</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 English self-perceived proficiency</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>-.126*</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Self-efficacy</td>
<td>-.46**</td>
<td>-.33**</td>
<td>.298**</td>
<td>.169**</td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $N = 261$. *$p < .05$ ** $p < .01$
In order to examine the simultaneous effect of the five learner variables (self-efficacy, gender, knowledge of a third language, experience abroad, and English self-perceived proficiency) on the participants' levels of FLA and self-efficacy, regression analysis procedures were conducted. Results (see Table 7) show that the presented model is significant as there was a significant relationship between the learner variables and anxiety ($R^2 = .282$; $R = .531$, $p < .0001$). The $R$ value (.531) for the model indicates a medium linear relationship between the five learner variables and FLA. $R^2$ was .282, which means self-efficacy, gender, and English self-perceived proficiency combined to explain 28.2% of the variance in the participants’ anxiety. According to Cohen’s (1988) criteria for assessing the predictive power of a set of independent variables, this indicates a small effect size.

However, as evidenced by Table 7, of the five learner variable only three contributed significantly ($p < .0005$) to the prediction of FLA: self-efficacy, gender, and English self-perceived proficiency. The other two variables (knowledge of a third language and experience abroad) did not make any significant contribution. Among the useful predictor variables, self-efficacy had the highest relative impact on anxiety with $t$ value of -4.049, followed by self-perceived proficiency with $t$ value of 3.486. Gender was found to be the weakest predictor with $t$ value of 3.215.

Table 7 Regression Model for Predicting FLA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>$T$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>-.267</td>
<td>-4.049**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>7.393</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>3.215**</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English self-perceived proficiency</td>
<td>-.539</td>
<td>-.214</td>
<td>-3.486**</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of a third language</td>
<td>-2.963</td>
<td>-.073</td>
<td>-1.312 (n.s.)</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience abroad</td>
<td>-.736</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>-.272 (n.s.)</td>
<td>.786</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Model $R = .535$; $R^2 = .287$; Adjusted $R^2 = .273$; Std. Error = 16.714; $F = 20.499$; $p = < .0005$, ** $p < .0005$

Discussion

This section is devoted to the discussion of each of the research questions in light of the results obtained. The first research question explores the level of FLA, as measured by the participants’ scores on the FLACS. Results show that the EFL students experienced an average level of FLA overall. The participants’ level of FLA was similar to the level reported in other studies. The mean and standard deviation of the FLACS ($M = 93.04$, $SD = 19.60$) were similar to those reported in previous research (e.g., Arnaiz & Guillén, 2012; Horwitz et al., 1986). The findings are also aligned with the outcomes reported by previous experiments involving EFL Saudi students (e.g., Alshahrani, 2016; Ashahrani & Alshahrani, 2015; Alrabai, 2014; Hamouda, 2013).
Regarding the potential impact of gender on anxiety levels, the current study found that female participants experienced higher levels of FLA than their male peers. This outcome corroborates other findings in the literature (e.g., Abu-Rabia, 2004; Arnaiz & Guillén, 2012; Clarck & Trafford, 1996; Dewaele, 2007; Donovan & MacIntyre, 2005; Park & French, 2013). In the case of British students learning French, German and Spanish, Clarck and Trafford (1996) argue that the differences of the levels of anxiety between males and females were due to the fact that female students are more sincere and frank than male students when they reported their feelings of anxiety. Another explanation that may be applicable to the current study is provided by Park and French (2013). These researchers cite sociocultural factors as the main reason for higher levels of FLA among female Korean students. They maintain that in a male-dominated society where females culturally have a predisposition to embrace a submissive role, they argue that the females are more inclined to be stressed out when asked to express their personal thoughts.

The second research question explored the relationship between five learner variables (self-efficacy, English self-perceived proficiency, gender, knowledge of a third language, and experience abroad) and levels of anxiety. Results revealed that self-efficacy had the largest correlation with FLACS score. The negative relationship between self-efficacy and anxiety suggests that students with low self-efficacy are more prone to experience higher levels of anxiety. This result corroborates the findings reported in previous studies (e.g., Tóth, 2007; Torres & Turner, 2016). It is worth mentioning that Tóth’s study explored only first year English majors. However, Torres and Turner’s (2016) experiment involved learners of Spanish from different levels. It is a unique study since it examined the correlation between students’ levels of FL skill-specific anxiety and FL skill-specific self-efficacy. The results showed that when Spanish learners experienced higher levels of anxiety in each of the FL major skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), they indicated lower levels of FL self-efficacy in the specific skill. The correlation between anxiety and self-efficacy underscores the strong role an individual’s beliefs about oneself can play in the amount of anxiety he/she can experience (Tóth, 2007).

Gender has been found a significant predictor for FLA. The literature on whether gender could be a predictor to FLA shows contradictory results. Findings in the current study are consistent with research carried out by Arnaiz and Guillén (2012) and Stephenson (2007) who found that gender was a predictor of FLA among EFL learners in Spain. However, they are not aligned with the outcomes of other studies involving Arab EFL learners (Bensalem, 2017) who found that gender was not a significant predictor of FLA.

The finding that self-perceived proficiency appeared as a predictor of FLA was expected as it was consistent with previous research (Arnaiz & Guillén, 2012; Liu & Chen, 2013; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Sparks & Ganschow, 2007). Learners who perceive themselves as less competent at performing specific tasks tend to experience higher levels of anxiety than those learners who perceive themselves as more competent (Clément, Gardner, & Smythe, 1980; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985; Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, Kitano, 2001; MacIntyre et al., 1997). However, self-perceived proficiency in this study was not the highest predictor; in Dewaele and Al Saraj’s (2015) study, self-rated oral proficiency in English was the strongest predictor.
predictor of classroom anxiety among Arab EFL learners. Nevertheless, this result is in line with previous research reporting negative correlations between self-perceived proficiency and anxiety level, and supporting the theory that self-perceived proficiency has proven to be a better predictor of anxiety level than achievement tests (e.g., Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999; Cheng, 2002; Clément et al., 1994; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993).

It was an unexpected finding of the study that knowledge of a third language and FLA scores was not a predictor to FLA even though it was correlated to FLA. This finding appears to contradict the findings of previous research, which has shown that the knowledge of more languages is linked to lower levels of FLA/FLCA across languages (Bensalem, 2017; Dewaele, 2010, Dewaele et al., 2008; Thompson & Lee, 2013). The current study found the same results reported by Dewaele and Al Saraj (2015) who did not find any link between anxiety and knowledge of languages. One of the possible explanations for this outcome is that most of the participants had a low level of third language proficiency. All students have studied French for only a couple of semesters.

Implications
Helping students be more self-efficacious and less anxious is a key to success in learning a foreign language. Many studies have demonstrated that a large number of students underachieve in FL courses because of anxiety (Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, & Daley, 2003). Therefore, it is important for language instructors to play a major role in reducing students’ anxiety in the classroom. The learning environment that an instructor creates can influence learners’ levels of self-efficacy (Fencl & Scheel, 2005). Therefore, teachers should establish a safe learning environment where the focus is on learning rather than on testing since students tend to view learning a foreign language as a long series of examinations (Horwitz et al., 1986). It is important to stress that performing well on assignments is less important than learning and making improvements (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). For instructors who lack teaching experience, they should receive training in implementing anxiety-reducing techniques that boost students’ self-efficacy. Examples of such techniques include communicative activities (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), group work, and class discussions (Jones, 2004) where making mistakes is not stigmatized. Torres and Turner (2016) have argued that instructors are responsible for providing positive learning experiences for students. To this end, they have suggested using FLAS and FLSES as formative assessment tools to measure students’ levels of anxiety and self-efficacy throughout the course. A more realistic approach is to open channels of communication with students where the issue of anxiety is discussed, and use persuasion to raise students’ level of efficacy.

Limitations and directions for future research
This study has limitations that should be addressed. The instruments used may have overlooked cultural subtleties that may have skewed the results. The FLACS, for example, was designed to measure anxiety originally in a Western context. Al-Saraj (2014) has argued that the translation of instruments might result in culturally inappropriate or irrelevant instruments, hence the need to adapt questionnaires that fit the target population. The researcher has tailored the FLSES towards the EFL learners in Saudi but more improvements may be needed. Furthermore, FLACS focuses primarily on anxiety related to speaking. Anxiety related to other skills such as writing and reading...
have not been accounted for in this study. Youngsang (2001) has argued that learners may experience FL anxiety and self-efficacy related to specific FL skills. Therefore, future research should explore the relationship between self-efficacy and other learner variables with FLA, not as unitary constructs, but independent skills. No single study has explored that line of research in the context of EFL.

Conclusion
The present study investigated the levels of anxiety among Arab EFL learners who experienced average levels of FLA with female learners feeling more anxious than their male peers. Furthermore, this investigation examined the link between self-efficacy, self-perceived proficiency in English, and three sociobiographical variables (gender, knowledge of a third language, and experience abroad) on FLA of Arabic learners of English using FLCAS and FLSES. Results revealed that self-efficacy, self-perceived proficiency in English, and gender were predictors of FLA of Arab EFL learners. The results suggest that participants who were self-efficacious and felt more proficient in English were significantly less likely to suffer from FLA. However, even though knowledge of a third language and experience abroad were correlated with FLA, they were found to have no effect on participants’ anxiety.

About the Author:
Dr. Elias Bensalem is an associate professor at NBU. He is teaching English courses at the languages and translation department. His research interests include second language learning, educational technology, methodologies and practices in the teaching of foreign languages. He is the author of several articles related to language teaching and learning. ORCiD ID is 0000-0002-6018-0897

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References


Identity, Ideology, and Language
A Literature Review of Theoretical Anchors and Empirical Studies

Majd Sarah
College of Education, TLC Doctoral Program,
The University of Texas at El Paso, TX, USA

Abstract
The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of selected theoretical frameworks and some empirical studies that take up theories on identity, ideology, and language. The researcher attempts to highlight the most important theoretical frameworks on identity, ideologies, and language, and discusses key theoretical frameworks that have had an influence among recent scholars’ empirical work especially in the fields of second language acquisition (SLA), sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology. This article has two objectives. First, with a focus on the relationship between language, identity, and investment, the researcher attempts to present a review of Norton’s foundational work dated between 1995 (Peirce, 1995) to a more recent scholarly work (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Next, she discusses identity and interaction from a sociocultural linguistic approach by drawing on Bucholtz and Hall’s framework (2004a, 2004b, 2005). Findings from this article highlight a paradigm shift in the ways the scholarly focus has changed from looking at language solely as an oral and written skill to looking at language from the sociocultural lens and studying how it is embedded in identity production through linguistics interaction. This article concludes with a recommendation for future research on identity and language to respond to the diversity of language practices and aim at connecting language ideologies and identity to enhance our understanding of today’s complex learning communities and globalized world.

Keywords: agency, investment, language learning, linguistic capital, social identity

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Introduction

What is language? Is it a set of rules that are universal across all languages (Chomsky, 1988), or is it a set of “socially charged” words (Bakhtin, 1981)? Scholarly opinions on what language study is differ depending on areas of research, interests, and purposes. Early in the 1990s, a change was initiated in the questions scholars asked in the fields of second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology. The popular view of language was as a set of formal rules, or distinctive knowledges: langue and parole in the Saussurean approach (De Saussure, 2011[1916]) and competence and performance in Chomskian approach. But in the 1990s, researchers (McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton Pierce, 1995) doubted the popular view of language as “an empty vehicle that conveys pre-existing meanings about the world” (Ahearn, 2011, p. 8) and they wondered about SLA theorists’ perspectives of the language learner’s relationship to the social world. The shift we’ve witnessed hence then have asserted that “language is not a neutral medium for communication but rather a set of socially embedded practices” (Ahearn, 2011, p. 3).

Research interests in the relationship between identity and language learning underwent a shift in the epistemological paradigms utilized by many second language acquisition scholars and linguistic anthropologists. Questions on identity and language learning have taken up new research trajectories theoretically and empirically. For example, in her study of immigrant women learning English in Canada, Norton (1995) examines the reasons behind which learners of a language seem to sometimes be able to successfully communicate in some situations, while other learners struggle, resist, or remain silent. Other scholars argue the role of power in conversations involving immigrants and observed “self-recreation” in how some learners established their changing identities within certain social context (McKay & Wong, 1996). Furthermore, linguistic anthropologists hold in common views that language is a form of social action. Urciuoli’s (2013) ethnography, Exposing Prejudice: Puerto Rican Experiences of Language, Race, and Class, argues that the “political economy” of language is evident in the ways Puerto Ricans in New York City’s Lower East Side experience, accept, or resist the judgments that they and others make about what constitutes “good” or “bad” language whether Spanish, English, or a mix both. Urciuoli’s findings on Puerto Ricans’ language choice when interacting with white coworkers as opposed to their language choice when talking to their African American neighbors brings attention to the “strictly enforced” boundaries between Spanish and English in certain social contexts. She notes the importance of language in unequal social and economic relations and the way these power relations both reflect and reinforce the differences in status (Urciuoli, 2013).

Amid the most recent developments in sociocultural and sociolinguistic studies of identities, ideologies, and language, the author attempts to examine how theories of social identity and language learning have developed and discusses the ways in which these frameworks have been used by SLA theorists (Pierce, 1995; Norton, 2000; Darvin & Norton, 2015) and linguistic anthropologists (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004a, 2004b, 2005). This paper is by no means an exhaustive review of literature, but rather a discussion of selected theoretical and empirical studies of the relationship between identity and language learning. First, the researcher discusses how second language acquisition theorists reconceptualize the relationship between language learners and the social world; then she reviews a framework for the analysis of identity as constituted in linguistic interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) and draws on some empirical studies that used these frameworks.
Social Theory and SLA Theory in Language Learning

Between the 1980s and the 1990s, research discourse has shifted from language itself as an abstract component made of a set of elements to learning processes and styles (Cohen & Aphek, 1981; Oxford, 1990). Oxford’s taxonomies (direct and indirect strategies of language learning) lead to another shift in the research emphasis and the next developments in the field of linguistics become the exploration of the social context of language learning. This new emphasis is the starting of a reconceptualization to SLA theory and the way SLA theorists make a distinction between the language learner and the social world. Up until the 1990s, second language acquisition theorist have described the individual’s personality unidimensionally “as [either] introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited, field dependent or field independent” (Pierce, 1995, p. 10). In other words, “the individual” is described as a “host of affective variable”. An example of this can be found in Krashen’s (1981, 1982) hypothesis that comprehensible input in the presence of a low affective filter (the learner’s motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety state) is the major causal variable in SLA. All of these variables are related to the individual and not to the social context; some other theories in SLA focus on the social aspects, but these aspects mostly refer to variations in groups of language learners and groups of target languages (Schumann, 1976).

Because of the inadequacy of the SLA theories mentioned above in addressing why the women in Norton’s study sometimes have equivocal feelings about speaking English, a reconceptualization to develop a comprehensive theory of social identity is needed. Norton’s (1995) paper attempts to integrate the language learner and the language learning context, and question how the “relations of power in the social world affect social interaction between second language learners and target language speakers” (Pierce, 1995, p. 12). To contribute to the debate on second language learning, Norton uses the data collected in Canada in 1991 (diaries, questionnaires, individual and group interviews, and home visits) and draws on her reading of social theory and “the poststructuralist conception of social identity as multiple, a site of struggle, and subject to change to explain the findings from her study” (Pierce, 1995, p. 9).

Social Identity as Multiple, a Site of Struggle, and Changing Over Time

Among postmodern theorists, Weedon’s (1987) work is highly distinguished for its conception of subjectivity and the way she links individual experiences and social power in a theory of subjectivity. Subjectivity is “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). Moreover, Weedon highlights the role of language in the relationship between the individual and the social by stating that language is “the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed” (p. 21). This acknowledgement of how language forms a central role in defining social and political organizations is essential to the way in which poststructuralism depicts individual diversity.

Drawing on Weedon’s work, Norton identifies three main characteristics of subjectivity which play a particularly important role in her 1993 study analysis: “the multiple nature of the subject, subjectivity as a site of struggle, and subjectivity as changing over time” (Pierce, 1995, p. 15). First, previous definitions of the individual in SLA research presuppose that a person has a fixed, essential, and unique core, while in poststructuralism the individual is diverse, dynamic,
and multiple. Second, the subject is not perceived as passive but rather has human agency within communities, or societies through which they navigate the unequal relations of power. It is argued that “subjectivity is produced in a variety of social sites, all of which are structured by relations of power” (Pierce, 1995, p. 15). Third, Weedon (1987) argues that subjectivity is multiple and open to change. A person’s social identity is of a changing quality. This notion of “self-recreation” is later discussed in the work of McKay & Wong (1996).

Motivation or Investment?

The concepts of instrumental motivation (learning a language for specific reason) and integrative motivation (learning a language to become part of a certain community) have been very influential in the field of second language acquisition (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985). In their work, Gardner and Lambert do not capture the complexity between relations of power, identity, and language learning because instrumental and integrative motivation assumes language learners to have a static identity and a singular desire to learn a second language. Pierce (1995) argues for the conception of investment rather than motivation to capture the complex relationship between language learners and the social world. By drawing on Bourdieu’s (1977) use of economic metaphors and in particular the notion of cultural capital, Pierce analyzes “the socially and historically constructed relationship of the women [in Canada] to the target language and their sometimes-ambivalent desire to learn and practice it” (Norton, 1995, p. 9).

To deepen our understanding of the argument of motivation versus investment, the author provides here a brief example from Pierce’s (1995) study on the struggle in conceptualizing the relationship between the individual language learner and the larger social processes. Pierce’s presentation of the short dialogue between Eva, an immigrant language learner and one of her anglophone Canadian coworkers, Gail, is critical to our understanding of the previously mentioned concepts (1995, p. 10). When Gail asked Eva how come she didn’t know “Bart Simpson”, Eva remained silent. With reference to the previously discussed theories (Krashen, 1981, 1982; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985), Eva may be portrayed as an unmotivated person with a high affective filter, a poor language learner with minimal to no sociolinguistic competence, or an introverted person who is unable to interact properly. All of these possibilities, Pierce argues, do not adequately address why Eva decided to remain silent in that particular place and at that specific time.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) use the term ‘cultural capital’ to refer to symbolic resources (language, education, friendship), as well as material resources (goods, real state, money). They argue that some forms of cultural capital have a higher exchange value than others in particular social contexts. Pierce (1995) builds off this notion to look beyond conceptions of motivation and explore how learners invest in a second language. She argues that “if learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital” (p. 17). Pierce’s notion of investment is to be distinguished from instrumental motivation since motivation is “a property of the language learner- a fixed personality trait” while the notion of investment captures the complexity of the language learner social identity and multiple desires. Pierce’s study of the immigrant women in Canada sheds light on the complex dynamic relationship between the
language learner and the social world and describes language learning in terms of social, economic, and political relations and diverse practices that reinforce gendered activity.

**Other Discourses**

Other researchers also argue that SLA theorists have struggled to understand the relationship between language learner and the social world. McKay & Wong (1996) draw on Pierce’s conception of investment in order to explain and analyze the English language development of four Chinese-speaking high school students in an ESL program in California. Their two-year ethnography suggests that there are multiple discourses and counter discourses that constitute “the very fabric of students’ lives and [determines] their investment in learning the target language” (p. 603). These multiple discourses and larger conversations affect these students’ identities especially conversations involving immigrants that depicts Asians as model minorities. McKay & Wong extend Pierce’s analysis by emphasizing the role of power in all conversations personal to national and how these include competing and contradictory colonist/racialized discourse of immigrants. This study contributes to our understanding of this complex, changing self of language learners who undergo “self-recreation” and “constantly conduct delicate social negotiations to fashion variable identities” (McKay & Wong, 1996, p. 603).

Skilton-Sylvester (2002) also builds on Pierce’s work by exploring the experiences lived by four Cambodian women participating in ESL classes in the United States. These case studies present an analysis that problematize the conceptions of motivation. Skilton-Sylvester argues that women’s “interest in and ability to come to class shifted across time and space as they look on different roles and identities in and out of the classroom” (p. 11). This suggests that the conception of language investment must take into account home experiences and professional identities in order to explain language learners’ investment in a second language.

**Communities of Practice**

Identities are complex, social production of relations of power and social interactions (Bakhtin, 1981; Foucault, 1970). Furthermore, Wenger (1998) argues that people can make sense of the world around them through “communities of practice”. Thus, identities are constructed through social interactions and “tension between our investment in the various forms of belonging and our ability to negotiate the meanings that matter in those contexts” (p. 188). Drawing on Wegner’s notion of “communities of practice” and Norton’s (2001) research with two adult immigrant language learners, Kanno & Norton (2003) argue that language learners’ practices go beyond the four walls of the classroom to realms of imagined and desired communities. These imagined communities are “groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination” (p. 241).

What constitutes communities of practice in second language classrooms? In many of these classrooms, communities are either a reconstruction of the past historically constituted communities and relations, or imagined and desired communities which offer a range of possible identities in the future. Imagined communities build off Wenger’s (1998) notion of “communities of practice” and suggest extending that conception to better understand learners’ investment in second language learning while taking their future, imagined communities of practice into account. Kanno & Norton’s example of a Japanese fashion design student who’s learning English in Japan
while envisioning himself working in New York, provides an insight on how learning a second language (in this example English) can be an “important means of gaining this future affiliation” (Kanno & Norton, 2003, p. 242). Thus, “an imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and a learner’s investment in the target language must be understood with this context” (Kanno & Norton, 2003).

**Communicative Competence under Reconstruction**

In this article, the author has earlier discussed that in the field of formal linguistics, the dominant approach to language revolve around decontextualization of language to be reduced to a set of formal rules (Chomsky, 1988). Linguists have used the Chomskian approach to draw distinction between competence (the abstract and usually unconscious knowledge that one has about the rules of a language), and performance (putting those rules into practice—sometimes imperfectly). While these conceptions are used to dominant, Hymes’ (1971) views on communicative competence have been taken up by many SLA theorists. Hymes addresses Chomsky’s abstract notion of competence by undertaking ethnographic exploration of communicative competence. This exploration establishes the importance of a language learner to not only learn the rules of a language, but also explore whose interests these rules serve. With his ethnography, Hymes pioneers the approach known today as ethnography of communication.

Thus, what does a language learner need to know in order to learn and know a language? According to Cipollone et al. (1998), a language learner must master five basic components of a language to know it: Phonology (the study of sound), Morphology (the study of word structure), Syntax (the study of sentence structure), Semantics (the study of language meaning), and Pragmatics (the study of language use). In today’s research, we notice a shift of linguists’ primary interest in the first three areas (phonology, morphology, or syntax), to an interest to study the last two components (semantics and pragmatics) and the integration of these two components with the first three (Ahearn, 2011). Thus, building on these arguments and Bourdieu’s (1977) conception of competence as “the power to impose reception” (p. 75), Pierce (1995) argues that “the definition of competence should include an awareness of the right to speak” (p. 18).

**The Model of Investment within a Social Turn: Reshaped Ideologies**

Norton defines identity as “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (Norton, 2013, p. 45). Norton’s recent work expands her foundational work on identity and investment and proposes a comprehensive model of investment. This model “occurs at the intersection of identity, ideology, and capital” (Darvin & Norton, 2015); and it takes into account the spaces where language acquisition and socialization occur and how they “have become increasingly deterritorialized and unbound, and [how] the systematic patterns of control [become] more invisible” (p. 36). This new model that Darvin & Norton propose addresses the ways learners navigate through online and offline contexts and “perform identities that have become more fluid and complex” (p. 36).

As discussed earlier, constructs of motivation view the individual as having a “unitary and coherent” identity with specific desire or traits; while the construct of investment depicts the learner as a complex social being that changes over space and time within social discourses. In an
Identity, Ideology, and Language

Sarah

attempt to sharpen the lens, Darvin & Norton propose a more comprehensive model which “challenges educational agents to reflect on the material conditions that allow learning to take place, and how learners, inscribed by race, ethnicity, gender, social class, and sexual orientation are accorded or refused the right to speak” (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 37).

Today and after Pierce’s 1990s study of the five immigrant Canadian women, theorists have noticed that the world has gone through many changes in global economy and the relations of power on both micro and macro levels. These changes lead to the call of “reshaping language ideologies, linguistic capital, and interactions within multilingual and multicultural environments” (Blommaert, 2013 as cited in Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 41). The technological revolution reshaped the way people communicate and enabled new forms of productivity and labor. As a result, power relations and mechanism have become more invisible and work landscape has become more private and isolated. Additionally, the rise of new industrialized countries such as China led to changes in language ideologies and reshaped the value of a second language. Amid these changes, Darvin & Norton (2015) propose a model of investment that is able to achieve a change in the foundational poststructuralist theories. Their main goal is to establish a dual perspective which aims to “go beyond the microstructures of power in specific communicative events and to investigate the systematic patterns of control that communicative events are indexical of” (p. 42). In the rest of this article, the author discusses the theoretical framework proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2004a, 2004b, 2005), and simultaneously draws on some empirical studies use of this theoretical framework to analyze identity in interaction.

Identity and Interaction

The main goal of the earlier sections of this article is to shed the light on the paradigm shift that took place in the way scholars questioned and analyzed the relationship between language, identity, and the social world, and to provide a short overview of the framework proposed by Pierce (1995) and trace its arguments and trajectories. In the remaining sections of this article, the author provides a brief summary of Bucholtz and Hall’s (2004a, 2004b, 2005) framework for analyzing identity as produced in linguistic interaction. While providing the reader an accurate account for all the five principles proposed as the pillars of Bucholtz and Hall’s framework, the author attempts to draw readers’ attention to the connections between this framework and earlier theoretical approaches and scholarly research.

Linguistic research on identity has drastically increased and has become central across a wide scope of fields such as sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology. However, while research on identity has increased, the development of theoretical approaches remains a second concern. As mentioned in the introduction of this article, we’ve witnessed a change in the study of language and a shift in scholarly concerns from language as a universal medium (Chomsky, 1988) and a set of distinctive knowledges (De Saussure, 2011[1916]), and language learning as an abstract component of strategies and styles (Cohen & Aphelk, 1981; Oxford, 1990) to language as “a set of socially embedded practices” (Ahearn, 2011, p. 3) and language learning as a complex relationship between the language learner and the social world (Pierce, 1995). Simultaneously, a change in the analytical approach to identity is also traceable: from identity as a stable structure located primarily in the individual psyche or in fixed social categories to identity as “multiple, a site of struggle, and
subject to change” (Pierce, 1995, p. 20) and a “relational and social cultural phenomenon that emerges and circulates in local discourse contexts of interaction” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 585).

Thus, with the scholarly turn in identity focus and the need for a general sociocultural linguistic perspective, Bucholtz & Hall’s theoretical framework aims at drawing together insights from multiple fields and theorists to allow “for a discussion of identity that permits researchers to articulate theoretical assumptions about identity often left implicit in scholarship” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 586). By drawing on speech accommodation theory (Giles et al., 1991), social identity theory in social psychology (Meyerhoff, 1996), theories of language ideology (Gal & Irvine, 2000; Silverstein, 1979), indexicality in linguistic anthropology (Silverstein, 1976), and theories of style (Mendoza-Denton, 2002) among many others, Bucholtz & Hall offer a framework that “focuses on both the details of language and the workings of culture and society” (2005, p. 586).

Within this framework, identity is depicted in a broader and a more open-ended definition: *Identity is the social positioning of self and other*. Bucholtz & Hall (2005) argue that identity doesn’t emerge at a single analytical structure, such as code choice or ideological structure, but rather operates at many levels simultaneously. Their approach encompasses the intersubjective construction of identity and privileges interaction as the means in which resources -like vowel quality or turn shape- gain social meaning. In the following section, the writer summarizes Bucholtz & Hall’s five fundamental principles to the study of identity and includes brief discussions of some empirical studies that embark on Bucholtz & Hall’s theoretical framework as toolkit to analyze identity.

**Identity: A Discursive Construct That Emerges in Interaction**

The first principle proposed by Bucholtz & Hall is the emergence principle which addresses the traditional view of identity as a construct primarily within an individual’s mind that is merely reflected in language use. Emergence is first addressed by Hymes (1975) who views language as dialogic rather than monologic and calls for a better understanding of linguistic structures as “emergent in action” (Hymes, 1975, p. 71). Later, other linguistic anthropologists have moved further with the conception of emergence in the field and in particular, Bauman and Briggs whose work demonstrates that performance emerges as specific encounters unfold (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Briggs, 1988). Additionally, other theorists view culture as an emergent product through dialogical processes; that is, it is produced when speakers draw on multiple voices and texts in every utterance (Bakhtin, 1981).

Extending these arguments against structuralist and generativist formulations of performance, culture, and grammar, Bucholtz & Hall maintain that “identity is best viewed as the emergent product rather than the pre-existing source of linguistic and other semiotic practices” (p. 588) and therefore, identity is mainly “a social and cultural phenomenon” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 588). Almost all recent linguistic research on identity and language take this general view as the starting point. However, the principle of emergence is particularly helpful when speakers use language in a way that does not conform to the social category they are normally assigned to, for example, cases of transgender identity and cross-gender performance.
An example of this case is Hall’s (1997) study on the discourse practices of hijras, a transgender group in India whose members are predominantly born males. Hijras violate gender norms in India by dressing and speaking like women. Gender marking in Hindi is often obligatory, thus hijras use linguistic gender system as a resource to distance themselves from masculinity. Hall’s example of Sulekha, a hijra member who was forced out of the house in her early teens, illustrates how feminine gender marking does not reflect a straightforwardly assigned feminine identity. It also demonstrates how linguistic structures (gender marking in this case) can be a powerful tool used by Sulekha to construct her feminine identity as opposed to her family’s perception of her gender (Hall, 1997).

Identity Is Not a Collection of Social Categories

In the second principle, positionality, Bucholtz & Hall (2005) challenge the popular view of identity that is mainly found in quantitative social sciences which correlate macro identity categories (gender, race, social class, age, etc) to individual’s social behavior (Labov, 1966). These approaches have traced valuable trends, but have been less effective in capturing the flexibility in identity relations in varied contexts. Linguistic ethnographers aim at filling this analytical gap by demonstrating that “language users often orient to local identity categories rather than to the analyst’s sociological categories” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 591). These ethnographers look at micro details of identity shaped in interaction, orientations and temporary roles assumed by participants, and other interactional positions that seem different from their participants’ conventional identity. Individuals’ formation of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in discourse accumulate ideological associations “with both large-scale and local categories of identity” and may shape who does what and how in interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 591).

Therefore, Bucholtz & Hall’s perspective broadens the widely circulated views on identity by arguing that identity encompasses “macro-level demographic categories, local ethnographically specific cultural positions, [as well as] temporary and interactionally specific stances and participant roles” (p. 592). Bucholtz’s (2001) study on California high school students is an example of the effectiveness of this principle. In ethnographic interviews of two 17-year-old middle-class European American girls, Bucholtz notices that even though the two girls have lots in common and share similar linguistic resources, yet they position themselves as different kinds of teenagers using a variety of linguistic markers (in this case innovative quotative markers in youth discourse). Both girls, Christine and Josie, use different choices of innovative quotative markers to index their identities and their youth. In the analysis of these interview, Bucholtz & Hall argue that “demographic lines of gender, age, race, and class provide part of the picture” (p. 593), but more can be learned when considering the ways these girls position themselves and others subjectively and intersubjectively.

Indexicality

“Identifying the precise ways in which language and social relations intersect is one of the most pressing issues in linguistic anthropology” (Ahearn, 2011, p. 28). One of the key concepts that help scholars in identifying these intersections is indexicality. Indexicality is the fundamental mechanism by which identity is constituted (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). In order to obtain a fuller understanding of this term, the author starts by tracing back its links to the study of semiotics (the study of signs) and how the concept of indexicality involve the creation of semiotic relationship
between *signifier* and *signified* (De Saussure, 2011[1916]); in other words, between the *sign* and the *object* (Peirce, 1955), or more precisely between the linguistic form and social meaning (Silverstein, 1976).

De Saussure’s famous example of the ‘tree’ as a sign, since it links the mental concept of a tree with the sound that this word compromises, lacks an important element of semiosis which is found later in Pierce’s model of meaning-making through signs. Pierce’s (1955) model involves three components: signs, objects, and interpretants. The latter is extremely important because this component (interpretants) represents the outcomes or effects of semiotic relationship between the sign and the object. Drawing on these conceptions of indexicality, Bucholtz & Hall (2005) argue that “identity relations emerge in interaction through several related indexical processes” (p. 594). For example, in the previously mentioned study (Hall, 1997) of Indian Hijra members, Sulekha quotes her family as they condemned her in childhood as ‘hijra’. Sulekha’s family uses this extreme derogatory term deliberately to enforce the term’s ideological association with impotence which indexes an ultimate insult in common Indian family structures. Other micro-level linguistic structures that can be addressed as indexical signs include style features (Mendoza-Denton, 2002), and stance markers (Du Bois, 2002) among many other aspects of language use such as regional or ethnic accents or dialects (Gal & Irvine, 1995). The tactics of indexicality mentioned here provide a sense of the wealth of linguistic resources that contribute to the formation of identity position and call our attention to the micro and macro indexical processes that construct identities at multiple levels in interaction.

Identity as a Relational Phenomenon

Building on the first three principles discussed: emergence, positionality, and indexicality aspects of identity and its construction, Bucholtz & Hall propose a fourth principle that emphasizes identity as a relational phenomenon. Through this principle, they call into question the over simplified views of identity relations as “revolving around a single axis: sameness and difference” (2005, p. 598), and the popular view of identity as autonomous and independent. Thus, Bucholtz and Hall argue that identities are “intersubjectively constructed through several, often overlapping, complementary relations, including similarities/ differences, genuineness/ artifice, and authority/delegitimacy” (2005, p. 598). The list of identity relations Bucholtz & Hall outline is not exhaustive, but rather suggestive of the multiple dimensions of relationality through which identities are constructed. The author briefly summarizes this discussion here.

The first complementary identity relations, similarities and differences, are referred to by Bucholtz & Hall as adequation and distinction. The relation of adequation emphasizes that “in order for groups or individuals to be positioned as alike, they need not … be identical, but must be understood as sufficiently similar for current interactional purposes” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 599). Adequation can be seen earlier in the example of Sulekha (Hall, 1997) and her use of feminine gender marking that neither reflect her view of herself as a woman nor an attempt to be viewed as such; but her use of the gender marking is rather an enough semiotic potion of femininity to help her produce herself as hijra. On the other hand, distinction is a familiar identity relation that depends on “the suppression of similarities that might undermine the construction of difference” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 600). In this case, the researcher returns to the example of high school California girls (Bucholtz, 2001) to illustrate how processes of social differentiation...
can be found in the way these two girls distinct themselves from each other through interaction. By means of some linguistic resources in their youth discourse, and particularly their use of innovative quotative markers, Christine and Josie, position themselves as distinct subjectively and intersubjectively.

The second pair of relations is authentication and denaturalization processes. “What sorts of language and language users count as genuine for a given purpose” is a question that has prevailed the sociocultural linguistic literature (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 601). According to Bucholtz and Hall, authenticity “focuses on the ways in which identities are discursively verified [while denaturalization focuses] on how assumptions regarding seamlessness of identity can be disrupted” (2005, p. 601). The first phenomenon can be traced in Bauman’s (1992) study of Icelandic legends, and particularly the case of the poet who is thought to have magical powers. Bauman’s analysis of the narrator’s narrative points how the narrator authenticates his history and himself as a teller in a process Bauman’s call traditionalization, “the act of authentication akin to the art or unique dealer’s authentication of an object by tracing its provenience” (Bauman, 1992, p. 137). On the other hand, denaturalization is noted in Bailey’s (2000) investigation of Dominican Americans’ identities. Bailey points out that Dominican Americans’ phenotype ideologically displaces them as African American or black while their language-based identities are Hispanic. In this case, denaturization is apparent in the fact that black skin does not necessarily entail black identity.

The last pair of relations is authorization and illegitimation aspects of identity construction. While authorization involves “the affirmation or imposition of an identity through structures of institutionalized power and ideology, whether local or translocal [its counterpart, illegitimation,] addresses the ways in which identities are dismissed, censored, or simply ignored by these same structures” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 603). The latter is illustrated in Park’s (2004) investigation of ideologies of English in Korea. Park’s example of Korean nationals attending graduate school in the United States, who mock one of their Korean friend in his absence for his Americanized pronunciation of the word ‘Denver’, illustrates that based on these participants’ ideologies, speaking English fluently is culturally inappropriate or un-Korean. This example shows how interactional dynamics support ideological structures even in the absence of powerful authority; a process that is earlier called hegemony by Gramsci (1971).

Partialness and Agency in Language Learning

Researchers’ interest in the dispositions or tendencies that organize how people perceive and respond to the world around them have spread across a variety of fields. According to Bourdieu these dispositions are a system, a habitus, which is “experienced in the form of personal attraction or revulsion” (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 5). Drawing on Bourdieu’s conception of habitus as the guide for learners acts and desires and as the environment in which learners exercise their agency, linguistic anthropologists question the extent to which identity rely on agency. According to Duranti (2004), the use of language itself is an act of agency. “Under this definition, identity is one kind of social action that agency can accomplish” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 606). This view of agency and structure as overlapping components of micro and macro articulations of identity benefit the on-going argument of agency in social theory (cf. Ahearn, 2001).
Over the past two decades, postmodern critiques in cultural anthropology and feminist theory have challenged the totalized representation of social life and culture as internally coherent and called for recognition of partialness and for capturing identity as fractured and discontinuous (Behar & Gordon, 1995; Clifford & Marcus, 1986). Bucholtz & Hall’s final principal states that the construction of identity constitutes partialness in deliberation, intention, habitualness, consciousness, negotiation, contestation, representation, and structure. Therefore, identity construction is “constantly shifting both as interaction unfolds and across discourse” (2005, p. 606). In other words, identity is rational and partial and “produced through contextually situated and ideologically informed configurations of self and other” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 605).

Conclusion

Work on identity, ideology, and language has intrigued issues regarding the relationship between language and identity. As more theorists in the fields of second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology questioned the popular norms in analyzing identity, new theoretical frameworks are developed to satisfy the need for a comprehensive theory which integrates the language learner and the social world. Starting with Norton’s notion of investment rather than motivation in language learning to Bucholtz & Hall’s investigation of identity within interaction, broader conceptualizations are continuously constructed to cope with our globalized present and rapidly changing future. Thus, in every region of the world, future research on identity and language should respond to the diversity of language practices and aim at connecting language ideologies and identity to enhance our understanding of our ever-changing globalized communities.

About the Author:
Majd Sarah is an ESL faculty at the Language Institute at El Paso Community College, and she's a doctoral student at the University of Texas at El Paso. Majd is in the Literacy/ Biliteracy strand and her scholarly interests include language, identity, and ideology.

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4155-9244

References


Identity, Ideology, and Language

Sarah


The Effect of ECRIF Strategy on EFL Seventh Graders’ Vocabulary Learning and Retention

Basma Issa Ahmad AlSaleem
Language Center
The World Islamic Sciences and Education University
Amman, Jordan

Abstract
This paper aims at highlighting the effectiveness of Encounter, Clarify, Remember, Internalize, Fluent Use (ECRIF) strategy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Seventh Graders’ vocabulary learning and retention. It tries to answer the following question: Are there statistically important differences at (α ≤ 0.05) in the whole mean scores in vocabulary accomplishment among the students who learn English vocabulary through using ECRIF strategy (experimental group) and those who learn English vocabulary over the traditional technique (control group) in the post test? To accomplish the purpose of the study, the researcher shown the experimental group with a sample involved (125) students for ECRIF strategy. While the traditional technique was used with the control group which involved (100) students in the first term of the school year 2017-2018. The researcher used (pre -post & delayed) vocabulary test and an analysis card to collect data. The study’s results suggested that there were statistically important differences at (α ≤ 0.05) in the whole mean grade in vocabulary accomplishment between experimental and the control groups in the post & delayed test in favor of ECRIF strategy. In addition, the researcher recognized these differences to using ECRIF strategy in teaching English language vocabulary. In light of these outcomes, the study suggested the necessity of applying ECRIF in teaching English language to get better results in students’ vocabulary learning and retention in English as a foreign language. Similarly, the ECRIF Strategy would be used with other English skills and sub-skills.

Key Words: ECRIF, EFL, vocabulary, retention, seventh grade, learning.

1. Introduction & Background

English, as a way of communication, is currently the most generally spread language allover the world. In today’s global world, no individual can deny or disrespect the importance of English Language from the time when it is the most familiar language spoken everywhere. English is a worldwide language that is expressed in several countries all around the planet. It is the language of knowledge, science, computer, medicine, leaflets, and commerce. In the phase of globalization and internet, people publically in a small community in which they need no selections but dealing with English Language as the chief methods of communication (Alkhawaldaeh, 2010).

Keashta (2012) describes English as a widespread language; the tongue of communication through countries in the universal world of commerce, corporate, communication, air transportation and knowledge. Moreover, it is expended as a second authorized Language following to the mother Language which is Arabic, then this provides English Language its position in the Arab world. Ediger (2007) specifies that English language is pondered a window to the world and we can converse almost in all statuses in the world with information in English (Ediger, 2007).

In truth, English language is the simply foreign language that has been edified in the Arab world. Arab world students begin learning English language from the early beginning of their school. They start learning English language from the first grade after they are approximately six years old. Speaking about learning as strange language, the first object to think around is words. Min (2013) states that a hard foundation of vocabulary in formation is essential at each stage of the learner's second language education. Words are the structure blocks of language and lacking them; there is no language (Milton, 2013).

1.1 Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Language teachers have to take into consideration the decisive role of strategies in developing learners’ vocabulary. Language teachers to acquire vocabulary utilize various strategies. The vocabulary learning strategies indicates a group of techniques used by teachers to enhance understanding the meaning of the new word to facilitate recovering the word and to widen vocabulary knowledge in general (Intaraprasert, 2014). There are numerous ways of vocabulary learning strategies some of them will be investigated here. According (Dubin, 2010), there are two approaches: the direct approach that involves memory of language learning, cognitive and compensation strategies and indirect method that includes Meta cognitive, community, and affecting strategies.

Moreover, vocabulary-learning strategies can be stated according to (Freeman, 2017) as meta cognitive, cognitive, memory, and activation strategy. Selective attention and self-initiation are clarified as meta cognitive strategies that are essential to comprehend the passage and clarify the meaning of the passage (Mukoroli, 2011). However, cognitive strategies deal with context, which is rich enough to give clues to guess the words meaning. Guessing, dictionary and note talking are related to cognitive strategies. The third type is memory strategies. Rehearsal and programing strategies, word lists, and repetition are examples of rehearsal approaches.
Based on vocabulary learning strategies and according to (Stahl, 2015), the researcher concludes that there is no one strategy suitable for all cases. However, the expert teacher can combine more than one technique and different strategies to help the students to learn vocabulary and the best choices to achieve this goal are by providing a rich context where learners can encounter the word several times in several contexts and thus the word can transform from short-term memory to long-term memory easily. Another choice is making and sharing vocabulary notebooks, which is a neat and organized manner to facilitate learning words. So, the researcher discusses in her current study the effectiveness of using of ECRIF strategy to develop vocabulary learning and retention of the EFL seventh graders.

1.2 ECRIF Strategy

1.2.1 The Origin of ECRIF

(Kurzweil, 2007) develops a framework of stages called ECRIF, which gained its popularity in teaching English for Speakers of Others Languages (ESOL). As a framework that focuses on how learners learn, ECRIF is an approach that concentrates on how learners learn thus it moves classroom instruction to student-centered collaboration and independent practices rather than teacher guided lesson. ECRIF contains initial letters reorient the language learning strategy; E=Encounter a problem, C=Clarify, R=Remember, I=Internalize, F=Fluent use. Table 1 clarifies the stages of language learning through ECRIF Strategy.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>What the students are doing</th>
<th>What they may be thinking</th>
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| E ENCOUNTER   | Students see or hear new language and realize they don’t know something | • What’s this?  
• I don’t know this?                                      |
| C CLARIFY     | Students distinguish the meaning and use of the new knowledge or skill. They ask questions and think about what is correct. | • Oh I see what it means.  
• Oh I see how to do this.  
• What’s the difference between this and that?  
• Is this right?                                      |
| R/I REMEMBER & INTERNALIZE | Students have a chance to move the knowledge or skill from short-term to long-term memory. They then can begin to personalize it and use it in different contexts. They connect it mentally to prior experiences with images, sounds, and feelings. | • Okay. I’m starting to remember this.  
• Okay. I’ve got it in this activity.  
• I’m making connection to my own life |
| F FLUENTLY USE | Students have a chance to use the new language to communicate their ideas. So work toward being able to spontaneously use the language in different contexts. | • Cool. I can use this skill or knowledge automatically.  
• This is for real-world purposes.  
• I don’t have to consciously think about this. |

*(Kurzweil, 2007)*

In addition, ECRIF strategy is related deeply to scaffolding in that both ECRIF and scaffolding are focusing on helping learners to acquire the language. Both of them are considered...
as planned instructional framework. Two different kinds of scaffolding were reflected by (Brawns, 2016). The first is spontaneous scaffolding, which is the result of the interaction of a learner and the new knowledge during the act of teaching and the process of learning. While the second is planned scaffolding that refers to the support, facilitations and plans that the teacher uses to enhance the successful learning, the excellent use of the objective language and the effortless utilize of the target ability (Brawns, 2016). To Brawn, the two notions of scaffolding are essential for learning as they complement each other, this accommodates with (Vygotsky, 1988) who declares that the ultimate goal of scaffolding is to develop the learning habits while developing learner’s ability to use skills naturally and productively - Zone of Proximal Development as the students gradually become more independent and the control of the teacher decreases (Brawns, 2016). Again, based on (Brawns, 2016) the scaffolding concept can be referred to as a designed process with accurate planning to guide curriculum, assessment, and instruction. According to this point of view, ECRIF can be seen as an instructional framework that guides planning for learning experiences in order to enhance the use and production of a target language.

1.2.2 Meaning of ECRIF

ECRIF refers to a frame system or the format that examines how students learn a language. This framework method is an essential aid for teachers to comprehend the way in which students can perform the dynamic process of learning a foreign language (Al-Mobayed, 2016). This framework of the strategy equips teachers and learners of certain steps to follow which enhance achieving maximal learning. The ECRIF framework is a way of looking at how people learn. Rather than prescribing what teachers should or should not do, the aim of this framework is to provide a tool that teachers can use to see student activities and content from the perspective of student learning. In this way, ECRIF is connected to how teachers think about what is happening in their classrooms.

The key to the ECRIF framework is the focus on the learning process that students go through as they work with the target skill or knowledge rather than what the teacher is doing during the lesson. In this way, the teacher plans activities and thinks about the content to service learning in a principled way. ECRIF can be used to plan lessons and adapt course book materials = (reflecting for action) to assess where students are in their learning process during a lesson = (reflecting in action) to reflect on student learning after a lesson = (reflecting on action).

Who developed ECRIF and where is it being used?
The ECRIF Framework was developed by Josh Kurzweil and Mary Scholl between 2004 and 2005 as they wrote the book Understanding Teaching Through Learning for McGraw-Hill and the School for International Training. It has been used on many SIT TESOL Certificate Courses as well as in a variety of workshops given for government and non-governmental organizations. Although it was originally developed for English language teachers, it has also been with content teachers teaching other subjects such as history and math as well as vocational instruction such as using computer software and operating construction equipment.
ECRIF sheds light on the dimension that effects on teaching process and enhances leading learners to be active acquirers. Moreover, (Kalaf, 2016) describes ECRIF as a lesson-designing framework that regulates the comprehension learning as it estimates the students’ level and their touch with the educational materials. ECRIF can be used as a useful kind of reformatory findings about the learner progress through learning process.

1.2.3 The Goal of ECRIF.
Cordelo and pere, (2014) argue that there are several goals that can be achieved through ECRIF for both learners and teachers. The eventual goal is to expand a technique that stimulates opportunities for observing students' performance and reflections during their learning rather than representing teachers’ manner in class. In other words, ECRIF has a great value for teachers as it provides them with appropriate procedures to monitor learners’ activities and content based on students’ learning. Students’ learning process and their work with the target skill or knowledge are the central focus of this strategy. The ultimate goal of ECRIF strategy is not just providing students with new language but also supplying them with different views of employing this language fluently through communication tasks moreover inside or outside the classrooms.

1.2.4 Usage of ECRIF
The substantial concept of ECRIF is related to active learning strategies, which are embodied in centering on the procedures that are required to observe students’ activities and reflect their performance during the process of learning (Brawns, 2016). These procedures can guide the teacher to design an accurate plan for classroom movement. Here are the three main procedures that can be applied through ECRIF framework.

1. Designing plans for lessons and knowing the required course book and available school materials.
2. Focusing on the performance of students in the learning process and estimating their levels.
3. Reflecting on actions that pass after a lesson by contemplating on students' learning (Freeman, 2017,p.24).

Moreover, (Vygotsky, 1988) states that ECRIF cannot be described as a current or a forthright way of teaching language. As the first step of ECRIF depends on carrying out the language before learning it, this is accomplished by means of parallelism or explanation from the teacher about any unconscious thing. This comprehension of the unconscious knowledge can enhance and internalize the following important step that involves going back to drilling or exercising fluently. After confronting a new content and before being able to utilize it, students pass through clarifying and remembering meaning of a target input.

Using ECRIF in teaching Vocabulary
- The ECRIF framework does not suggest a 'right' way to teach or any specific methodology. Rather, it has to do with adopting a more learning-centered way of thinking about the lessons that we already teach. In this way, we can understand the lessons from a learner's perspective and make adjustments to the lesson to serve their learning. Look at the
following example taken from a teacher who taught a vocabulary lesson on sports to elementary level students. Teachers often think of their lessons in the following way:

"I presented the vocabulary words related to sports to the class by showing pictures, saying the sport and writing it on the board.\" (Freeman, 2017, p.22)

Notice how in the above example the focus is on what the teacher is doing in the lesson, not on how the students are learning.

The ECRIF framework asks the teachers to shift their thinking so that they can adopt the perspective of the student who is doing the actual learning. For example:

"The students encountered some unknown vocabulary words as they saw pictures of sports (i.e. they realized that they didn't know the word for that sport). They then clarified the vocabulary word for that sport by first hearing other students say the sport, hearing the teacher say it (pronunciation), and seeing it written on the board (spelling).\", (Freeman, 2017, p.28)

By making this shift in thinking the teacher can start to think questions such as:

Did the students encounter the target language? (i.e. I may have presented it, but did they have their attention focused and realize that there was something they didn't know and wanted to learn?)

- What can I do in the lesson to support students so that they encounter target language? i.e. How can I focus their attention, so that they notice that there is something that they don't know and so that they feel a need to learn it?
- What can I do in the lesson so that students can actively clarify the form, meaning, and use of the target language? i.e. it is the students that must do the work of clarifying it. The teacher 'telling' does not mean that the students clarified the language point.

When teachers shift their thinking in this way, they can also see that students are really in charge of their own learning process. We can try to set up and guide learning, but it can happen (or not happen) throughout the lesson. For example, students may be working a fluency activity in which they rank the sports that most like and give reasons why. Although the teacher may be hoping that students work on their fluency, one student might encounter a new word uttered by their partner in the conversation and have a strong need to clarify it. Moreover, students do not learn in a lockstep linear way during the lesson. They come in with differing prior knowledge/skills and learn at their own pace. The teacher, thus, works to provide opportunities for learning throughout the lesson.

1.3 Problem Statement

Due to the researcher's experience in teaching English for Arab students at schools and universities, the researcher has observed that students face a lot of difficulties in learning English vocabulary. Neither motivation nor students’ classroom level of participation seems to be improved. This problem asserts that young learners have short attention span and they are quickly distracted. In addition, the traditional technique and techniques that teachers implement in teaching English vocabulary do not attract learners towards practicing it effectively. Hence, it is so
important to examine the use of ECRIF strategy in providing effective teaching that enhances students’ achievement in English vocabulary and improves their retention.

1.4 Research Questions
This paper is an attempt to answer the following research questions:
1. Are there statistically important differences at (α ≤ 0.05) in the whole mean scores in vocabulary accomplishment among the students who learn English vocabulary through using ECRIF strategy (experimental group) and those who learn English vocabulary over the traditional technique (control group) in the post test?
2. Are there statistically important differences at (α ≤ 0.05) in the whole mean scores in vocabulary accomplishment among post application and delayed application (experimental group)?

1.5 Research Hypotheses
The current research hypothesized that:
1. There are no statistically important differences at (α ≤ 0.05) in the whole mean score in vocabulary accomplishment among the students who learn English vocabulary through using ECRIF strategy (experimental group) and those who learn English vocabulary over the traditional technique (control group) in the post test.
2. There are no statistically important differences at (α ≤ 0.05) in the whole mean score in vocabulary accomplishment among post application and delayed application over (experimental group).

1.6 Study Objectives
The study aims at achieving the following objectives:
1. Determining the effectiveness of using ECRIF Strategy in the acquisition of English vocabulary of the EFL seventh graders
2. Comparing of ECRIF Strategy and traditional technique to improving vocabulary acquisition among EFL seventh graders
3. Persuading teachers to integrate interactive methods and strategies, especially the ECRIF Strategy in English language classroom.
4. Determining the effectiveness of using ECRIF Strategy in developing English vocabulary retention of the EFL seventh graders
5. Examining the effectiveness of ECRIF Strategy in the classroom on teaching practices and pedagogy.

2. Methodology
2.1 Design
The researcher assumed a quasi-experimental method. As an assumption was due to the environment of the research, which aimed at finding the efficiency of using ECRIF strategy on the seventh graders’ English vocabulary learning and its retention. Moreover, two groups were selected: an experimental group and a control group. All groups were examined. Then, the experimental group was taught vocabulary by using ECRIF strategy. The control group was taught...
The study aimed to investigate the effect of ECRIF strategy on EFL Seventh Graders’ vocabulary through the traditional technique. The research includes two variables; the first variable is (ECRIF strategy), the second is the (Traditional technique), and the third variable is vocabulary included in the English language curriculum for the EFL Seventh graders at the Jordanian Schools.

The researcher chose randomly two classes from the seventh grades as a sample of the current study from AlJame’a Second Private Schools in Amman. The sample consisted of (225) seventh graders. The two classes were appointed randomly into two groups: control group, experimental group. Table 2 shows the spreading of the model.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1 Research Steps*

The researcher chose randomly two classes from the seventh classes as a sample of the current study from AlJame’a Second Private Schools in Amman. The sample consisted of (225) seventh graders. The two classes were appointed randomly into two groups: control group, experimental group. Table 2 shows the spreading of the model.
2.2. **Data Collection**
In order to collect the data the research included the amount of tools:

2.3.1. **Vocabulary Achievement Test**
The vocabulary achievement test was prepared to measure the students’ performance level, in which the researcher depends on the outcomes of content analysis in modifying the tests.

2.3.2. **The Aim of the Vocabulary Achievement Test**
The test aimed at measuring the effectiveness of using ECRIF strategy on the seventh grade vocabulary learning and its retention. It also aimed at testing the hypotheses of the study.

2.3.3. **Description of the Vocabulary Achievement Test**
The vocabulary achievement tests like pre-test, post-test, and delayed test were administered to test students’ performance. The questions were direct from their textbooks. Therefore, they were normal that most students could answer. The questions were given a suitable time before the test began in order to give students time to discuss the answers. Each question aimed at evaluating the students’ implementation corresponding to one vocabulary. The questions were fitting to students’ levels and interests. The test contained of (50) items spread into nine major questions as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question (1)</th>
<th>Look and Match</th>
<th>10 items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question (2)</td>
<td>Choose and Write</td>
<td>10 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question (3)</td>
<td>Read and finish the sentences</td>
<td>10 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question (4)</td>
<td>Re-write the letters to form correct words</td>
<td>10 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question (5)</td>
<td>Read and circle the correct answer</td>
<td>10 items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total mark of the vocabulary achievement test is (50) marks.

2.3.4. **Pilot study (control group)**
The test was applied on a random sample of (100) students from seventh grade of AlJame’a Second Private Schools in Amman. The results were documented and statistically analyzed to measure their reliability. The items of the test were modified in the simple of the statistical results.

2.3.5. **Internal Consistency Validity**
The researcher used Pearson correlations coefficients to compute the internals consistency of the vocabulary’s achievement test items. To measure such validity, Pearson Correlations computed the correlation of the results: the items with their domains, the factors with the total test, and the area with the test as a whole. Table 4 describes the internals consistency of the vocabulary’s achievement test questions.
Table 4 shows that correlations coefficients were important (0.05), so vocabulary achievement test questions were suitable and valid.

2.3.6. Difficulty Coefficient

Difficulty Coefficients means the measurement of the students who gave wrong answers to the total of school students who took the test. It may be estimated by handling the following equation:

Equation 1 Co. Of difficulty

\[
\text{Co. of difficulty} = \frac{\text{Number of students who gave wrong answers}}{\text{Total number of students}}
\]

Table 5 shows the difficulty coefficient for every point of the grammar achievements test.

2.3.7. Discrimination Coefficient

Discrimination coefficients refer to the test ability to separate among the high achieving students and the low achieving counterparts.

Equation 2 Co. of discrimination equation

\[
\text{Co. of discrimination} = \frac{\text{No. of correct items of high achieves} - \text{No. of correct items of low achieves}}{\text{No. of one group}}
\]

Table 5 shows the discrimination coefficient for every item of the grammar achievement test.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Difficulty Coefficients</th>
<th>Discrimination coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q(1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q (2)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results in Table 5 show that the difficulty coefficients varied from (0.350) to (0.700), where the average of all difficulty coefficient was (0.490). This indicates that each item was acceptable or within the normal limit of difficulties corresponding to the viewpoints of measurement and evaluation specialists. Moreover, the results show that the discrimination coefficients rated from (0.340) to (0.700), where the average of all discriminations coefficients was (0.509). The discriminations coefficients of all test items were similarly acceptable because they were above (30%). This indicates that the test items had good difficulty and discriminations coefficients.
2.3.8. Split Half Method
This method depends on splitting the vocabulary achievement test, calculating the correlations between the parts, and then making corrections for the correlations coefficients by Prophecy Formula.

**Equation 3 Spearmen Brown Coefficients**

\[
Spearmen Brown Coefficient = \frac{2R}{1 + R}
\]

where R is Reliability coefficients

**Equation 4 Reliability Coefficients**

\[
Holesti formula \ R = \frac{2C}{C1 + c2}
\]

Where
- \(R\) = Reliability coefficient.
- \(2(C)\) = Number of agreements between the two analyses.
- \(C1\) = Total points in the first analysis.
- \(C2\) = Total points in the second analysis.

Table 6 shows split half coefficients for the vocabulary achievement test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spilt half method</td>
<td>50</td>
<td><strong>0.724</strong></td>
<td>0.840</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 5 show that the reliability coefficient is acceptable because it was above 0.700, which means that the test was reliable and valid to apply.

2.3.9 Controlling the Variables
To assure the accuracy of the results and avoid any extraneous interference, the researcher tried to control some variables prior to the study. The researcher taught all groups. This was done to prevent any other factors related to the difference in the teachers affect the results. Study groups received eight-week instructions. The control group was taught traditionally; that is, students acted as usual to answer questions. The experimental group was taught vocabulary by using ECRIF strategy. Moreover, the researcher controlled the following variables:

a- Age Variable
T-test was used to measure the statistical differences between the groups concerning their ages. Table 7 shows the results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. value</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>12.792</td>
<td>0.537</td>
<td>-1.558</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>not sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>13.053</td>
<td>0.920</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results in Table 7 show that Sig.value was more than (0.050), and the calculated t was less than t table. Therefore, there were no statistical differences at (0.050) among the groups concerning the ages variables.

b- General achievement variable
T-test was used to measure the statistical differences between the groups concerning their general achievements. Subject-related results in the first term test of the school year (2017-2018) were recorded and analyzed. Table 8 presented the results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. value</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General achievement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>179.12</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>0.682</td>
<td>0.497</td>
<td>not sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>172.80</td>
<td>44.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“t” table value at (79) d f. at (0.05) sig. level equal 2.00
“t” table value at (79) d f. at (0.01) sig. level equal 2.66

Results in Table 8 show that Sig.value was more than (0.050), and the calculated t is less than t table. Therefore, there were no statistical differences at (0.050) between groups concerning the general achievement variable.

c- English language achievement variable
T-test was used to measure the statistical differences between the groups concerning their English language achievement. The subject-based results in the first term test of the school year (2017-2018) were recorded and analyzed. Results were presented in Table 9 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig. value</th>
<th>sig. level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English language</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>57.50</td>
<td>23.16</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>0.965</td>
<td>not sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language achievement</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>57.73</td>
<td>24.57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“t” table value at (81) d f. at (0.05) sig. level equal 2.00
“t” table value at (81) d f. at (0.01) sig. level equal 2.66

The results in Table 9 show that Sig.value was more than (0.050), and calculated t was less than t table. Therefore, there were no statistical differences at (0.050) between groups concerning the English language accomplishment variable.

2.4 Procedures of the study
➢ Studying and revising the researches and previous studies conducted the use of ECRIF strategy.
The Effect of ECRIF Strategy on EFL Seventh Graders’ Vocabulary

➢ Analyzing the content of the suggested units.
➢ Preparing a teacher’s guide to teach the content of the suggested units though ECRIF strategy.
➢ Designing the achievement test.
➢ Consulting experts in English language and methodology for modifying both the material and tool according to the referees’ comments.
➢ Using the pre-test, recording and understanding the outcomes.
➢ Teaching the content using the ECRIF strategy with the experimental group and the traditional technique with control group.
➢ Applying the post-test, recording and interpreting the results.
➢ Applying the delayed test, recording and interpreting the results.
➢ Presenting recommendations and suggestions in the light of the results.

2.5 Statistical Analysis Procedures

The researcher used a number of the statistical techniques that suit the study nature; the data were collected and computed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS IBM- Version 22.0) as follows:
1. Frequencies and Percentage.
2. Correlation coefficient.
4. Difficulty equation to identify the difficulty of the test items
5. Discrimination equation to identify the discrimination of the test items
6. T-test Paired Sample was used to measure the differences in developing vocabulary between a pre and post applied, or post and iterative applied.
7. Independent Samples T–Test was used to measure the differences between control and experimental group.

3 Results

This portion of the study is dedicated to answer its questions

3.5 Question #1: Are there statistically important differences at (α = 0.05) in the whole mean score in vocabulary accomplishment among the students who learn English vocabulary through using ECRIF strategy (experimental group) and those who learn English vocabulary through the traditional technique (control group) in the post test?

To answer the first question the researcher tested the first hypothesis by using independent samples T test. The results show no statistically important differences at (α = 0.05) in the whole mean score in vocabulary accomplishment among the students who learn English vocabulary through using ECRIF strategy (experimental group) and those who learn English vocabulary through the traditional technique (control group) in the post test. The results of the independent samples T test revealed that there were statistically important differences as pointed out in Table 10:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>η²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 10

T Test for Differences Between Control and Experimental Group Due to Teaching Strategy
The Effect of ECRIF Strategy on EFL Seventh Graders’ Vocabulary

AlSaleem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post vocabulary achievement test</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>19.30</td>
<td>38.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std.</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>12.55</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“t” table value at (79) d.f. at (0.05) sig. level equal 2.00
“t” table value at (79) d.f. at (0.01) sig. level equal 2.66

Table 10 shows that sign value is less than (0.01), and (t) calculated are more than (t) table. So there were statistical important differences among control and experimental group. So the researcher concluded that there were statistically important differences at (α = 0.05) in the whole mean score in vocabulary accomplishment among the students who learn English vocabulary through using ECRIF strategy (experimental group) and those who learn English vocabulary through the traditional technique (control group) in the post test. And these differences are in favor to (experimental group).

Also table 10 shows that Eta Square equals (0.66), that’s mean using ECRIF strategy in teaching English language vocabulary, is interested in high effect, where Eta Square ($\eta^2$) was more than (0.14).

3.6 Question#2: Are there statistically important differences at (α = 0.05) in the whole mean score in vocabulary accomplishment among post application and interactive application among (experimental group)?

To answer the second question, the researcher tested the second hypothesis by using Paired samples T test.

There were no statistically important differences at (α = 0.05) in the whole mean score in vocabulary accomplishment among post application and iterative application (experimental group). The results of the Paired samples T test revealed that there were no statistically important differences as pointed out in Table 11:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Application</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Post – test</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>38.93</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>1.962</td>
<td>0.057</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Iterative – test</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>38.60</td>
<td>8.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“t” table value at (40) d.f. at (0.05) sig. level equal 2.021
“t” table value at (40) d.f. at (0.01) sig. level equal 2.704

Table 11 shows that sig. value was more than (0.05), and (t) calculated was less that (t) table. So, there were no statistical important differences between post application and iterative application among (experimental group).

Accordingly, the researcher concluded that using ECRIF strategy had a high effect on developing student’s vocabulary and its retention. Moreover, there were no statistically important differences at (α = 0.05) in the whole mean score in vocabulary accomplishment among post application and interactive application (experimental group).
3.7 Summary

The first hypothesis results proved that there were statistically important differences at (α = 0.05) in the whole mean score in vocabulary accomplishment among the students who learned English vocabulary through using ECRIF strategy (experimental group) and those who learned English vocabulary through the traditional technique (control group) in the post test. Moreover, these differences were in favor of experimental group. In addition, these differences were due to using ECRIF strategy in teaching English language vocabulary.

Accordingly, the results of the second hypothesis indicated that there were no statistically important differences at (α ≤ 0.05) in the whole mean score in vocabulary accomplishment among post application and interactive application (experimental group). In addition, the results showed that using ECRIF strategy had a high effect on developing students’ vocabulary retention.

The study results indicated that there were statistically important differences at (α ≤ 0.05) in the total mean score in vocabulary accomplishment among the students who learned English vocabulary through ECRIF strategy (experimental group) and those who learned English vocabulary through the traditional technique (control group) in the post test. The researcher attributed these differences to using ECRIF strategy in teaching English language vocabulary. In this sense, Eta square was high (0.66), and using ECRIF strategy had a high effect on developing English language vocabulary among EFL seventh graders. The results agreed with Kalaf, 2016 which showed that using ECRIF framework enhanced practicing the target language.

4 Discussion

The results showed that using ECRIF strategy has a great effect on developing English language vocabulary retention among seventh graders. They also showed that the using of ECRIF strategy helped students to retain vocabulary in English language Ediger,(2007).

Thus, ECRIF strategy contributed to understanding vocabulary and comprehending the texts. Clearly, the results, which were in favor of ECRIF attributed to the way of teaching vocabulary. Through this strategy the understanding and acquisition of vocabulary are influenced by integrated skills. As the strategy concentrated on addressing students with the target vocabulary and clarifying its words in an interesting manner through applying a purposeful discussion and connecting vocabulary with its various implications. From the early beginning with the first step "encounter," where students confront new vocabulary passing through "clarify," where students set the correct meaning of the vocabulary, then saving new vocabulary in memory through "remember." This process leads to depositing vocabulary to long-term memory by means of continuous practice to help "internalize" the new vocabulary. All these previous connected and integrated steps lead to the final stage "fluently use," which is the ultimate goal of the learning process that enables the learner to produce, employ, and practice vocabulary fluently Freeman (2017).

Factually, ECRIF strategy reinforces learning vocabulary as the strategy employs a variety of activities and interesting educational games. And these activities facilitate the teacher’s task in
teaching English vocabulary. Moreover, these interesting activities encourage students to acquire vocabulary through the learning process and lead them to be more active and do their ultimate efforts to develop both acquiring and producing vocabulary. These activities include storytelling, roleplaying, recording, matching, categorizing, and brainstorming. Every one of these educational activities gives more attention to students’ vocabulary and help building their own knowledge of vocabulary. Moreover, these educational activities provide appropriate educational opportunities to deal with vocabulary in more than one certain context. For example, using role play, which is a dynamic activity, gives students more confidence and lead them to be more independent on choosing appropriate vocabulary, as it gives learners the chance to decide what, when, and how to use the target vocabulary without the assistance of their teacher. Further, opportunities of real interaction with other colleagues develop the social items and manners of learners as they reflect new aspects of vocabulary learning and new abilities in producing the learned vocabulary. Generally, ECRIF activities contain visual and sound effects that activate students' senses attract their attention towards the vocabulary related to these effects. Thus, students can learn vocabulary well and recall it easily in new teaching situations.

ECRIF strategy develops vocabulary learning through meeting the needs of students and interests. Every student studies English for their own reasons, and students intend to develop some skills more than others depending on each one’s own interests. For language learners, who aim to acquire vocabulary for communicating, ECRIF is a good way to develop their basic building blocks of communication that is vocabulary Freeman (2017). Then giving them the chance of having a balanced linguistic skill scores is satisfactory. Through ECRIF, all students should implement and encounter vocabulary before they learn it. Students can ask their teacher for more explanations to help them comprehend the meaning of the target vocabulary, giving them a chance to go back to practice more drills and exercises related to the intended vocabulary fluently. The first stage which is "encounter" also gives the teacher a chance to recognize his students' abilities and interests of vocabulary. When students are encountered with new vocabulary and new situations, depending on real reaction towards the action, the teacher can estimate the level of his students. The teacher can identify his students’ vocabulary, its types and purposes, and how to improve their vocabulary. All these things lead students to master vocabulary through clarifying, remembering, and other steps of the ECRIF, and thus students can catch the important meaning of a target input of vocabulary.

The study results that were in favor of ECRIF may attributed to teaching through ECRIF framework that shifts the thinking of the teacher and his imagination to different aspects of teaching knowledge. The teacher becomes aware that the real critique for teaching is the logical sequence in presenting the ideas and vocabulary. There are different logical steps that have a big influence on teaching vocabulary that deserves attention. ECRIF eventually gives attention to cognitive processes such as thinking, identifying, recognizing, analyzing, and practicing which constitute an appropriate sequence for enhancing acquiring vocabulary Milton (2013).
In addition, the metacognitive processes such as designing, projecting, regulating, and controlling are useful for focusing, organizing, and estimating the process of learning vocabulary. Moreover, the social process is reflected through preparing group activities to practice the intended vocabulary. All these aspects lead to the target and ultimate goal that is producing vocabulary fluently through a social context.

The cause of high and important differences in vocabulary retention, which were in favor of ECRIF, can be attributed to the capacity of ECRIF to enhance retaining the words. This is achieved by means of focusing on the cognitive significance of words, the semantic level, effective application, and the useful employment of words Freeman (2017). While students grasp new words, they are conveyed directly by means of drilling and practicing to long term memory. This is reflected through the stage of "internalize” where students refer to vocabulary in order to internalize. They can use their storage of words to retain the needed vocabulary. Moreover, the following practices develop and improve retention very well. This high level of understanding and perception of the new vocabulary and materials leads students smoothly and freely to invest the target vocabulary productively and fluently.

Another equally more important point that deserves consideration is that learning words does not happen because of using materials only. The main reason of this learning of vocabulary is motivating students to study words cooperatively, which contributes to building their vocabulary knowledge to be outstanding speakers in the future. This creates a social sense through vocabulary lesson and teamwork among students leads to perfect performance of vocabulary as students learn vocabulary from each other Min (2013). On the contrary, traditional techniques do not concentrate on the value of sharing and co-operation as its main goal is teaching vocabulary rather than the social aspect of this vocabulary. Also, students can learn better from sharing their vocabulary knowledge with others and through correcting mistakes and errors related to the pronunciation, spelling, and form of the vocabulary, which create more vocabulary producers.

Based on the results that were in favor of ECRIF, it is of a great value to refer to the new role of the teacher as one of the main reasons that enhance learning vocabulary. In ECRIF, the teacher becomes "a learner of vocabulary." This is reflected as a professional learner of teaching vocabulary while being aware of the options and opportunities related to words in each classroom situation. Teacher's correct choices of the target vocabulary and wide range of vocabulary possibilities prove that he becomes a decision vocabulary maker. Thus, decisions on vocabulary and careful examination of the suitable words are not a matter of chance or a random process. It is a process of deep thinking, clear strategies, wide vocabulary, open mindedness, careful searching for the best vocabulary for certain situations Min (2013). Excellent teachers believe that teaching vocabulary does not necessary lead to accurate vocabulary learning; it certainly does influence it. Teachers develop, assess, evaluate, encourage, motivate, and create situations to develop learning vocabulary. He is a facilitator of vocabulary acquisition process through ECRIF, contrary to his traditional role in the traditional strategies where he dominates the class and guides vocabulary learning.
ECRIF proved important in learning vocabulary because it is a framework that concentrates on integrating vocabulary in all language skills. Progressing the receptive and productive language services homogeneously is most favorable in vocabulary learning. Through the five stages of ECRIF, these vocabulary skills are introduced and developed by means of different tasks, techniques, materials, and activities. This leads to the maximum level of learning vocabulary that is the basic for communicative skills that enable learners to use vocabulary fluently. The productive language skill of speaking is probably the fastest way to show students’ vocabulary competence. Then, the similarity here just shows that it is possible to help students to develop this skill using a variety of teaching vocabulary models Min (2013).

5 Conclusion

The study results showed that ECRIF has a high effect on developing vocabulary among EFL seventh graders in Jordan. The researcher observed that the seventh graders gained a relatively substantial amount of improvement in learning new vocabulary and retrieving it when needed. Based on the results, the researcher concluded that ECRIF was superior to the traditional ways of teaching English and added a lot of learning situations. It has provided students with a better learning environment and created many types of collaborative learning within the same group and competing with other groups. Various courses have been provided, offering different situations depending on participants’ contributions, and using R-enabled real-time role-playing for students and teachers despite various geographical domains.

Moreover, the results have shown a big difference between teaching vocabulary through new modernized strategies and traditional ones. This has led us to conclude the importance of diversifying teaching steps and skills such as presentation, practice, and production model. Such steps give teachers the feeling of control and power that actually could be transformed to students if teachers use an approach that motivates students’ L2 use. Then, changing this approach to ECRIF strategy, as it has been attempted here, could be a way to make classes more students centered and get used to students’ freedom and avoid intervening too much. Working on this pattern could be a suitable start since students will be encouraged to find the language activity, as it is an aid to conserving memory. It also increases intellectual potency, learning motivation becomes intrinsic, and the learning of heuristics itself helps learners acquire techniques for problem resolving, learning, and detection.

To conclude, the use of enhanced ECRIF strategy is purposeful, clear, organized, and valued goals, targets, and evaluation criteria are clearly realized. Enhanced ECRIF strategy include many different types of activities, such as problem solving, role-play, discussion, image descriptions, and appropriate response. Therefore, students rarely get instructions through these bored and tiring techniques. This makes them focus on how to use language and communicate their ideas and feelings. They are not exposed to pressure, so they can produce the right words, and may inspire them to express their joy and happiness when they all participate in every activity. As such, students become energized, interested, excited, and encouraged to take the task on. This gives them the ability to get rid of hesitation in speech and give them opportunities to develop strategies to interpret and understand the language as it is actually handled by their native speakers. In this light,
the researcher believed that ECRIF strategy motivate and stimulate students to discover, save, and retrieve new vocabulary as needed.

6 Pedagogical Implications
In light of the study results, the researcher put following suggestions
1. Using ECRIF strategy in the teaching and learning process encourages students to be active and motivated when doing an activity.
2. Employing ECRIF strategy supports teaching English vocabulary with different steps for creating a better learning environment.
3. The ECRIF strategy steps help to reduce the gap between teachers and learners when interacting together.
4. Using ECRIF strategy enables students to learn the English vocabulary with the atmosphere of joy and happiness.
5. Using ECRIF strategy develops students' vocabulary.
6. The ECRIF strategy instructions provide students with immediate feedback and different types of reinforcement.
7. Using ECRIF strategy activates students' prior knowledge and this operates students' thinking and restores their experience about the topic.
8. Promotion of English vocabulary among basic stages by enriching textbooks in the light of appropriate subjects

7 Recommendations
Based on the results of the study, the researcher suggests following recommendations:
7.1 For curriculum designers and decision makers:
1. Produce guiding materials to equip teachers with the needed knowledge to use ECRIF strategy.
2. Develop teachers' abilities in choosing the ideal vocabulary lesson strategy.
3. Include new methods in teaching English for EFL learners depending on active learning.
7.2 For English language teachers:
1. It is necessary to integrate all language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing in teaching vocabulary.
2. They should select the vocabulary and present them during classes in an interesting way.
3. Use more than one strategy in teaching vocabulary.
4. Good organized planning of the steps in teaching each strategy in teaching vocabulary.
7.3 For further studies:
1. This study was limited to developing the student's vocabulary. The ECRIF strategy would be applied for others English services and sub-skills.
2. Conducting studies to investigate the effect of ECRIF strategy on students' attitudes toward English language learning.
3. Conducting studies to explore the effectiveness of ECRIF strategy on developing the reading comprehension.
About the Author:

Dr. Basma Issa Tlelan Al-Saleem, An EFL Associate Professor in the Language Center at The World Islamic Sciences and Education University. Amman-Jordan. She is the Director of Arabic for Speakers of Other Languages Center ASOL 2016. She holds a doctorate degree from Yarmouk University in Curriculum and Instructions of Teaching English as a Foreign Language TEFL in 2010. She has a Diploma in TESOL from Columbia University in New York,2008. She holds the American Professional Certificate of English Teachers from SIT Institution-New York 2012. She was a participant in preparing the Strategic Development plan of Imam University in Saudi Arabia in cooperation with Stanford University in the USA 2014. She has several training courses in the area of Educational technology and human rights. Her concerns, several research in the use of technology in education and human rights. She has many of the posts working papers at conferences in Jordan and abroad. She holds a Diploma in Child Rights from Lund University in Sweden, 2009. ORCID ID : https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4531-9608

References


Perceptions of EFL Teachers at King Abdulaziz University
Regarding the Effectiveness of Cambridge University Press’s Train the Trainer Course

Catherine Karen Roy
English Language Institute
King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Sabitha Rahim
English Language Institute
King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Aishah Yaqoub Khojah
English Language Institute
King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
This study adds to the current literature on ongoing in-house professional development for teachers by exploring how administrators, other faculty, and the English-language (EFL) teachers who participated in Cambridge University Press’s Train the Trainer course (TTT) at King Abdulaziz University (KAU), Saudi Arabia, judged the TTT’s usefulness. To determine whether to support the TTT in the future, KAU wanted to identify how well its TTT graduates could provide professional development to their colleagues. This study’s aim is to discuss how positively those who were involved in the TTT, particularly the administration, the TTT graduate trainers themselves, and the other teachers who attended the workshops presented by first-year graduates of the ELI’s TTT responded to the course. The main question it addresses is how successful the implementation of such a TTT course can be at the English language institute of a Saudi university, like at KAU, so as to determine if the TTT should continue to be offered at KAU and more generally, taking the example of the ELI at KAU, if the TTT course should also be proposed at other English language institutes in Saudi Arabia. This study employed a Likert scale survey, semi-structured interviews, and open-ended questions with TTT participants, administrators, and other faculty to assess the TTT’s initial value. The main finding of this study is that so far, the TTT course was perceived as beneficial. However, future analyses should evaluate the longer-term effects of the TTT on teaching approaches and student learning.

Keywords: effectiveness of Cambridge Train the Trainer course, EFL Saudi context, EFL, EFL professional development, teacher-trainers

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This study investigates how participants, other faculty, and administrators at the English Language Institute (ELI) at King Abdulaziz University (KAU) perceived Cambridge University Press (CUP)’s Train the Trainer course (TTT), as offered to some English as Foreign Language (EFL) instructors at the ELI during the 2016-2017 academic year. The purpose of the TTT is to provide good teachers with the opportunity to become certified to provide Cambridge-standard professional development to their peers. The intended result of this training is that graduates of the TTT are able to provide their colleagues with useful professional development, thus improving the quality of instruction independent of outside assistance.

Before the 2016-2017 school year, KAU provided all professional development through its own Professional Development Unit (PDU), since the university had no connection with CUP. After KAU finalized a textbook contract with CUP, however, KAU was offered the TTT, which KAU then funded. The university arranged for the TTT to be offered simultaneously in 2016-2017 at its Men’s Campus and two of its three women’s campuses: the Women’s Main Campus and Women’s Colleges. However, this study examined the TTT only as implemented at the two women’s campuses.

The Purpose of the Study
This study discusses how the ELI administration, the TTT graduate trainers themselves, and the other teachers who attended the workshops presented by first-year graduates of the ELI’s TTT responded to the course. The TTT is currently being offered for a second year to another group of teachers. Having already supported the development of teachers during the first year of the TTT at the ELI, the administration wanted to ascertain the value of both the TTT course at the ELI and the workshops that the course’s graduate teacher-trainers have subsequently provided. This study’s focus, how the stakeholders evaluate the program, will determine whether the TTT is offered beyond this second year.

Research Questions
At the core of the study are four questions:

1. How effective do the teachers, graduates of the TTT, and the administration judge the TTT to have been so far?
2. How successfully do teachers feel they have been able to use the teaching methods that they have learned from the TTT graduate teacher-trainers at the ELI?
3. After the certification of its own teacher-trainers, was the ELI able to autonomously design and provide valued EFL training sessions to its faculty members?
4. To what degree did the workshops offered by the TTT graduates reflect the context and content of real classroom experiences?

The Value of Professional Development
Despite the fact that, as Rose and Reynolds (2007) point out, “the concept of continuing professional development (CPD) in education is often ill-defined” (p. 219), no institute with international standards can evolve or even survive without dynamic and ongoing professional development. Teachers everywhere tend to appreciate professional development because it not only gives them new ways to handle their changing curriculums and new technology as well as the opportunity to acquire new teaching techniques, but it also updates their understanding of how
In fact, to adapt to new demands and opportunities, especially technological ones, and to benefit from new findings in the field, EFL teachers must receive ongoing education so as to develop their skills and knowledge (Mohammadi & Moradi, 2017). In the case of many language institutes, this training is provided in-house.

However, professional development is more than just weekly workshops. At the ELI of KAU, for example, it takes various forms: in-house training, regional and international conferences, end-of-the-year symposiums, and the TTT that this research paper examines. The TTT is an extensive course: the workshops that TTT graduates deliver may range from classroom techniques and methodologies to technology and beyond, depending on the needs of the ELI’s teachers. By enabling teacher-trainers to subsequently offer professional development to their peers on such topics, the TTT aligns with the current general aim of language institutions to prioritize the training of their teachers so that the institutions continuously meet “prescribed standards-based performance benchmarks” (Bills, Giles, & Rogers, 2016, p. 106). In fact, providing in-house training through such instruments as the TTT has become imperative due to the ongoing evolution of curriculums and of students’ technological needs and tools, “rapid changes in the educational scenario [that] compel the teachers to work hard in order to respond to such changes effectively” (Al Asmari, 2016, p. 118).

Such professional development is thus a way for teachers to keep learning after starting to teach, without having to engage in further formal studies. The results of this ongoing teacher-education are improvements in teaching and learning. In fact, one indicator of the importance to all stakeholders—faculty members, administration, and students—of teachers’ participation in professional development is the fact that at most language institutes, including the ELI, it that such participation is considered in the institution’s end-of-year evaluations of their teachers.

Another sign of the importance of professional development is the effort that institutions may make to provide it to their teachers, whether by hiring international EFL trainers, by providing in-house training for their faculty, by implementing new teaching practices, or by formulating policy that supports professional development. As Tawelbeh (2015) argues, “[i]n order for learners to get effective learning opportunities, teachers’ professional development should be considered as a major goal in institutions’ policies” (p. 117).

To be successful, however, professional-development training needs to address the genuine interests and concerns of teachers: “to develop professionally, teachers should feel a continuous desire to learn more about themselves as professionals, and about their profession” (Peña Muñoz, 2009, p. 19). At the ELI of KAU, teachers expressed a strong interest in in-house workshops and training opportunities, a need that led to the administration arranging to offer the TTT as a means of increasing the number of meaningful workshops available each year.

Three Current Themes in Professional Development
Three trends in professional development—reflectiveness, newest teaching techniques, and the correlation between teachers’ effectiveness and their students’ performance—were incorporated into the TTT as delivered at KAU.

The first of these is an emphasis on the importance of teachers reflecting on their own teaching practices and experiences. The reflective practice that is part of the Cambridge training
course is seen by the ELI, the TTT graduates, and other teachers to accord with Auten and Twigg (2015)’s description of such reflection “as both a mode of learning and an avenue to improving one’s teaching” (p. 8), and thus to improving students’ learning processes. In fact, the idea that students’ achievement is strongly commensurate with their teachers’ professional skills and methodologies “is a widely accepted notion, and thus the focus on teacher quality has had a long history in the field of education” (Yoo, 2016, p. 8). As Peña Muñoz (2009) points out, in order to develop a better understanding of how to improve their practice, teachers must articulate their personal theories of teaching (p.19). And through such reflection, teachers learn to hone their skills or to identify areas that need development, such as the need to learn new teaching techniques.

Another current emphasis in professional development is on exploring recently developed teaching techniques. Since most teachers do not have time to enrol in outside professional-development programs, in-house workshops may provide their only opportunity to learn about new insights in EFL teaching. Typically, teacher development happens within a group: the faculty of a language institute, for instance, often work as a team to support each other and share their expertise. Ideally, such learning “involves trying out new strategies in the classroom, usually with supervision and monitoring and getting feedback from others on one’s own practice” (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 3). In the absence of programs like the TTT or other in-house workshops, this kind of professional development might not be available to all or any of the faculty. But teacher-trainer graduates of the TTT help to increase access for their colleagues to training in the best current teaching practices.

A third trend, the strong correlation between professional development, teachers’ effectiveness, and students’ performance, has also received considerable attention recently:

many educational researchers and practitioners argue that in order to improve student achievement, it is necessary to improve teacher quality. One way to do this is through sustained classroom-based professional development programs, which aim to improve teachers’ knowledge, instructional practices, and pedagogical beliefs. (Tawalbeh, 2015, p. 118)

Because teachers employ the teaching practices that they have learned are effective, these improvements in knowledge affect teachers’ daily practice and classroom decisions, and ultimately their students’ learning (Mohammadi & Moradi, 2017).

Recent Studies on Professional Development
Studies have underscored the necessity of ongoing professional development for all faculty because, especially as technology develops, new ways of communicating and getting information emerge. For this reason,

[e]ffective language study is focused on communication, facilitating the development of knowledge and skills in language and culture, integrating language acquisition with content from other subject areas, and preparing students to be lifelong learners and users of the skills, information, and insights they gain. (Al Asmari, 2016, p. 118)
Furthermore, due to the high demand on them to successfully integrate language acquisition with other related language skills, teachers benefit greatly from ongoing in-house professional development that gives them hands-on opportunities to practice new approaches.

The Role of Needs-Assessment Analysis in Professional Development
Good professional development should be based on needs analysis (Tawalbeh, 2015) to ensure that training sessions meet teachers’ needs or interests, and thereby help teachers’ practices to evolve in response to their changing conditions and knowledge.

At the beginning of every academic year, the ELI’s Professional Development Committee (an arm of its PDU) canvases faculty members to determine their professional-development needs. Though this can be a complex task since teachers may disagree about which workshops are most necessary, in 2016 the ELI needs survey showed that faculty wanted to learn about the latest insights into two topics: using technology in the classroom, and effectively teaching the four skills (speaking, listening, writing, and reading). By thus demonstrating their strong interest in developing their professional skills, the teachers confirmed their support for workshops and for the trainers offering them. At the ELI, all members of a sample group of faculty surveyed in 2018 through Google Forms strongly confirmed that the workshops given by their own TTT graduates had helped them to develop as teachers.

The Role of the Needs-Assessment Survey in Achieving Teaching Excellence
A needs analysis of what teachers would like to see in professional development workshops allows teacher-trainers to offer workshops directly related to what those teachers need to know in order to improve their teaching and thereby their students’ success rate. In this way, teachers can act, as Yousef and Dajani (2014) put it, as “leaders of change.” Workshops that TTT graduates offer in response to a needs analysis are better able to provide teachers with training in new techniques, raise their professional standards, and thus improve the quality of their work.

The Train the Trainer Course as a Source of Professional Development
The TTT, designed and developed by Cambridge English (a subsidiary of the University of Cambridge) and provided through employers and language institutes, offers participants a series of workshops, workshop observations, and feedback to better equip its graduates for providing powerful and effective teacher-training workshops to their fellow teachers. It is an intensive set of workshops that involve an experienced Cambridge trainer as well as senior faculty members in discussions of how to plan, design, deliver and evaluate professional-development training sessions for their fellow teachers. The course does not always take the traditional top-down approach that, as Rose and Reynolds (2007) note, has traditionally characterized perceptions of professional development. Rather, the TTT workshops as delivered at the ELI were often an opportunity for teachers to learn from each other.

The core components of the course are training classes, the design and analysis of training sessions, the delivery of training sessions, teacher observation, feedback management, and trainer development. The workshops that TTT graduates in turn provide are intended to help EFL teachers to hone their teaching skills and to meet such professional targets as better teaching of the four skills, optimal use of technology in the classroom, effective management of large groups, and the
promotion of critical thinking in class. The course thus corresponds to teachers’ needs to develop their skills, knowledge, and tools to grow professionally and teach effectively.

Participants engage in face-to-face training sessions, independent follow-ups, and practical tasks. By the end of the year-long course, successful participants should have improved their skills for designing and delivering teacher-training sessions and courses, deepened their understanding of the key issues involved in planning and delivering training courses, developed an understanding of good practices for observing and giving feedback to course participants, trained their fellow teachers to use the latest EFL techniques, built sustainability into their teacher-development programs, extended their own teaching skills and experience, and identified strategies they may employ for their further development as trainers. TTT graduates should have also demonstrated the ability to effectively deliver Cambridge-prepared professional-development workshop material, to be able to research topics related to teaching methodology, and to design and produce relevant and appropriate workshops with achievable aims. Finally, they should display a strong interest in successfully delivering workshops, and fully appreciate the value of critical self-reflection to their own further development as teacher-trainers.

The Purpose of the Train the Trainer Course at the ELI of KAU
The main purpose of the TTT is to promote the best new teaching practices, to encourage reflection on and discussion of those techniques amongst faculty members, and to provide opportunities for teachers to experiment with these new ideas in the classroom. At the ELI, TTT workshops have led to teachers learning about the applications and implications of helpful new teaching methods, and about ways to use current technology in class.

The Collegiality that the TTT Encourages
The positive atmosphere in which the TTT is delivered helps the program to achieve these goals. As Yousef and Dajani (2014) point out, professional development is an opportunity “to promote, strengthen and foster cooperation to enhance teachers’ professional development based on the different experiences teachers have” (p. 143). Thus, the TTT’s provision of a supportive environment in which to explore those differences has helped ELI teachers to reflect on and share individual strategies and perspectives on classroom issues.

In fact, in its objective to provide ongoing professional development in an atmosphere of collegial learning, the program’s in-house training and learning opportunities resemble learning circles, structures which promote a rich “learning experience where teachers are able to improve their instructional practices and to construct knowledge for themselves and for their colleagues. Learning circles improve teachers’ communication skills and build confidence to cultivate a culture of collaboration and teamwork” (Yousef & Dajani, 2014, p. 151). Ultimately, the friendly manner in which TTT training is offered increases the likelihood of teachers voicing their particular experiences and needs, which gives teacher-trainers the opportunity to fine-tune the professional-development workshops that they then provide to their colleagues.

TTT Promotes Better Teaching
Similarly, when TTT graduates design their own workshops they aim to give their training sessions variety and inclusiveness so that they can encompass the variety of approaches that
teachers use: “teacher[s] may hold personal attitudes and beliefs about all possible aspects of their professional practices, from the subject matter to teaching methods, from what constitutes a good teacher to what constitutes a good student” (Lin, 2013, p. 56).

Some researchers have explored the connection between teachers learning to share their experiences and the growing autonomy of those teachers in choosing best teaching practices. Peña Muñoz (2009), for example, conducted a study in Mexico with five university tutors into how their practice and perceptions of professional development related to their autonomy in planning professional development, and concluded that it is essential to learn about what has shaped teachers’ experiences as learners and as practitioners. Furthermore, it is necessary to uncover other factors that may influence teachers’ beliefs, such as contextual, personal and academic aspects, because teachers often describe their practice of language teaching in terms of these beliefs. (Peña Muñoz, 2009, p. 22)

At the ELI, graduates of the TTT are thus aiming to develop the potential of the existing faculty either through cascading sessions or new workshops, according to the results of needs analyses.

The Value of in-House rather than Visitor-led Training, in General and at the ELI in Particular

One reason that the ELI embraced the opportunity to implement this CUP training course was that the institute wanted to develop its own teacher-trainers; the other is that, in alignment with its mission and vision statements, the ELI sought to provide its faculty with exceptional professional development. At the ELI of KAU, as at most other language institutes, the faculty members see professional-development workshops as a means of enhancing their professional skills and knowledge: as Richards and Ferrell (2005) note, “not everything teachers need to know can be provided at the pre-service level” (p. 1), and the ELI therefore provided the TTT to teachers to train the faculty.

When trainers can provide professional development to their own colleagues in their own institutions, as ELI teacher-trainers at KAU are able to do through the TTT, in two ways the training that they provide is better than training provided by an outside facilitator. First, in-house trainers are able to contextualize their own teaching practices according to the specific needs of the language institute. In this way, the trainers can address their colleagues’ specific, identified needs: for instance, how to deal with students passing from one level to the next at the same time as curriculums are being redefined. When the ELI used to invite Cambridge trainers from abroad, even from the nearby United Arab Emirates (UAE), the training provided was broad and, in important ways, unrelated to teaching at KAU’s ELI, where such factors as a lack of resources, large classes, and students’ levels of language ability, achievement, and absenteeism reduced the value of the recommended pacing of lessons and use of classroom activities. But those who already teach at the ELI of KAU know exactly what kind of students and challenges teachers actually face on a daily basis, and what kinds of workshops would best serve faculty members. For this reason, the TTT has improved the quality of professional development available to the faculty of the ELI.
And second, when professional-development training meets teachers’ specific needs, that training is more likely to be not only cooperative and collaborative, but also sustainable (Mohammadi & Moradi, 2017). The presence of TTT graduates amongst the faculty at the ELI means that no extra money needs to be budgeted to bring in visiting professional-development trainers; it also means the elimination of problems—with visas, flights, or accommodation—which might otherwise impact workshops. Furthermore, training sessions can be scheduled for any time that is convenient to ELI teachers. That scheduling flexibility is important because at KAU, changes in exam schedules due to unexpected rain- or sandstorms may affect teachers’ ability to attend workshops. These budgetary and logistical reasons for empowering some faculty members to offer very helpful professional development to their colleagues were important reasons behind the ELI initiating the TTT.

The TTT course thus meets faculty needs for help in handling such common campus-specific challenges as large classes, disruptive students, and changing classroom technology. In fact, ELI’s TTT graduates are already improving the faculty’s ability to manage these issues while carrying out the ELI’s mission to develop the quality of its instruction. ELI teachers have confirmed that these workshops have significantly enhanced their own professional development and teaching practices.

Furthermore, the ELI administration sees the TTT as an important means not only of increasing the number of in-house teacher training sessions available to faculty, but also of providing a practical balance between teaching theory and practical application, thereby helping teachers to more thoroughly understand how to use their newly acquired or updated knowledge. While workshops addressing new and relevant information are without doubt of interest to teachers, even workshops that revisit familiar topics can be valuable educational refreshers for faculty: the more skilled teachers are, the better their teaching methods, and the more their students benefit. Topics covered in the training sessions of the TTT graduates thus must be applicable to real classroom scenarios and to the course book at the ELI itself. Therefore, the TTT is a very practical course, allowing participants to apply whatever they learn in the training sessions to their work with their own students;

In a workshop, participants are expected to learn something that they can later apply in the classroom and to get hands-on experience with the topic, such as developing procedures for classroom observation, [integrating technology, encouraging critical thinking, and promoting creativity]. (Richards & Farrell, 2005, p. 23)

For all these reasons, the TTT’s provision of in-house professional development enhances the program’s measures to encourage participants to consider and test new ideas.

**Implementation of the Train the Trainer Course at the ELI**

As part of a major curriculum change in the 2015-2016 academic year, the ELI contracted with the CUP that the latter would provide the TTT to selected faculty members for two successive academic years, 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. The only challenge that the ELI faced in providing the TTT was allocating sufficient time for the training sessions. Given the ELI’s tight modular
schedule, workshop scheduling required meticulous planning to ensure that the training sessions did not conflict with exam and assessment dates.

For the first of these years, because of their superior knowledge, experience, potential, and adaptability, ten faculty members from each of the ELI’s two women’s campuses in question were selected for participation in the TTT. They attended the course between August, 2016 and May, 2017. Four of the ten graduated from the Women’s Main Campus, and nine from the Women’s Colleges, due mostly to the participants’ prior professional commitments.

Methodology
This research utilized an explorative study method, employing three in-person semi-structured interviews (one with all four administrators who played key roles in making the TTT available; one with each pair of leaders from the two campus-based group of participants) and one questionnaire distributed to 20 randomly chosen members of the 200 faculty who participated in the TTT. All three interviews were conducted at the KAU, Jeddah: two at the ELI at the Women’s Main Campus and one at the Women’s Colleges; and all interviewees gave their voluntary consent to being interviewed. The interview responses were then grouped according to whether they were from administrators or participants.

The administrators were asked for their opinions about the usefulness, effectiveness, and expected standards of the Cambridge course; they were also asked about the facilitation process, the selection of candidates, the effectiveness of their workshops, and the benefits to the ELI and the TTT participants of this program (Appendix A). Although the interviews with the administrators were conducted in English, someone was present to translate for those participants who preferred to be interviewed in Arabic, so everyone interviewed was able to respond freely. The guidelines for the interview prescribed anonymity; therefore, the participants are referred to as Participant 1, Participant 2, and so on. Similarly, the anonymity of the four TTT participants responding to questions (Appendix B) in their semi-structured interview was preserved. As for the faculty questionnaire, it was made available online to faculty members through Google Forms, and consisted of 24 statements and questions, out of which 20 were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the TTT course itself, most utilizing the Likert Scale (Appendix C). Their anonymous responses were then analyzed using thematic analysis.

Analysis of Interview and Survey Responses
This section summarizes significant findings from the four ELI administrators as well as from the interviews with four of the 13 TTT graduates (two of each of the women’s campuses). It then reviews the statistical analysis of survey responses by 20 out of the 200 participants in the ELI workshops offered by TTT graduates.

ELI Administrators’ Perceptions
When asked about the cost efficiency of the TTT, Participant T4 said that it is “saving a lot of money. The travel, accommodation and on-site expenses of [using CUP trainers instead to provide all future professional development for ELI faculty] . . . was not feasible in the long run.” Training sessions by the TTT graduates, in contrast, entail no further costs, and the workshops can be scheduled to accommodate the ELI’s schedule.
Administrators felt that the workshops offered by TTT graduates aligned with the ELI’s vision and mission to provide valuable in-house training at international standards of excellence to its faculty. Participant T1 said that she was pleased that the ELI, in accordance with its mission of providing on-going professional development, had decided to develop its own on-site trainers, because attendance at such sessions is part of the teachers’ yearly evaluation (though unrelated to their job security). Participant T2 said that the training sessions provided by the ELI trainers were more effective than previous workshops provided by a Cambridge representative from abroad. Participant T3 highlighted the fact that faculty gave “better scores [to] our own trainers” than to CUP’s; in addition, she noted that “our own trainers are more vibrant, [more] suitable to our own community.” All of the interviewees emphasized that training the institute’s own faculty to become trainers is much more convenient and more easily managed than bringing in outside trainers.

In terms of knowing their audience, the professional-development areas that needed to be tackled, and effective activities to use in their workshops, all four administrator respondents felt that ELI’s new trainers performed well. Participant T3 said that as in-house teacher-trainers, the ELI graduates from this course contributed significantly to the institute. She also pointed out that other faculty members’ appreciation for the training that their newly qualified colleagues had provided them with the previous year had motivated more faculty to engage in professional development during this current academic year. At the same time, the interviewees valued the work that the resource person from Cambridge had done in providing the TTT course to the ELI participants so that they could carry on her work in subsequent years.

Participants’ Perceptions of How Effectively the TTT Taught Professional Development
During the interview of the two participants at the Women’s Main Campus, participant T1 said that the course met her needs as a trainer in the EFL field, especially in regard to developing her own subsequent workshops. Participant T2 added that the training had had a positive impact on her teaching by providing her with better insights into how to teach the four language skills as well as how to anticipate and tackle issues faced by the ELI teachers at KAU (students needing extra help, the fast pace of the curriculum, tardiness, low motivation, and long hours, to name a few). Participant T1 said that she had gained the ability to design, develop, and conduct her own workshops according to the needs of the faculty and the institute. During the interview at the Women’s Colleges with the other two TTT graduates, Participant T3 said that her participation in the course had helped her to understand how to give effective feedback to teachers after observing their classes. Participant T4 felt that the sessions had improved her abilities to time the workshops she gave her colleagues and to foster collaboration between the teachers participating in those workshops. Participants 2 and 3 felt more empowered and effective after having been certified by this internationally recognized training program.

Faculty Perceptions of the Effectiveness of the Train the Trainer Course Graduates’ Workshops
Faculty respondents to the online questionnaire indicated more than 90% agreement or strong agreement with the survey’s 20 questions and statements about their perceptions of the effectiveness of their training by their TTT-certified colleagues. These results indicate that they found the TTT to be a valuable form of professional development.
To streamline the graphing of responses, answers to this questionnaire’s questions and statements were arranged in groups of five simply according to the order in which they were asked. These 20 items are represented below by the letter “Q” and a unique number over the four graphs (Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4); the corresponding questions or statements appear beneath each graph. Although respondents could choose from five numbers to indicate their responses to each statement or question (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree), few respondents chose options 2 or 3, so the graphs (Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4) represent only responses 1, 4, and 5. Overall, the heights of the blue and orange “strongly agree” and “agree” bars clearly indicate that the faculty strongly valued the workshops that the TTT graduates offered during and after completing their participation in the TTT course.

The first questions in the survey (Fig. 1) concerned participants’ perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the workshop sessions. As this graph indicates, respondents’ levels of agreement with questionnaire items 1-5 were satisfactory.

![Figure 1. Faculty perception of the effectiveness of the graduate-led workshops (items 1 – 5), with the vertical axis representing the number of responses](image)

Q1. The training sessions addressed the problems relevant to our institution.
Q2. The training sessions were interactive sessions where participants could play an active role.
Q3. The training sessions identified and included appropriate aims.
Q4. The activities in the training sessions offered a balance of input and output.
Q5. Each workshop provided clearly stated objectives with appropriate interaction patterns.

Because the core components of the course are training classes, the analysis and design of training sessions, the delivery of training sessions, teacher observation, managing feedback, and trainer development, items 6 to 10 in the faculty questionnaire explored how effectively the TTT graduates designed and delivered training sessions, demonstrated knowledge of the topic, and provided valuable feedback.
Figure 2. Faculty’s satisfaction with the graduate trainers (items 6 – 10), with the vertical axis representing the number of responses

Q6. Trainers selected, adapted, or designed appropriate materials, activities, and resources for each session.
Q7. Trainers demonstrated knowledge of the topic and handled associated problems.
Q8. Trainers engaged their audience through energy, body language, enthusiasm, and good interpersonal skills.
Q9. Trainers demonstrated effective ELT techniques and organizational skills, flexibility, and adaptability.
Q10. Trainers supplied constructive and valuable feedback, responding to questions effectively.

The effectiveness of the training sessions was almost universally confirmed by the responses to items 11 through 20, represented in figures 3 and 4. Additionally, in response to Q 15, 19 of the 20 faculty respondents indicated that in the training sessions they had acquired valuable strategies and methods that they could implement in their classrooms, a major aim of the workshops that the TTT graduates provided and one that was not always satisfied by the workshops conducted previously at the ELI by Cambridge representatives from abroad.

Figure 3. The impacts of graduate-led workshops on faculty (items 11 – 15), with the vertical axis representing the number of responses
Q11. Trainers monitored their audience to encourage active participation and to check appropriately and sensitively for their full understanding.
Q12. The training inspired reflection at the end of each session.
Q13. At the end of each session, were you able to identify strategies/methods that you will implement in your classroom?
Q14. Did the trainers relate the training sessions to the textbooks currently in use at the ELI?
Q15. Were the training sessions successful in providing you (teachers) with new ideas for more engaging classroom activities?

The questionnaire indicated that the specific topics that the TTT graduate trainers chose to develop into workshops for their fellow teachers were relevant to the EFL educational context at the ELI of KAU. Responses to Q19 in particular showed that faculty appreciated professional development on using current technology in the EFL classroom, a topic that always appears on the needs analyses that the ELI’s PDU conducts.

Figure 4. The impacts of graduate-led workshops on teaching practices (items 16 – 20), with the vertical axis representing the number of responses

Q16. Did the training sessions promote critical thinking later in your EFL classroom?
Q17. Did the training sessions help you to employ creative strategies in your own classroom to correspond with students’ various learning styles?
Q18. Did the training sessions teach you how to stimulate the different learning zones of your students’ brains while they are learning?
Q19. Did the training sessions help you to effectively utilize technology in your classrooms?
Q20. Did the training sessions help you learn how to use motivating strategies to teach the four language skills in your classroom?

Conclusions
This study’s interviews and statistical analyses indicate that for KAU’s English Language Institute, for its faculty, and for its newly certified teacher-trainers, the TTT has already had positive impacts: it has provided faculty with valuable professional development, knowledge about current technological applications for the EFL classroom, and a creative and supportive professional-development atmosphere. In addition, it has tackled recurring, culturally-specific
challenges related to the teaching of EFL. These findings testify to the success of the program’s implementation at the ELI.

**Recommendations**
Because it meets KAU’s goal of helping the ELI to become a world-class centre for EFL instruction, for at least one more academic year after the current second year (2017-2018) KAU should fund CUP offering the TTT to its faculty interested in becoming professional-development trainers for their colleagues at KAU’s ELI. In this way, an adequate number of teacher-trainers for the foreseeable future will likely be available to provide their fellow faculty members with timely professional updates and insights. This future TTT course should be scheduled for the beginning of module 1.

**Limitations of the Study**
While the TTT was offered also at KAU’s Men’s College, this study was conducted at the Women’s Main Campus at KAU and it examined only the TTT as implemented there as well as at the Women’s Colleges.

**About the Authors:**
**Dr. Catherine Karen Roy** is a language instructor at the English Language Institute of King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She is also a member of the Professional Development Committee at KAU. She holds a PhD in Germanic Studies from the University of British Columbia, a Master of Arts from the University of Toronto and a CELTA.
ORCid ID 0000-0001-7634-8482

**Sabitha Rahim** is the Coordinator of the Professional Development Committee, Development Unit at the English Language Institute of King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She holds an MA in English Language, a BA in English Literature and a CELTA.
ORCid ID 0000 0001 7516 6927

**Dr. Aishah Yaqoub Khojah** is Assistant Professor at King Abdulaziz University. She holds a PhD and MA in linguistics. Recently, she has become the Head of Development Unit at the English Language Institute, KAU.
ORCid ID 0000-0002-9117-8028

**References**


### Appendix A. Administrator Interview Questions and Statements

1. Was the selection of participants for ELI’s TTT based on merit and on the ELI’s professional development criteria?
2. Do you think this training is the most effective, cost-efficient way to develop our own in-house trainers?
3. Do you think this course has increased the trainers’ value to the institute?
4. Were the expenses involved in running ELI’s Train the Trainer course justified?
5. Did the TTT training schedule mesh well with the ELI’s academic calendar?
6. Was the TTT smoothly implemented and run at the ELI?
7. Were the Cambridge facilitators of the TTT culturally sensitive?
8. Were an appropriate number of faculty selected to participate in this program?
9. Did the TTT graduates meet the ELI’s standards of international excellence in their instruction of their ELI colleagues?
10. Would you run the TTT again, and if so, would you provide more than 10 spaces for participants?
11. Did the Cambridge University Press do an excellent job of smoothly implementing this program at the ELI?

### Appendix B. Questionnaire for Graduates of the Train the Trainer Course

1. Did the TTT meet your needs as a workshop developer and presenter?
2. Did the TTT have a positive impact on your teaching?

3. Through these training sessions, have you gained the ability to design, develop, and conduct your own training and workshops in response to the needs of the faculty and the institute?
4. Do you think the TTT should be offered again at the institute to other faculty members?
5. Do you feel more empowered and effective after having participated in the TTT?
6. Do you think the TTT was relevant to the ELI’s mission and vision?
7. Do you think the program’s components met the ELI’s professional development standards for teaching excellence?
8. Do you think using the TTT to develop in-house teacher-trainers is more beneficial to the ELI and its faculty than having a CUP representative train the whole faculty?
9. Do you think that it was reasonable that the TTT was offered at no cost to selected participants?
10. Do you think earning CUP certification through participation in the TTT will help you in your career?
11. Do you think your certification with CUP will enhance your ability to contribute meaningfully to the ELI?
12. Do you think the workshop venue was suitable for all group activities, comfortable, and in a nice location?

Appendix C. Questionnaire for Faculty Perception of the Effectiveness of the Graduate-led Workshops

1. The training sessions addressed the problems relevant to our institution.
2. The training sessions were interactive sessions where participants could play an active role.
3. The training sessions identified and included appropriate aims.
4. The activities in the training sessions offered a balance of input and output.
5. Each workshop provided clearly stated objectives with appropriate interaction patterns.
6. Trainers selected, adapted, or designed appropriate materials, activities, and resources for each session.
7. Trainers demonstrated knowledge of the topic and handled associated problems.
8. Trainers engaged their audience through energy, body language, enthusiasm, and good interpersonal skills.
9. Trainers demonstrated effective ELT techniques and organizational skills, flexibility, and adaptability.
10. Trainers supplied constructive and valuable feedback, responding to questions effectively.
11. Trainers monitored their audience to encourage active participation and to check appropriately and sensitively for their full understanding.
12. The training inspired reflection at the end of each session.
13. At the end of each session, were you able to identify strategies/methods that you will implement in your classroom?
14. Did the trainers relate the training sessions to the textbooks currently in use at the ELI?
15. Were the training sessions successful in providing you (teachers) with new ideas for more engaging classroom activities?
16. Did the training sessions promote critical thinking later in your EFL classroom?
17. Did the training sessions help you to employ creative strategies in your own classroom to correspond with students’ various learning styles?
18. Did the training sessions teach you how to stimulate the different learning zones of your students’ brains while they are learning?
19. Did the training sessions help you to effectively utilize technology in your classrooms?
20. Did the training sessions help you learn how to use motivating strategies to teach the four language skills in your classroom?
An Exploratory Study on Students’ Reading Interest Development through Independent Reading-Retelling Activity

Rusma Noortyani
Department of Language Education and Indonesian Literature
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat
Banjarmasin, Indonesia

Abstract
Reading interest, in addition to reading skills, is crucial for students if they want to be successful readers. The condition of low reading interest among students has been a major issue that needs a creative follow-up from scholars, teachers and practitioners. This study aims to explore the development of students’ reading interest in relation to their participation in independent reading-retelling activity as part of independent learning activity in a particular course they took. Seventy-five students from Faculty and Teacher Training Education of Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Indonesia, were involved as the participants in this study. The students took part in independent reading-retelling activity which requires them to read novels and short stories and retell it to as well as do sharing session to discuss the stories with their partners. This activity was done out of course schedule and complemented with a journal entry to track the students’ progress. Without the purpose of assessing the students, the activity was intended to give students meaningful reading experience and to grow their reading interest. The encouragement of the lecturer was regularly given to the students to keep up their reading and retelling. A questionnaire was used to collect data on their reading interest and their perception on the influence they feel from the activity. This study showed that the students’ reading interest was at medium level with several positive reading behaviors. From the students’ perception, the activity has given them positive influence on their vocabulary growth, reading comprehension, self-quality development, and reading interest.

Keywords: independent reading, reading, reading interest, retelling activity

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Introduction

Reading as a means of collecting and analyzing information is predominant for people’s career improvement in the era of 21st century. For learners particularly, reading might be their primary need to achieve academic success. It is generally assumed that reading will take place meaningfully if it is preceded by interest to read. Cambria and Guthrie (2010) state that in addition to reading skills, students should have will to read in order to benefit from reading and to be a reader. Will itself, according to Cambria and Guthrie (2010, p. 16), “describes children’s enjoyments, their wants, and their behaviors surrounding reading”. This means that will includes reading interest. Reading interest is defined as the extent to which an individual feel excited to engage in reading written materials and delighted to find new information (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010; Thomas, 2001). Reading activity will be more meaningful and beneficial if the reading interest which preceeds the reading rooted in one’s intrinsic motivation, not in the force of other parties or extrinsic rewards (Cambria & Guthrie, 2010).

Reading interest has been investigated by a number of scholars and it is found to be beneficial for reading success. Hidi (2001) made a review on the empirical findings related to interest and reading and noted that all types of interest gives positive contribution and enhancement on reader’s comprehension. In the same vein, Squires (2014) in his study reveals positive significant relationship between reading interest and reading comprehension. Miranda et al. (2011) further explain that high reading interest is usually reflected in positive reading attitudes, such as having willingness to comprehend words and ideas in the reading passages and perceiving reading as pleasant activity. At this point, Cambria and Guthrie (2010) state that the pleasant feeling that students feel in reading can help them to provide more time, effort and concentration in reading. This will help them to enrich their knowledge and eventually influence their academic achievement. Students with high reading interest are also likely to share what they read to others. Thus, it can be stated that these positive reading attitudes derived from reading interest help students to improve their reading comprehension more effectively.

Many scholars and practitioners conduct research to investigate the real overview of students’ reading interest. Pehlivan, Serin and Serin (2010) studied reading interest and reading habit of students from education faculties in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and found that the students’ reading interest was at medium level and their reading habit was very low. Issa, Aliyu, Akangbe, and Adedeji (2012) conducted similar study to federal polytechnic students and found that the students mostly read notebooks and textbooks and it is closely related to the finding of students’ reason to read, namely to pass examination. The similar finding of reading to pass examination is also shown by Owusu-Acheaw (2014) and Rasiah, Kaur & Nagaratnam (2011), while textbook as the mostly-read materials is also revealed by Akanda, Hoq, and Hasan (2013). Issa et al. (2012) note that the findings indicate less positive reading habit orientation since reading for examinations is considered forced reading and it is not likely to promote readers’ awareness of recreational use of reading. This trend, according to Rasiah et al. (2011), suggests that the students generally read only for scores, not for the love of reading itself. Furthermore, Akanda et al. (2013) demonstrated that the majority of the undergraduate students in Bangladesh context in their study pointed up watching television as their favorite pastime and only 26.9% like reading for their
favorite pastime, while Owusu-Acheaw (2014) showed that visiting social media is the activity that the students mostly do for their leisure time. Although students show their agreement on the importance of reading (Issa et al., 2012; Akanda et al., 2013; Owusu-Acheaw, 2014), these previous studies mainly highlight students’ low interest to read voluntarily which should have been supposed to be rooted from their own intrinsic motivation.

In Indonesian context, Wahyuni, Listyasari and Rangkuti (2017) found that the majority of the students at Indonesian acronym for institute of teachers’ education (LPTK or Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan) have low reading interest. Similarly, Hardianto (2011) investigated reading interest of undergraduate students in State University of Yogayakarta and found that the students’ reading interest is also low. This is indicated by the students’ responses which opted “sometimes” for having willingness to read. The low reading interest is also reflected by the lack of students’ willingness to access books and book advancement. Moreover, the low reading interest is also demonstrated by the study of Widodo and Harnanik (2015) involving students in Economic Faculty of State University of Semarang, yet the reading interest issue can be facilitated and positively influenced by the library service and social environment at the college.

In addition to reading interest, factors which made students unwilling to read are also disclosed by previous studies, yet the results vary. For instance, Issa et al. (2012) found that home environment as the most dominant hindrance factor of reading, while Akanda et al. (2013) demonstrate lack of interesting reading materials as the most dominant factor. Owusu-Acheaw (2014) even reveals internal factor from the students themselves as the hindrance to reading, namely mere laziness. Students’ laziness to read might be caused by their perception on reading as boring activity, not as pleasurable activity (Issa et al., 2012; Akanda et al., 2013; Owusu-Acheaw, 2014). These various factors are necessary to ponder if teachers and educational practitioners attempt to help their students to build and nurture their reading interest.

Some effort has been made to solve the problem of low reading interest, such as the empowerment of library service, advancement of book availability, use of innovative reading techniques and strategies in classrooms, and sustainable reading program. The effort made is adjusted to the problematic background of the low reading interest. This study has been underpinned by the previous studies’ findings that reading is mostly considered as boring activity by students and that laziness becomes one of the internal factors which block the willingness to read. To trigger students’ reading interest, reading activity should be designed in a favorable way, not in the sense of utilitarian reading for examination or score, so the love of reading can be instilled gradually. This study aims to explore the development of undergraduate students’ reading interest through independent reading-retelling activity. Independent reading, very much like extensive reading, is reading for pleasure done outside of school or course schedule. In this type of reading, students care given encouragement to read pleasurably on their own, as many reading materials as possible, without being anxious of testing or marks. Independent reading is affirmed beneficial for students’ enrichment of vocabulary, improvement of reading comprehension, verbal fluency, academic success, as well as understanding and appreciation of students’ own life, environment and society (Krashen, 1993; Whitten, Labby & Sullivan, 2016; Renandya, 2007).
As pointed up by Du Toit’s (2001) survey results that readership promotion is highly necessary at school and at home, independent reading-retelling activity is regarded as part of readership promotion among students. Literature in the form of short story and novel is chosen in this activity since it is aimed at adding the pleasure for reading itself, so students will not find it as a technical or boring reading like what they experience in reading for examination. Moreover, retelling is included as part of this activity to integrate collaborative talk, so students can share what they have read and discuss it with their peers. This activity, quite similar to literature discussion, has been proved affirmative to add the enjoyment of reading, contribute positively to students’ learning, reading interest and reading comprehension, especially those who are struggling readers (Pittman & Honchell, 2014). The independent reading-retelling activity is expected to be able to develop students’ reading interest and help them to avoid being reluctant readers, so they can engage in meaningful reading for their own intellectual, psychological and social development and value reading.

Method

Participants

The participants of this study were 75 undergraduate students of Teacher Training and Education Faculty at Lambung Mangkurat University, a leading university in South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. The students were at the second year of their study and were taking the course of Reading Instruction and Theory.

Independent Reading-Retelling Activity

Independent reading-retelling activity was designed as a complementary part of Reading Instruction and Theory course. After the students received the instruction on reading approaches, methods, and techniques, the students were told to do independent reading-retelling activity outside the course schedule. The activity used literature in the form of novel and short story. After the independent reading was finished, the students were asked to pair up and retell the gist of the story they have read to their partner including retelling the characters, setting, and plot. In addition to the retelling activity, the students and their partner were asked to do sharing session about the story by talking about some points adapted from Pittman and Honchell’s (2014) literature discussion group: the students’ favorite parts and not favorite parts and the reasons, new words they find from the story; and what lesson they learn from the story as well as how the students connect with and reflect on the lesson learned. Renandya (2007, p. 145) suggests that “regular monitoring is recommended especially when working with reluctant readers”. Thus, regular monitoring is needed in this kind of reading especially to keep track of students’ progress, yet the purpose of the monitoring is to motivate the students, not for assessment. Thus, to keep the students on the track, a journal entry is provided to be filled by the students to write the results of their sharing session. This activity was conducted for three months, with the required amount of literature was minimum three novels and ten short stories. The schedule of the retelling and sharing session was determined by the students in a balanced way, so it was well-distributed during the three-month period. In the meeting of classroom schedule once a week during the period, the lecturer made time to ask the students’ feeling about the activity and encourage them to keep up
their work. After the whole activity was finished, the students were asked to submit their journal entry to the lecturer to get feedback and encouragement from the lecturer.

**Instrument**

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire to explore students’ reading interest designed based on the theories of reading interest and the expert assistance in the field of reading. The questionnaire consisted of 14 items which had five options using Likert-Scale, namely always (4), often (3), sometimes (2) and never (1). The items covered the willingness to read, indication of reading habit, reading with pleasure, reading compared to other activities, benefits of reading, engagement in reading, repetition in reading when dealing with reading difficulty, frequency of reading, theme or topic of reading materials, the willingness to make time for reading, note-taking of important ideas from reading to broaden knowledge, and library visit. The questionnaire also consisted of five open-ended questions to investigate students’ perception about the impact of the activity on the enjoyment of the reading, their reading comprehension, vocabulary, self-quality development and reading interest. The instrument was administered after the three-month independent reading-retelling activity was finished.

**Results**

This study demonstrated that the students’ reading interest can be generally categorized at medium level. This finding is based on the students’ responses which are mostly at the options ‘always’ and ‘often’ for each questionnaire item. At item 1 on having willingness to read, there were 30.67% of the students who selected ‘always’ and other 50.67% who selected ‘often’. The favorable indication of reading interest from item 1 is supported by the students’ responses for item 2 in which the accumulation 74.67% of the students do reading task with pleasure. However, not all the students do reading activity in college and at home as indicated by the similar percentages of students’ responses for options ‘often’ and ‘sometimes’ for item 3. Moreover, half of the students preferred reading to other activities, such as watching TV or playing, in their free time as indicated by item 4.

**Table 1. Students’ Responses (%) for Each Questionnaire Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Students’ Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Do you have willingness and motivation to read?</td>
<td>30.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>If you get reading task, do you do it with pleasure?</td>
<td>38.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Are you accustomed to reading books in college and at home?</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>If you have the options between reading or other activities (such as watching TV or playing), will you choose reading?</td>
<td>14.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Do you feel the benefits of reading?</td>
<td>70.67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questionnaire items 5 and 6 aimed to picture the students’ perception on the benefits of reading. The significant 70.67% of the students admitted that they always feel the benefits of reading, and the majority of the students admitted the influence that books and materials have on their behavior and attitude. In the aspect of engagement in reading, it is affirmative that all the students try to get the gist or the ideas in the reading material and most of them try to refine their understanding of the material by repeating the reading (items 7 and 8).

Items 9, 10, 11 and 12 elicited students’ effort in making time to read. In terms of reading frequency, the majority of the students stated that they do not read every day, as indicated by the highest percentage on option ‘sometimes’ and the same option for making time to read articles or short stories on the wall magazine at their campus. In spite of the fact that they do not read every day, a bit more positive indication of reading interest is shown by the students’ responses on making special time to read. Place and condition for reading might be a determining factor for reading to take place since the students mostly chose ‘sometimes’ to indicate their effort to read wherever they were. This is likely due to some typical places and condition the students prefer to do reading activities.

The last two items were related to activities that facilitate the students’ reading activity. The majority of the students demonstrated that they did note-taking while reading to expand their knowledge and visited library to access books and reading materials. Library visit might be important for the students to find books and materials for their courses and for the independent reading-retelling activity.
The results of open-ended items were quite interesting. From the first item, it was deduced that all of the students regarded the independent reading-retelling activity enjoyable due to the content of the stories and the collaborative activity. Some students implied the reading activity as recreational activity since they felt their imagination took part while doing the activity and they felt the joy of reading. A student even mentioned that instead of being stressful due to the activity, the activity made him perceive that reading is intrinsically rewarding because of the inspiring stories he read. Most of the students also like the idea of retelling and sharing session since they feel that collaboration makes the activity more interesting. With their partners, they admitted that they gladly shared ideas and tried to understand their partners’ point of view on the content of novels or short stories.

The second item elicited the students’ perception on the influence of the independent reading-retelling activity on their comprehension. All of the students’ responses were affirmative for this item. They viewed the activity as beneficial activity to improve their reading comprehension. One of the students mentioned, “The more I read, the more familiar I am with the organization pattern of the stories. I feel more accustomed to finding main ideas of the stories. Gradually, I can understand the next short stories easier little by little.” This finding can also be seen from the student’s response “What improves my reading comprehension in the reading activity is that the process that I experience. I have to read the reading materials, understand the content, and retell it to my friends. This process helps me to practice to get the gist of the reading effectively and efficiently, so I can retell it well to my friends.

From the second open-ended item, the students agreed that the independent reading-retelling activity they have done help them to enhance their vocabulary knowledge. They perceived that they got several new vocabulary items from the reading activity. Furthermore, the students’ responses for item 4 revealed whether they perceive benefit of independent reading-retelling activity toward their self-quality development. All of the students provided positive responses. They considered the activity has been useful to expand their knowledge. According to the data, some students mentioned the knowledge they got from the reading is mostly about how to deal with oneself and people. Some of them also mentioned that they obtained meaningful moral lesson from the stories and can reflect on them.

The last open-ended item was about students’ perception on the influence of the activity toward their reading interest. All of students’ positive responses on this item were underpinned by the enjoyment of the reading and retelling activities, the feeling of being accustomed to read gradually, and the awareness of the importance of reading. For example, one of the students commented “At the beginning, I am engaged in reading the novels due to the requirement of this course. Yet, when I feel accustomed to it, I feel that I enjoy the reading more and I voluntarily read other novels and I think it’s going to be my habit now.” The other student wrote, “We are required to read and retell the stories to our friends. The retelling activity is interesting and it somehow affects me to read more stories, novels, and other reading materials and share the contents to my friends.”
Discussion

This study has revealed a bit more satisfying picture of students’ reading interest compared to the previous studies conducted in Indonesian context. This study showed that the students already had the willingness and motivation to read, and the important thing is that they show their willingness to read with pleasure. The fact that they do not always read at home and college every day is due to several factors. It can be the existence of more interesting distraction, such as TV (Akanda et al., 2013) and social media (Owusu-Acheaw, 2014).

The finding on the students’ perception on the importance of reading is in line with Issa et al. (2012), Akanda et al. (2013), and Owusu-Acheaw (2014). The nurturing and maintaining effort of students’ reading interest do not simply depend on the students themselves. As has been demonstrated by the study of Widodo and Harmanik (2015), library service and social environment play roles in nourishing students’ reading interest. Faculties and Universities should create conducive atmosphere in the library, update the books regularly based on the book advancement in the field, and improve the quality of the library service. Moreover, enhancing the role of social environment to build students’ reading interest can be done by designing independent reading activity which involves collaboration with students’ peers. As suggested by this study, the students feel motivated to read because they have partners to share about what they read. Conducive social environment can contribute to the building of good reading culture.

This study also confirms the study by Pittman and Honchell (2014) that retelling and sharing session, which are also similar to literature discussion, can add enjoyment of reading in the students’ point of view. The enjoyment itself, according to this study, is resulted from the intrinsic features of the stories the students read and the collaborative feature of the activity. It can be concluded that to help students to value reading and to view reading as pleasurable activity, teachers or other practitioners should allow students to read and share with their peers, not assigning them to do reading alone without any collaboration.

This study also suggests that improving students’ reading comprehension does not have to be through technical or intensive reading all the time where the goal is mostly for assessment. Encouraging students to do independent or extensive reading and monitor their progress are more recommended. More importantly, students who do independent reading have the opportunity to broaden their mind, so that they can understand themselves, other people and their surroundings better. Furthermore, this study revealed that the students perceived the increase of their reading interest after they participated in the independent reading-retelling activity. From the students’ responses, it can be deduced that if teachers want their students to have high reading interest, teachers need to take part in it and do not let the students to make the effort alone. Most of them admitted that although the independent reading-retelling activity seemed to be the requirement of the course, they gradually found the enjoyment and pleasure experience from it, and automatically they are more motivated to read. They also acknowledged the role of the the lecturer in encouraging them to keep the reading activity. Moreover, the students implicitly mentioned the curiosity of stories that drive them to do more reading activity.
Conclusion

Helping students to build and nurture their reading interest is one of big challenges teachers should deal with. Many ways and strategies have been proposed by scholars that can be used by teachers to scaffold their students in developing students’ reading interest. The results of this study attempted to contribute one alternative to motivate students to read and value reading. The independent reading-retelling activity with sharing session as part of it can be applied and modified to adjust the need of students from various school backgrounds. This study suggest that teachers’ role in promoting readership is pivotal for students’ development of reading interest. Once a program or activity is conducted as the effort to develop students’ reading interest, it should be kept in mind that the program or the activity is not for assessing the students. Monitoring is also one important component in such effort to keep students’ progress on the track. Further research is needed to quantitatively and statistically examine the effect of independent reading-retelling activity on students’ reading interest and reading comprehension.

About the author:

Rusma Noortyani is a lecturer in Indonesian Language Education and Art Department, Faculty of Teachers Training and Education, at Lambung Mangkurat University, Banjarmasin, Indonesia. She obtained her bachelor and master degrees at Lambung Mangkurat University for Indonesian Language Education and Art Studies. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1063-8898

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Spelling Difficulties Faced by Arab Learners of English as a Foreign Language

Oudah S. Alenazi
Collage of Languages and Translation
King Saud University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

The field of second language acquisition has acknowledged the importance of good spelling for second language (L2) learners. Learning to spell, in fact, is not a straightforward process rather it involves numerous mental processes. Proponents of this field argue that learning English spelling entails the correct connection of the phonemes and graphemes. The former refers to the spoken sounds and the latter refers to the written symbols. Spelling, also, reflects to a large extent the actual level of people's word knowledge and it can be used to measure the language achievements of L2 users. Nevertheless, the irregular system of English causes different kinds of problems and difficulties for roughly all learners of English including native speakers. This paper aims to highlight the difficulties that Arab learners of English encounter when spelling English words. It describes some spelling approaches such as whole word approach, phonics approach, invented spelling approach, traditional approach and morphemic approach. Then, it considers the different kinds of spelling errors often made by Arab learners of English. It concludes with some suggestions for helping Arab learners of English improve their spelling skills.

Key words: Arab learners of English, spelling, spelling mistakes

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Introduction
Learning to spell English has been considered one of the challenging tasks that face most English language learners. Various studies have been carried out to investigate the reasons that cause this problem. Many researchers (e.g. Hughes & Searle, 2000; Wright, 2000; Ediger, 2001) indicate that spelling is crucial to make the writer’s message and voice comprehensible for the reader. In addition, Bolton and Snowball (1993) assert that poor spelling has a negative effect on the content and makes it unintelligible for the reader. Therefore, it should be taught in a way like other language skills i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking. “Correct spelling is a sign of education; a spelling mistake is a solecism that betrays carelessness or plebeian origins. Spelling is thus a crucial factor in the way people present themselves.” (Cook, 1997, p. 474).

As English is considered the world’s most prestigious language, many jobs require applicants to have high knowledge of both written and spoken forms of English. Warda (2005) argues that in recent years, the job markets replace a great emphasis on the grammar and spelling rather than the overall scores of the candidates. The knowledge of spelling according to Warda (2005) is a sign for advanced education, hard-working personality and that the person has a great deal of intelligence ability. In addition, many researchers have admitted the very close relationship between spelling and reading abilities. It has been argued that incorrect spelling can affect people’s lives in various ways, for instance, poor spelling is more likely to affect reading capabilities, academic performance and grades (Al-Jarf, 2005; Warda, 2005). Also, Graves (1983) demonstrates that poor spellers often focus on the mechanics of spelling rather than the ideas which makes the content poorly suffer.

Stage and Wagner (1992) accentuate that studying spelling offer insight into the actual level of the learners linguistically and cognitively. It indicates the process of the children’s acquisition of the language and how they perceive its spelling system. Also, spelling can help understanding the nature of the learners. In other words, it can tell how learners assimilate orthographic, phonological, and morphological knowledge and how they translate spoken sounds into written symbols (Abu-Rabia & Taha, 2006).

Approaches to spelling
The irregular relationship of letters and sounds in English causes some approaches to emerge. These approaches are thought to help language learners learn the English spelling effectively. In the field of teaching spelling, the Whole-language Approach and the Phonics Approach are considered the most familiar ones. Also, other approaches such as the Invented Spelling, Traditional Approach, and Morphemic Approach have been identified.

The Whole Language Approach
The idea of the whole language approach has its basis in the belief that learning can occur only with frequent exposure to the language (Hughes, 1972). The learners learn the spelling of the words if they are allowed to recognize words as whole not in small chunks. This approach emphasises patterns of words through flashcards (e.g. visual materials). In addition, Hoffman (1990: 238) argues that it is integrated with the invented approach since spelling is learned through “context of communicative writing and reading interactions
between children and adults”. However, there are some drawbacks for this approach. If learners are expected to learn the language by memorizing endless lists of words, this may put language learners under pressure to learn the correct spelling and distinguish between the spellings of similar words. Since learners are not able to decode words, they will not be able to encode words to spell them accurately.

**The Phonics Approach**

Unlike the whole language approach, the phonics approach aims to raise learners’ phonological awareness about words and correspondingly they are expected to comprehend the relationship between phonemes and graphemes (Adams, 1990). Acquiring the phonological features of the words cannot be done in one step. Teriman (1994) identifies that the first step is to teach learners how to divide words into syllables, there are two main phonological units in the English syllable, an onset and rime. Normally, any syllable is divided into two units: the onset, which consists of the initial consonant, and the rime which consists of the vowel and any final consonants. For example, the onset in the word ‘three’ is ‘th’ while the rime is ‘ree’. Language learners will be able to acquire spelling skills if they are able to segment the words into their phonological units (Teriman, 1994). They also seem to show progress when they understand that one phoneme may represent two letters not only one letter such as /ch/ (Todd, 1982). Todd, suggests that learners’ ability to remember words can be improved by using chunks. One of its disadvantages, however, is the unnatural way of learning the target language. Language should be acquired by comprehending the whole text in a meaningful context rather than analysing the words into small language components.

**The invented spelling**

Invented spelling is based on the learners’ phonemic knowledge and on the belief of natural learning. It mainly refers to young learners’ attempts to use whatever knowledge they have in order to spell words, they simply invent words by arranging some letters (Lutz, 1986). Proponents of this approach argue that learners can develop their spelling skills if they explore the relationship between the letters and the sounds. For instance, if the word has the same number of letters and sounds (e.g. bat), learners will easily spell the word. However, other words which have silent letters, double consonants, or different sounds can be difficult to manage. Despite all the promises of the invented spelling, this approach has no long term outcomes since it, sometimes, leads to poor communication skills. More clearly, children who learn spelling by this approach are more likely to feel frustrated at the later years of schooling. They will be unable to spell or even recognize the correct spelling (Ripple, 2008).

**Traditional Approach**

Mainly, this approach focuses on memorizing the unit of the written form where learners are given a number of words every week and they have to practice and spell them correctly. It is followed in some English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts in which learners are required to spell a number of words, sometimes short sentences, in each class. The teacher’s role is to correct their writings and in case of any mistakes, learners have to write the correct spelling of the faulty word more than once. Although, this method helps learners to
recognize the correct spelling, it has a very short-term effect. That is to say, the words which are not frequently used will be forgotten depending on the learners’ memories since there is no rule to memorize them (Gill, 1997). Furthermore, Turbill (2000) asserts that barely memorisation is not considered a sufficient technique to learn spelling even for native speakers.

**Morphemic approach**

Many English words can be generated by following a set of rules for mixing morphographs (Simonsen et al, 2001). These morphographs refer to the affixes that are added to the words (i.e. prefixes, suffixes, infixes, and the root). For example, the word ‘recovered’ has the prefix ‘re’, the suffix ‘ed’ and the root ‘cover’. Teachers following this approach usually write new or important words on the board and each morpheme in a different colour. For example, the word ‘teacher’ is written as teacher where teach is a verb, and by adding ‘er’, it becomes a subject. The same with adding ‘es’ to pluralize words that end with ‘x, ch, sh’ like in ‘box’, and deleting the final ‘e’ when adding the suffix ‘ing’. Simonsen et al. (2001) provide some advantages for this approach which include:

- First, morphographs are generally spelled the same across different words.
- Second, when the spelling of a morphograph changes across words, it does so in predictable ways. Third, the number of morphographs is far fewer than the number of words in the written English language, and the number of principles for combining morphographs is relatively small. (p. 6)

**Spelling difficulties encountered by Arab learners**

A number of studies have been conducted to investigate the causes of the spelling problems encountered by foreign language learners (e.g. Kharma and Hajjaj, 1989; Ringbom, 1992). Fender (2008) carried out a study to examine the spelling comprehension of a group of Arab and non-Arab learners of English and found out that Arab learners scored considerably lower than other populations.

Bowen (2011) analysed data obtained from Emirati students’ writing and found that students have a tendency to add an extra vowel sound to certain words such as ‘partaner’. Bowen (2011) asserts that such epenthesis might have resulted as an attempt to make pronunciation of words easier. She further reported that there was a frequent omission of vowels which might be due to the students’ tendency to omit weak or silent vowels or “the transfer of Arabic nonvowelisation patterns” (p. 92). The absence of written vowels in Arabic text might have led students to guess words in English inaccurately and hence affected their spelling skills. Saigh and Schmitt (2012) go in line with this study suggesting that Arabic learners of English tend to treat English short and long vowels in the same way as Arabic.

In a recent study, Al-Busaidi and Al-Saqqaf (2015) investigated the possible difficulties that Arabic-speaking students encounter when learning English spelling and reported that Arab students had great difficulties in spelling rhyming words such as *rule-role*, and *full-fill*. These students also had difficulty distinguishing between short and long
vowels. Almost all the students in their study spelled the word *hit* as *heat*. The authors further reported that students confused short vowels with diphthongs. Al-Busaidi and Al-Saqqaf (2015) provide a possible interpretation of such findings arguing that students were not trained to be sensitive to the length and quality of the vowel sounds, as some of them are allophonic in their mother tongue. According to the authors, students should be taught the rules of using allographic variations of each grapheme to enable them to use capital and small letters in the appropriate contexts.

Many facts have been acknowledged to impact Arab learners’ spellings. For example, Arabic language has a different direction from English and other orthographies i.e. it reads from right to left. In fact, many Arab learners transfer their schemata knowledge from their mother tongue into English (Cook, 2004; Fender, 2008). Another central reason that causes different problems for Arab learners of English is that Arabic is a consonant-based alphabetic system (Cook, 2004). In Arabic, all the pronounced letters have written equivalents. Therefore, English words with silent letters often cause troubles for the learners. The question that arises in almost every English class and faces nearly most English language teachers is: why does English have these unpronounced letters.

These problems can be classified into phonological and orthographic difficulties. Phonological knowledge stands as a barrier to spell correctly in English. More specifically, learners sometimes write words that do not correspond to the target word for different reasons. For example, these words were not heard at all, students’ inability to distinguish some or all the phonemes in the words, the word sequence, minimal pairs, single vowels and consonant phonemes, or it might be because of failing to recognize flaps and elision (Al-Jarf, 2008). Apparently, this can be illustrated by looking at some Arabic letters and their English correspondences. For instance, Arabic language has thirty-two consonants and eight vowels (including diphthongs) whereas English has twenty-four consonants and twenty-two vowels. Some of these English consonants such as /p/, /v/ and /tʃ/ do not exist in Arabic. Besides, Arabic short vowels are not stressed, rather they are represented by small signs above the words (Swan & Smith, 1987). Additionally, letters such as /K/, /Q/, and /C/ almost sound the same for Arab learners and these letters correspond to only one letter in Arabic i.e. /خ/. Other examples like the sounds /S/ and /C/ correspond with one letter /ṣ/. Also, the letter /P/ causes a serious difficulty for most Arab learners because Arabic has only one letter corresponds to the letter /B/ which is /ب/.

Orthographic problems have, also, been admitted to cause many problems for most learners of English. As most spelling problems can be categorized as orthographic, it seems imperative to define its meaning. According to Al-Jarf (2008), orthographic errors usually refer to that misspell words which sound like the target word but the written form or the grapheme does not correspond with the intended word or the intended grapheme. Al-Jarf (2008) identifies many cases which can be called orthographic problems. Learners may confuse vowel or consonant graphemes that have the same sound, they may confuse vowel and consonant digraphs, delete silent vowels and consonants, represent consonants with hidden sounds phonetically, or substitute the words by other homophones.
In addition, doubling consonants has been considered one of the prevalent errors made by learners of English. Cook (1999) asserts that doubling consonants is one of the most frequent mistakes in English spelling. He believes that consonant addition or omission causes 43.3% whereas only 14.4% of the mistakes are caused by other types. Apparently, since Arabic language is a consonant-based system and there is no doubling for the consonants, this percentage is likely to be higher with Arab learners. In fact, one of the features of Arabic is gemination, called ‘Alshadda’, and refers to “a sequence of identical adjacent segments of a sound in a single morpheme without being separated by epenthetic vowels” (Crystal, 2003, p. 196). The sign for Alshadda - /ّ/ is usually placed above the stressed letters. However, some problems arise with these signs when it comes to writing in English. Many students are confused whether or not to double the letters; the problem that I often faced when I was a teacher of Saudi young learners. During my teaching, I used to dictate some words at the beginning of each class, and the students frequently deleted the doubled consonants as they only heard one sound (e.g. cary, bok) and sometimes they added a final letter for the words when it is not required (e.g. beautifull). I still remember one of my students when he wrote the word ‘can’ with Al-Shadda above it like this: ّcan.

Another rigorous problem that faces most learners in general and Arabs in particular is the vowels. English vowels are introduced at the early stages of learning English in all Saudi public and private schools. Yet, these vowels continue to be the main cause for many students’ mistakes. In Arabic, there are three long vowels (i.e. Alef, Waw and Ya’) and four short vowels which are known as marks (in Arabic called, Harakat or Tashkeel). These Harakat contain four different signs and each one has a different function, they are: Fat-ha, Dhamma, Kasra, Sukoon and mean respectively ‘an opening’, ‘a closing’, ‘a breaking’ and ‘Static’ (Fadi, 2009). Apparently, even though Arabic language has some vowels, students mostly confuse the English vowels ‘a’, ‘o’, and ‘e’ at the endings of the words.

The previous points represent some of the major problems that the majority of Arab learners face in spelling English. Although many studies have been conducted to investigate these problems, little has been said about the solutions or ways to overcome these difficulties.

Therefore, in order to better understand the extent to which these sources of spelling mistakes can influence Saudi young learners’ writings, a small experiment was carried out in a Saudi school at Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK. Twenty students participated in the experiment; they were randomly selected form different classes and their ages between 5 and 10 years. All the participants lived in the UK for at least one year. They were dictated five words (i.e. sun, school, cat, pig, and horse). It was noticed that the word ‘school’ was written “skol’, by younger participants and “scool’ by the older ones but three participants spelled it right. Also, all the participants except two omitted the final ‘e’ in the word ‘horse’ as well as the letter ‘r’, so, the word ‘horse’ was written as ‘hos’. The word ‘pig’ spelled in four faulty ways such as (big, beg, dig, bi6) or it left out. Regarding the word ‘sun’ it was written in two ways (sun, son), and the word ‘cat’ as (kat). Surprisingly, none of the participants spelled all the words correctly and none spelled the word ‘pig’ perfectly. Yet, two skilled participants spelled four correct words. All participants have problems in
recognising the letter ‘P’ which does not exist in Arabic; they substituted it with ‘b’ or ‘d’.
In addition, the hidden consonant ‘h’ in ‘school’ was not recognized by the majority of the
participants. According to this brief analysis and based on my experience as a learner and
teacher of English, it can be said that most Saudi students seem to be poor in phonology
knowledge in addition to their lack of the orthographic awareness.

Suggestions to improve the spelling skill for Arab learners

Learners need to understand a variety of strategies in order to internalize them and use
them in producing correct spelling. Many young learners consider their teachers the
predominant persons who have all the knowledge and ability. Therefore, teachers hold the
main responsibility and they need to be trained enough to teach the English spelling rules
and conventions quite successfully.

Topping (1995) recommends the Ten Steps for Cued Spelling technique. This technique
is based on the idea that the learner chooses a word and the teacher checks the correct
spelling. Then, the teacher reads the chosen word aloud and the student reads it afterward.
The student, after that, chooses cues and says cues with the teacher loudly. The student
alone says cues and the teacher writes it. After that, both of them repeat the previous step
and the student says cues aloud, writes the word and reads it as a final step. The teacher’s
role in this technique, according to Topping (1995), is to encourage and praise the students
to produce the correct word; yet, to stop them if there is a mistake.

Topping (1995) suggests another technique which is the mnemonic strategy, a memory
aid that helps people remember things. Some ways are to remember the logical rules of
spelling e.g. ‘i’ before ‘e’ except after ‘c’, visualize the words by making pictures in mind,
fronts and backs as English contains many words that has the same start and finish.
Additionally, shrink and grow technique helps remembering short difficult bit, e.g. the
word ‘ghost’, can be remembered by the sentence ‘ghosts hate orange, sausages, tea’
(Topping, 1995, p. 169). However, this technique may make the job even harder, so it
should be used just with the most difficult words.

Further suggestions have been proposed for teachers to help them improve their
learners’ spellings. Kourke (1985, p. 3) mentions that teachers can pinpoint and alleviate
their learners’ spelling problems by “…focussing on particular graphemes or patterns that
cause problems”. He stresses the necessity of drawing the learners’ attentions to the most
plausible source of misspellings and providing them with examples for the most common
misspelled words. Jones (1998), also, posits a number of suggestions and guidelines to help
learners improve their spelling abilities. She claims that practicing is a powerful tool that
helps to spell correctly; yet, not to practice more than three or four new words at a time.
Then, reviewing and using the practiced words by saying them into short phrases or
recording them on a tape.

Conclusion

Learning spelling is a complex process that has been considered an appendage stage in the
writing development. Spelling is a crucial area of language which has further implications
on learners and their level of knowledge. However, it has been widely admitted that
spelling causes serious difficulties for all learners including native speakers. This problem exaggerates with Arab learners of English especially the younger ones.

Therefore, this paper has aimed to illustrate this important aspect. It briefly described why spelling matters and provided some approaches to spelling. Then, some problems that often influence most Arab learners’ writing and that cause most of their spelling errors were provided. It was presented that many spelling errors stem from a lack of phonological and orthographic knowledge. Therefore, a number of suggestions have been stated to improve learners’ spelling. The main responsibility is placed on the teachers; they need to be aware of the importance of spelling in developing the learners’ writings. So, they have to adopt different strategies and techniques in order to examine the most effective one. In addition, students have to focus on this aspect of language and try to develop their spelling skills by practicing and revising the acquired words; they, also, need to know the different systems of the two languages in order to cope with their difficulties.

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About the Author:
Dr. Alenazi is an assistant professor at the Department of English and Translation, College of Languages and Translation, King Saud University in Saudi Arabia. His main research interests include applied linguistics, EFL, sociolinguistics, world Englishes, and the use of technology in learning English. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9260-4511

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English Language Syllabuses: Definition, Types, Design, and Selection

Sabah Salman Sabbah
Community College of Qatar
Doha, State of Qatar

Abstract

This article aims at probing the different types of syllabi used to teach English to English native and non-native speakers. The researcher used a chronological approach in describing each syllabus type in accordance to its emergence in epistemology of the syllabus design and pedagogical trends in teaching English in the world. Theories of language and learning, characteristics of each syllabus, and pros and cons of the discussed syllabi were highlighted throughout the article. Emphasis was also given to shed light on the interrelationship between syllabi types and pedagogical approaches and techniques. The process of syllabi design was also discussed with examples. The researcher endeavored to cite texts from proponents of authors and scholars who discussed each syllabus. The strategy used in presenting the information in this article was to list main titles and write explanatories to describe the syllabus. Primary and secondary resources were referred to for more ideas. Thus, some resources dated back to the 1985-2017. This was done on purpose to highlight authentic resources of the pioneer linguists and scholars of each type of syllabi.

Keywords: situational, functional, notional, communicative, content, task-based syllabi, syllabi design

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Introduction

Syllabus models have passed through different revolutionary changes. Each syllabus gives way to another. As a result of the constant changes and innovations in paradigms of language teaching methodology, there emerged several types of syllabuses, such as the structural syllabus, the notional-functional syllabus, the lexical syllabus, the topic-based syllabus, the task-based syllabus, the communicative syllabus …etc. Each of these syllabuses has viewed language as focusing on certain aspects of language materials designed in certain quality and quantity to serve the main premises of the paradigm it represents.

Definition of ‘a syllabus’

There are many definitions of the term “syllabus’ in literature. Educationalists differentiate between two terms, namely “syllabus” and “curriculum”. The curriculum is “all the relevant decision-making processes of all the participants” the syllabus is its result (Johnson, 1989, p. 33). According to Brown (1995, p.7) “A syllabus provides a focus for what should be studied, along with a rationale for how that content should be selected and ordered.” Similarly, Richards (2001) defines syllabus as “A specification of the content of a course of instruction [which] lists what will be taught and tested” (p.2). Robertson (as cited in Yalden, 1987) states that:

Curriculum includes the goals, objectives, content, processes, resources, and means of evaluation of all the learning experiences planned for pupils both in and out of the school and community through classroom instruction and related programs. (P.18)

Robertson defines syllabus as “A statement of the plan for any part of the curriculum, excluding the element of curriculum evaluation itself.” (As cited in Yalden 1987, p.18). Robertson concludes that “Syllabuses should be viewed in the context of an ongoing curriculum development process.” (Yalden 1987, p.18). A syllabus has been compared to a blueprint. It is a plan which the teacher converts into a reality of classroom interaction. Richard and Platt (1992) state that syllabus refers to the principles of choosing and orchestrating the textbook content. They explain that by identifying the type of syllabus used, it is possible to understand the focus and contents of a course and whether the course will be structural, situational, notional…. etc.

On the other hand, Pienemann (1985, p.23) sees the syllabus as “the selection and grading of linguistic teaching objectives”, while for Breen (1984, p.47) it “is a plan of what is to be achieved through our teaching and our students’ learning”.

On close examination, however, both these definitions seem flawed–Pienemann’s emphasis on linguistic objectives missing the possible non-linguistic functions of a syllabus and Breen’s attention to achievement seeming to overlook the indeterminate relationship between what is taught and what is learnt. Candlin (1984) defines syllabuses as:

Syllabuses are concerned with the specification and planning of what is to be learned, frequently set down in some written form as prescriptions for action by teachers and learners. They have, traditionally, the mark of authority. They are concerned with the
achievement of ends, often, though not always, associated with the pursuance of particular means. (p 30)

Types of Syllabi

Syllabus design is thought to be based essentially on a decision about the 'units' of classroom activity, and the sequence in which they are to be performed (Robinson, 1998). Syllabi can be divided into two different types: Product-Oriented Syllabi and Process Oriented Syllabi. (Long & Crookes, 1992; Long & Robinson, 1998). Product oriented syllabi focus on what learners will know as a result of instruction and they typically list a selection of graded items to be 'learnt' by the learners. However, the focus in Process-Oriented Syllabi is on the pedagogic processes of how outcomes of teaching and learning can be achieved. Brown (1995) lists seven basic syllabus types: “structural, situational, topical, functional, notional, skills-based and task-based and these can be linked to specific teaching approaches and methods.” (p.7)

Product-Oriented Syllabi

Structural Syllabi (Ellis 1993, p.199)

Structural syllabi are one of the most common types of syllabi and still today we can see the contents pages of many course books set out according to grammatical items. The grammatical syllabus has been defined as one which consists of a list of grammatical items selected and graded in terms of simplicity and complexity (Nunan, 1988). The structures are generally presented one by one, usually, but not always, in contrasting pairs, for example, simple present versus simple past or singular nouns versus plural nouns (Long & Crookes, 1992). In his work Notional Syllabuses, Wilkins (1976) as cited in Baleghizadeh (2012) defines this kind of approach to syllabus design as synthetic.

A synthetic language teaching strategy is one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step-by-step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of the parts until the whole structure of the language has been built up. (p.2)

The above definition provided by Wilkins suggests that the grammatical syllabus presents structures, which are graded according to grammatical complexity, one by one and are supposedly internalized by learners before moving on to the next item. The Structural Syllabus (sometimes it is called the traditional syllabus) is based on a theory of language which assumes that the grammatical or structural aspects of language forms are the most basic or useful items in learning languages. This syllabus can be said to embrace a theory of learning which holds that functional ability arises from structural knowledge or ability. Structural syllabus is based on the assumption that language rules are learned in a linear fashion and learners should demonstrate complete mastery of one rule before moving on to the next (Nunan, 2001). Nunan (1899) states “In the process-oriented syllabuses, however, the focus shifts from the ‘outcomes of instruction, i.e., the knowledge and skills to be gained by the learner, to the processes through which knowledge and skills might be gained” (p.40). The procedural and task-based syllabuses are considered as examples of process-oriented syllabuses.
Objectives of the Structural Syllabus

According to that syllabus, grammatical concepts such as nouns, imperatives, plural, gerund are simply better defined than functional ones and also easily measured. For example, to make right or wrong decisions about the structural aspects of learners’ language is easy in a grammar test. Ellis (1993, 2003) maintains that formal grammar instruction works by developing explicit knowledge of grammatical features. According to Ellis, explicit knowledge gained through grammar instruction helps learners in three ways. First, it helps them monitor their utterances before and after they are produced. Secondly, it helps learners notice certain features in the input. Thirdly, Ellis (2003) points out “If learners know about a particular feature they are better equipped to detect the difference between what they themselves are saying and how the feature is used in the input they are exposed to.” p.149. Similarly, Cullen (2008) states that “without any grammar, the learner is forced to rely exclusively on lexis and the other prosodic and non-verbal features, to communicate his/her intended meaning.” (p.221). Cullen calls this as a “liberating force of grammar.” (p. 222). Following is an example set by this article author on how grammar will help listeners to understand the difference in meaning between the following sentences:

1. John is studying medicine.
2. Omar studied medicine.
3. Sami has been studying medicine for five years.
4. Jane will study medicine.

The tenses used in previously-mentioned sentences helps us to know that Sami is the one who started to study medicine and is still studying it now, whereas Omar finished studying medicine and Jane is still planning to study medicine.

Two terms, grading and sequencing, are related to structural Nunan (1988) pinpoints that “it could be argued that any proposal failing to offer criteria for grading and sequencing can hardly claim to be a syllabus at all.” (p. 47) Nunan adds that often the items in each list of grammar and lexicon are arranged in order showing which are to be taught in the first course, which in the second and so on. Nunan (1988) also states that staging and sequencing are carried out according to criteria of:

1. Simplicity (simple structures are taught first)
2. Regularity (generalizable and productive structures are taught first)
3. Frequency (most common structures are taught first)
4. Contrastive difficulty (structures not found in the L1 are emphasized) and
5. Social and pedagogical utility. (p. 49)

Shortcomings of the structural syllabus: The structural syllabus has many shortcomings:

1. Meaning of words are taught separately from context. They are taught in a list of isolated lexicon.
2. As grammar is taught in rules, there is no teaching of the way in which grammar is used in an utterance to express a social context.
3. Teaching grammar is overemphasized through drilling exercises.
4. Structural syllabus may make students feel bored or demotivated.

**Situational Syllabus**

Both Situational Syllabus and Notional Syllabus are types of semantic syllabus. Linguistic underpinning of this syllabus is that language is always used *in context*, never in isolation. (Yalden, 1983, p.35). Ur (2000) defines a situational syllabus as “A syllabus in which the contents are organized according to situations in which certain language is likely to be employed.” (p.178)

According to Yalden (1987)

> The situational model will comprise units indicating specific situations, such as 'At the Post Office', 'Buying an Airline Ticket', or 'The Job Interview'. The topical or thematic syllabus is similar, but generally employs the procedure of grouping modules or lessons around a topic, something like barnacles clinging to the hull. (p. 35)

According to (Johnson, 2002) there are three types of situational syllabus differentiated by their informational content and linguistic content.

1. **Limbo:** Specific setting of the situation is of little or no importance. What is important is the particular language focus involved.
2. **Concrete:** Situations are enacted to specific settings and the language associated with it.
3. **Mythical:** Situations depend on a fictional cast of characters in a fictional place. (Pp.179-180).

The most familiar way of presenting a situation is as a dialogue, usually at the beginning of a lesson and the topics, settings, participants in situations can vary infinitely. Well-prepared situations can show how native speakers act and what they talk about and are concerned about. In situational language teaching, structures are always taught within sentences, and vocabulary is chosen according to how well it enables sentences patterns to be taught. Frisby (as cited in Holliday, 1994) states:

> Our early course will consist of a list of sentence patterns, statement patterns, question patterns, and request or command patterns, will include as many structural words as possible, and sufficient content words to provide us with material upon which to base our language practice. (p.54).

One of the shortcomings of the situational syllabus is that the different situations created in Situational Syllabi determine the language structures to be learnt. Yalden, (1987) summarizes this limitation of situational syllabus. He states that

> While situational syllabuses represent a step toward greater emphasis on the semantic component of syllabus design, there is still something missing in their organization, in that the situation in which we find ourselves does not in and of itself necessarily determine all of what we want or need to say (p.38).
Lexical Syllabus

Design of Lexical Syllabus. (Willis, 1990) and (Nunan, 1988)

The cornerstone of this type of syllabus is vocabulary. Lexical syllabuses build up vocabulary areas based on a detailed analysis of high frequency vocabulary and phrases of a selected corpus of language used in language communication. Thus, the syllabus usually contains lists of the most frequent words, their meanings, word collocations and patterns where the words can be used. Grammar, in lexical syllabuses is connected to the different patterns of words, expressions of notions and functions. But the organizing principle is lexical, and as such it can account for a far higher proportion of text and offer a more thorough coverage of the language of the target discourse situation than other syllabus types. Another benefit of a lexical syllabus is that it is clear, unambiguous in the sense that everybody can recognize what a word its phrases and patterns are. However, Lexical syllabus may contain one full page explanation of a word, its word families, its patterns, and its phrases and collocations. Most of the 700 most frequent words (which would seem a reasonable target for a 120-hour course) have at least 3 different meanings, making corpus of 2100 items. Nunan (1988) states that the length of the lexical syllabus textbook might sometimes be 350 pages.

The Notional Syllabus

One of the pioneers in writing about notional syllabus was Wilkins. Thus, most of the information of notional syllabus is based on his book “The Notional Syllabus Revisited” (1981). Notions are meaning elements that may be expressed through nouns, pronouns, verbs, prepositions, conjunctions, adjectives or adverbs. Notions are general concepts such as, “time, space, cause and effect.” Finocchiaro & Brumfit, 1983 (cited in Brown, 2000, p.91).

The Notional Syllabus was developed in direct response to the failings in both grammatical and situational syllabuses. The syllabus is organized in terms of content rather than the form of the language. The Notional Syllabus has as its focus the semantic content of the target language. Students must learn to express different types of meanings. Underpinning this syllabus is the idea that language is cyclic, rather than linear. Therefore, there was really no ordered approach to the grammar. It also recognized that a variety of forms are used to express the same meaning. Wilkins (1981) pinpoints that notional syllabus helps learners to use language communicatively, leading to better learners’ competence.

Functional / Notional Syllabus

In the very late of the 70s and 80s, there was an attack on the structural syllabuses (Yalden 1983, p. 28). As a result of the challenges that the structural syllabuses include, there emerged a new type of syllabuses, namely the functional-notional syllabuses on the one hand and English for Specific Purposes movement on the other. Wilkins (1981) simply redefines the language content of the structural syllabuses, and introduces the following items to them:

a. The notions or concepts the learners need to talk about (what meanings people wanted to convey (notions).
b. The functional purposes for which language is used, “what people wanted to do with the language (functions).
c. The situations in which language would be used.
d. The roles the learners might possibly play. (p.17).

It is undeniable, as most researchers indicated, that the most significant proponent of such a syllabus was Wilkins who attempted a comprehensive explanation and endorsement of the notional-functional syllabus. Cited in Richards (2001), Wilkins states that:

A notional-functional syllabus should comprise three categories of meaning: semantico-grammatical meaning (including time and quantity), modal meaning (including an indication of the certainty and attitude of the speaker) and communicative function (including requests, complaints, and compliments, among a vast array of others). The major emphasis of the Functional-Notional Approach is on the communicative purpose(s) of a speech act. This redefined lexicon-structural syllabus is what Wilkins refers to as the "notional–functional syllabus. (p.37)

The functional view emphasizes the semantic and communicative aspects rather than the grammatical characteristics of language. Hedge (2000) highlights how the communicative revolution in the 1970s urged educators to go beyond structural analyses of language and started to define what “communicative ability” in a language means. (P.246). According to communicative approach, language is used as vehicle for the expression of functional meaning (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Functional/ notional syllabus includes the topics, notions and concepts the learner needs to communicate. It is primarily based on an analysis of learners' social and/or vocational communicative needs.

**Design of Notional Functional Syllabus**

A notional-functional syllabus is based on the premise that communication is a meaningful behavior in a social and cultural context that requires creative language use rather than synthetic sentence building. Grammatical structures are taught not as an end in themselves but as a means of carrying out communicative functions.

A typical unit might be Giving Advice. The content of the unit would include: I think you should. Why don't you . . . If I were you, I would . . . You'd better . . . Another example is provided in Yalden 1983, p.40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Sentence forms</th>
<th>Realization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordering</td>
<td>imperative</td>
<td>Please, finish that letter, Miss Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>conditional</td>
<td>Perhaps it would be best if you finish that letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>infinitive</td>
<td>We do expect you to finish that letter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You must finish that letter, I’m afraid.

You should have no difficulty in finishing that letter.

Example on a typical unit of Notional-Functional unit (Yalden 1983 p.40)

Other examples of functions include: asking for directions, telling stories about the past, talking about rules, and requesting information evaluating, persuading, arguing, informing, agreeing, questioning, requesting, and expressing emotions. The syllabus also deals with semantic-grammatical notions such as time, quantity, space, location, motion, and agent. As the syllabus relates forms to functions, it is normal to see a few structures used to perform many functions in a Notional/Functional textbook. There are also many formulaic utterances generally used to perform some specific function such as “No, thank you!” for polite refusal.

Finocchiaro & Brumfit (1983) list the following characteristics of notional functional approaches:

1. A functional view of language focusing on doing something through language;
2. A semantic base, as opposed to a grammatical or a situational base;
3. A learner-centered view of language learning;
4. A basis in the analysis of learner needs for using language that is reflected in goals, content selection and sequencing, methodology, and evaluation;
5. Learner-centered goals, objectives, and content organization reflecting authentic language behavior and offering a spiraling development of content;
6. Learning activities involving authentic language use; and
7. Testing focused on ability to use language to react to and operate on the environment. (p. 18-19)

**Topic-Based Syllabus**

Based on what (Bourke, 2006); and (Richards & Rodgers, 1994) state, this syllabus is the third type of Semantic Syllabi besides the Lexical and Situational Syllabi. Often, this syllabus is built around certain topics and themes, such as: Travel, drugs, religious Persuasion, advertising, modern architecture, sport as so on.

The topic-based textbook units start with a variety of exercise that stimulates student interest in the theme and develop the student’s ability to manipulate the language appropriate to the situation and use the language of the theme. The rest of the thematic unit include activities that elaborate the theme, such as key ideas, including cultural, cross-cultural and linguistic, listening comprehension; speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary.

**Process-oriented syllabuses**

More recently, applied linguists and syllabus designers have become more concerned with the...
pedagogic processes of how teachers achieve their outcomes. These syllabuses include the following.

**Task based Syllabus**

"Task" being "anything the learners are given to do (or choose to do) in the language classroom to further the process of language learning." (Williams & Burden, 1997: p.167). Some of task-based syllabus proponents is Willis 1996.

Skehan (1996a) defines a task as an “activity in which: i) meaning is primary; ii) there is some sort of relationship to the real world; iii) task completion has some priority; and IV). The assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome. (p.38). According to Prabhu (1992), a task is an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome, from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate the process.” (p.2). Long (1985) defines a task as “A piece of work undertaken for oneself or others, freely or for some reward. In other words, by 'task' is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between.” (p.89)

The task-based content consists of activities that the learners have to do for non-instructional purposes outside of the classrooms. The content of the situations is provided by the students themselves. Tasks require the student to apply cognitive processes or higher-order thinking skills, such as evaluation, selection, combination, modification, or supplementation to a combination of new and old information. The primary theory of learning underlying task-based instruction is Krashen’s acquisition theory. Tasks can be selected according to the students’ cognitive and linguistic readiness for particular tasks, and their need for the particular discourse. Shorter and simpler tasks should be undertaken before longer and more complex.

Nunan (1988) suggests that a syllabus might specify two types of tasks: real-world tasks or communication tasks such as using the telephone and Pedagogical tasks like information-gap task.

Students will have a chance to come across particular structures in different contexts. Since there will be constant and natural recycling of certain structures in each unit by means of tasks, listening tasks and language study sections. Students will be provided with an opportunity to overcome their difficulties and develop their inter-language. In the communication task, the most important skill for the learner is to be able to convey a message by means of the target language, not concentrating on the language itself.

**Three Types of Task-Based Syllabus**


1. **Procedural Syllabus**

The Procedural syllabus is associated with Prabhu, Ramani and others at the Regional Institute of English in Bangalore, India. Prabhu was dissatisfied with the Structural-Oral-Situational method
which had been developed and was generally in use in the 1960s, so he evolved an approach based on the principle that the learning of form is best carried out when attention is given to meaning.

Task-based syllabus is designed with the concept that, while the conscious mind is working out some of the meaning-content, some subconscious part of the mind perceives, abstracts or acquires (or recreates, as a cognitive structure) some of the linguistic structuring embodied in those entities, as a step in the development of an internal system of rules. To Prabhu (1992) “Teaching through communication, rather than for communication is an important aspect of this syllabus.” (p.19). Prabhu (1992) also argues

A task in a procedural syllabus should be intellectually challenging enough to maintain students' interest, for that is what will sustain learners' efforts at task completion, focus them on meaning and, as part of that process, engage them in confronting the task's linguistic demands” (p.24).

Opinion-gap, and later, information-gap and reasoning-gap activities were favored in the Task-based-syllabus.

2. Process Syllabus

A Process Syllabus addresses the overall question: 'Who does what with whom, on what subject-matter, with what resources, when, how, and for what learning purpose(s)?' (Breen, 1987, p. 56).

3. Skill-Based Syllabus

The term “skill” in language teaching is used as a specific way of using language that combines structural and functional ability but exists independently of specific settings or situations. Examples are reading skills such as skimming and scanning; writing skills such as writing specific topic sentences or writing memos, reports; speaking skills of giving instructions, personal information, asking for emergency help over the telephone; and listening skills such as getting specific information, listening to foreign radio for news, talking orders in a restaurant and so on.

The Content-Based Syllabus

Krashen’s theory, cited in Brown (1995,2000), focuses on the fact that for learning languages to happen, sufficient opportunity to engage in meaningful use of that language should be provided. The content-based syllabus is the teaching of content or information with little effort to teach the language itself separately from the content being taught. When teaching techniques are adjusted so that students comprehended the content material as it is presented in the new language, both content and language acquisition do occur. Cited in Jalilzadeh and Tahmasebi (2014) Stoller (2002) states:

In a content-based approach, the activities of the language class are specific to the subject matter being taught, and are geared to stimulate students to think and learn through the use.
of the target language. Such an approach lends itself quite naturally to the integrated teaching of the four traditional language skills. For example, it employs authentic reading materials which require students not only to understand information but to interpret and evaluate it as well. It provides a forum in which students can respond orally to reading and lecture materials. It recognizes that academic writing follows from listening and reading, and thus requires students to synthesize facts and ideas from multiple sources as preparation for writing. In this approach, students are exposed to study skills and learn a variety of language skills which prepare them for the range of academic tasks they will encounter (p. 224).

The theory of language assumed by content-based syllabus embraces the full range of communicative competence, including a structural component (grammatical competence), sociolinguistic and discourse competence (especially in school settings) and strategic competence. Content-based syllabus does not clearly distinguish form and function in teaching language but makes the language available in the contents of its functions and meanings (Brown, 2000).

Extensive reading of literature or other content material in a target language can also be seen as a type of content based learning. There are many techniques used to present content-based syllabus. Jalilzadeh and Tahmasebi (2014, 226-228) listed the following techniques: cooperative learning, task-based learning, experiential learning, whole-language approach, graphic organizers, project work, and web quests.

The Relational Syllabus

As reported in White (1988), relational syllabus is based on items like "notional relations such as cause-effect; or discourse relations, such as question-reply; or clause structure...."(p. 78). It could perhaps be included under the headings of Semantic – Functional-Textual. A relational syllabus, like grammatical and notional/functional syllabuses, would seem only to account for certain parts of the total linguistic system.

The Communicative Syllabus

It is a syllabus which specifies the semantic-grammatical categories (e.g., frequency, motion, and location) and the categories of communicative function that learners need to express (Brown, 1995, p. 95). The council of Europe expanded and developed this into a syllabus that included descriptions of the objectives of foreign language courses for European adults, the situations in which they might typically need to use a foreign language (e.g. travel, business), the topics they might need to talk about (e.g. personal identification, education, shopping), the functions they needed language for (e.g. describing something, requesting information, expressing agreement and disagreement), the notions made use of in communication (e.g. time, frequency, duration), as well as the vocabulary and grammar needed. In short, it is centered around communication (i.e. meaning, convention, appropriacy, interaction and structure).

Syllabuses and teaching methods
Cited in Richards & Rodgers (2001 pp 10-87)
The Audio-lingual Method
Audiolingualism is a linguistic, or structure-based approach to language teaching. The starting point is a linguistic syllabus, which contains the key items of phonology, morphology, and syntax of the language arranged according to their order of presentation. In addition, a lexical syllabus of basic vocabulary items is usually specified in advance. Thus, the structural and the lexical syllabi can be taught using the ALM.

Total Physical Response (Asher’s Method)
The type of syllabus Asher used can be inferred from an analysis of the exercise types employed in TPR classes. This analysis reveals the use of a sentence-based syllabus, with grammatical and lexical criteria being primary in selecting teaching items. Unlike methods that operate from a grammar-based or structural view of the core elements of language, Total Physical Response requires initial attention to meaning rather than to the form of items. Grammar is thus taught inductively.

Multi-intelligence -based language teaching
Also, there is no syllabus as such, wither prescribed or recommended, in respect to MI-based language teaching. According to Wijaya (2013), multiple intelligences theory offers teachers an opportunity to develop innovative teaching techniques. However, there is a basic developmental sequence that has been proposed as a type of “syllabus” design.

The sequence consists of four stages: awaken the Intelligence, amplify the intelligence, and teach with/for the Intelligence and transfer of the Intelligence. The Educational Broadcasting Corporation, 2004 as cited in Lunenburg & Lunenburg (2014) listed some activities used in multiple-intelligences based teaching. These include: “Writing a report or essay, composing a song, Group discussion Journal writing, making a video, choreography, communicating with experts, making graphs, putting on a play, designing posters, Constructing timelines, Hands-on experimentation. (p.7)

How to Write a Syllabus?
Bill and Gower (cited in Tomlinson 1998, 116-124) suggested some guidelines of the process of writing syllabuses and materials. In the Pre-Writing Stage, the teaching situation and the intended learner group should be analyzed. Then, Decisions should be made on the type of assessment, resources/ staffing available should. Next, the syllabus designer should have intensive information about the learners’ needs, their age, level, interests, and purpose of their learning English, their weaknesses and their strengths. This information can be obtained by administering placement tests and need analysis, and surveying students’ descriptive analysis.

Another important factor to consider in the initial steps is to state the learning objectives based on the information obtained in the first stage. These can be written in terms of ‘can do' statements, such as the learner can talk about likes and dislikes; the learner can narrate a story in the past tense. Next, the designer starts to create activities taking into consideration the
importance of having balance of skills vs grammar and vocabulary, deciding on the outcomes, and the suitability of topics. The last stage is piloting the new syllabus on one class and making sure that teachers are trained on the new syllabus.

**The Approaches of Syllabus Design and Selection**

Yalden (1983 p. 33) indicated that there are different approaches of designing ESL/EFL Syllabi and that all indicate similar conceptual poles: formal-functional, structural-contextual, grammatical-communicative, linear-spiral, difficulty approach, utility approach, synthetic-analytic, top-down versus bottom up. Difficulty Approaches to the Syllabus - easier things are taught first, more difficult things are taught later. The Linear Syllabus - content is sequenced one item after another. The Spiral Syllabus - the same item is returned to repeatedly and treated in more depth on each occasion. Utility Approaches to the Syllabus - based around what is needed, useful, and urgent for learners e.g. should they learn how to hold a telephone conversation first, or should they concentrate on managing transactions when shopping.

**The Synthetic Approach in Syllabus Design**

Syllabus types can be divided into two superordinate classes, synthetic and analytic. Wilkins (cited in Allwright, 1997) defines synthetically-designed syllabus as “one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that the acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of the parts until the whole structure of the language has been built.” (p.21).

In designing syllabuses based on this approach, the language items to be taught are ordered into a list of grammatical structures and lexical items.

**Analytical Approaches to Syllabus-Design**

Using Wilkins’ (as cited in Allwright, 1997) terminology, this is the approximation of the learners’ own linguistic behavior, the language being presented in an unanalyzed whole.” (p.22). Nunan (1988: p.33) defines the analytic syllabuses as those which present the target language whole chunks at a time, without linguistic interference or control.” They rely on (a) the learners' assumed ability to perceive regularities in the input and to induce rules (or to form new neural networks underlying what looks like rule-governed behavior), and/or (b) the exposure of learners to natural samples of the L2. Procedural, process, and task syllabuses are all examples of the analytic syllabus type.

**Conclusion**

This paper has elucidated different aspects concerning ELF/ESL Syllabi: definitions, types, advantages and shortcomings of each type, stages of syllabus design, an exploration of the relationship between syllabus design and methodology, the various approaches in syllabus design. The writer of the current article believes that no syllabus is better than the other if it serves the purpose it is designed for. The integrated-syllabus, namely using chunks of all syllabi types in our teaching will help students to learn better structures, notions, and functions more communicatively. The writer of the current article also believes that students’ needs-analysis should be conducted before applying any syllabus. It would be essential that no syllabus should be imposed on
individual teachers as the teacher himself can design his syllabus based on the students’ needs and the course requirements.

About the author:
Dr. Sabbah, Sabah holds Ph.D. in English Language Curriculum and Instruction. She published papers in international journals. She published two books in Jordan and Amazon.com. She presented papers in Los Angeles, Dubai, Qatar, Oman, Las Vegas, and Lisbon. She got two Awards of Excellence as a plenary speaker and the best research presenter at GRDS International Conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, May 2018. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1314-3399

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Announcement of Retraction

The editorial board announced this article has been retracted on June 22, 2018

If you have any further question, please contact us at: info@awej.org

Article Title: Effectiveness of Kagan Models in Minimizing Disruptive Behaviors and Academic Achievement among Jordanian Fourth Graders

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Human versus Automated Essay Scoring: A Critical Review

Beata Lewis Sevcikova
Applied Linguistics Department, College of Humanities
Prince Sultan University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
In the last 30 years, numerous scholars have described the possible changes in marking writing assignments. The paper reflects these developments as it charts the paths recently taken in the field, evaluates automated and human essay scoring systems in academic environments and analyzes the implications that both systems offer. In recent years, ways and opportunities for giving feedback have changed as computer programs have been more widely used in assessing students writing. Numerous researchers have studied computerized feedback and its potential. Different problems, such as quality of this type of feedback, validity, and reliability have been analyzed. This critical review examines two major types of academic writing support. The objective of the study based on the literature review is to examine the potential support of human and automated proofreaders for teaching and learning purposes.

Keywords: assessment, rubrics, feedback, writing, automated essay scoring, human raters

Introduction
The movement toward the more frequent use of computers in assessing writing has been coupled with an assumption that computer-based feedback should be more efficient and accurate than traditional methods. Computer-based program innovators aimed to create more authentic assessments of tasks and constructs. All these innovations have been included in computer-based assessment tools. Computerized scoring of essays, particularly relevant to large-scale language testing programs and technological advances lead to improved understanding needed to support learning progress.

Advanced writing skills are an imperative aspect of academic performance. However, students rarely achieve advanced scores on assessments of writing skills. To attain higher levels of writing performance is an achievement "through deliberate practice that trains writers to develop executive control through repeated opportunities to write and through timely and relevant feedback." (Kellogg & Raulerson, 2007, p. 237). Based on their study, automated essay scoring software may offer a way to ease the requirements for marking and assessing writing performance. It also can substantially increase the amount of writing practice that students receive. “Regardless of whether an assessment is scored by human raters or by some automated mechanism, a goal of any assessment is to ensure that the construct is appropriately represented in the final scores or outcomes of the assessment” (Williamson, Mislevy & Bejar, 2006, p. 76).

Different writing tests and assignments are designed to score the written material of students differently and to identify whether the students have the writing skills as per the requirements. Nowadays, two major types of scoring systems are frequently used: Human Essay Scoring and Automated Essay Scoring. Both have advantages and disadvantages (Bridgeman, Trapani & Attali, 2012).

Zhang (2013) states, “Essay scoring has traditionally relied on human raters, who understand both the content and the quality of writing” (p. 1). From this perspective, an essay is evaluated by the evidence that provides the following abilities from a good writer (Bridgeman, Trapani, & Attali, 2012):

- A clear statement of the perspective of the issue to be discussed and the analysis of the relationship between the writer’s perspective and the perspective or perspectives of others.
- Development of an idea or ideas.
- Supporting the developed idea or ideas with reasons and examples.
- Organization of the idea or ideas logically and clearly.
- Communicating the idea or ideas efficiently using standardized written English.

Nevertheless, the increased use of the constructed response items, as well as the increased number of students, has made the important question of relating to the viability of the human scoring alone. According to Zhang (2013), the scoring method where only human effort is involved is lengthy, expensive and requires a lot of logistical effort. Furthermore, this process of scoring usually depends upon the judgment of a less-than-perfect human (Shermis & Burstein, 2003).
Talking about the efficiency in scoring students' written work, using computers to evaluate and assess students' assignments, make the process more effective and less expensive. The objective of the current research is to analyze both scoring systems and their advantages and disadvantages. Additionally, it will review the opinions of the researchers and scholars favoring either option from their perspectives, using logical arguments. Specifically, the current study aims at investigating the usefulness and the validity of automated essay scoring versus human scoring. The debate surrounding this comparison can also be found in academia, media and the public. Researchers are most concerned about the use of automated essays scoring within the standardized tests, as well as within the context of electronic learning environments, primarily used inside and outside of classrooms. Important things for the test developers, educators, and policymakers are to have adequate knowledge relating to the strengths and weaknesses of both scoring methods so that the prevention of misuse can be attained (Attali & Burstein, 2006). From this perspective, the present work contrasts the distinguishing features of the two scoring methods by elucidating their differences and discussing their practical implications for testing and learning purposes.

Writing in the Academic Environment
In contemporary research, authors draw attention to the 'problem' of student writing in higher education. This problem is described from various perspectives such as from the “perspective of 'non-traditional' student-writers as they attempt to involve in academic writing or from the perspective of a cultural-historical tradition of scientific rationality” (Lillis & Turner, 2001, p. 57). Researchers argue that academic writing practices need to reach a complex understanding of what is involved in student writing. Some have expressed concerns that English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is too focused on the needs of L2 (second language) and therefore, fails to make an impact on “mainstream writing instruction” (Wingate & Tribble, 2012, p. 481).

Learning writing skills is a long process. If a writer accomplishes it, he/she becomes expert in the complex cognitive domains. Academic writing at advanced level challenges not only student language skills but also thinking, memory and general knowledge (see Figure 1). In theory, writers can use everything they have learned and remembered. Their cognitive systems for memory can only be used if they can retrieve knowledge from long or short-term memory. It means that writing is closely connected to thinking. Based on the various studies, good writers are often good thinkers and problem solvers. What to write and how to say it is a decision-making process which reflects an individual's knowledge and cognitive skills.

When correcting writing assignments or tests, educators and testers usually focus on audience, purpose, organization and style, while taking into consideration the lexical and grammatical means by which a formal written style is achieved. The writing critiques provided by educators is daunting for many L2 writers. Students learn how to gain awareness of stylistic and generic conventions, and to practice different aspects of academic writing. One dilemma that arises here is that many students with a reasonable English proficiency level require more grammatical and lexical back-up, whereas students who already possess a good command of the written language do not have either time or patience to work systematically (Swales & Feak, 2004).
Regarding the doubts mentioned above, it is apparent L2 writers should be empowered to use language efficiently in real-world conditions and avoid simplistic "recipes" for writing. Educators assume that students develop over time, in response to education, practice, and feedback. Their assignments or tests are analyzed for overall quality, grammatical accuracy and syntactic complexity using different assessment styles. This pedagogical practice helps students to improve at the discourse level, linguistic complexity, and language accuracy. A grading rubric aids this pedagogical practice because it sets a clear set of criteria used for evaluating a specific type of work or performance. It provides detailed guidelines for a marker and helps to improve objectivity. Typically, a grading rubric includes specific criteria, levels of performance such as ‘excellent, poor, fair,’ scores, and clear descriptors of the performance. This tool then serves as a marker for assessing objectively an assignment. Grading rubrics represent effective and efficient tools which can help clarify an educator’s expectations and help students to meet them. Rubrics also encourage students to improve their writing assignments, ensure consistency in grading and serve as proper evidence of student performance.

Even though rubrics make expectations and criteria for writing explicit, promote learning and/or improve instructions and facilitates feedback and self-assessment, there is still a lack of information in the literature describing the actual effectiveness of the rubric as an assessment tool in the hands of the students (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Hafner & Hafner, 2003). According to recent findings, raters' biases have related to gender, language command, and for some raters, mechanical characteristics of students’ writing are more important than the content even when they used a rubric (see Appendix A). Using rubrics may not improve the reliability or validity of assessment if raters are not well trained on how to use them effectively. However, in general, rubrics lead to a more reliable and less biased assessment (Rezaei & Lovorn, 2010).

Human Versus Automated Essay Scoring Systems

Human Scoring

Several large-scale testing programs or summative tests in academia include at least one essay writing task. Human raters typically assess an essay’s quality according to a scoring rubric that states the criteria an essay to meet a specific score level. Zhang (2013) argues that the quality of an essay is gauged by human raters with the help of a scoring rubric identifying the set characteristics (see Table 1). In other words, the human essay scoring system is aligned with a certain score level that is known as merit. A powerful learning aid in writing is feedback given by an instructor. Assessing written texts is probably the most challenging task for an instructor because it requires practice, routine and understanding of marking guidelines (even though assessing an individual's writing is not a routine task at all). It is well accepted that holistic grading is faster than an analytic one. Analytic evaluation focuses on different features of the text, such as mechanics, coherence, and content. Of course, even holistic grading can be extremely time-consuming. In some studies, instructors claim that they do not assign writing a research term paper longer than 5,000 words because it takes too long to mark papers.

Although human essay scoring systems are time-consuming and require much effort, there are certain strengths in these systems. For example, the information given in the text is sent through a
cognitive process and thus has a connection with prior knowledge. Human scoring is also based on the comprehending of the given content which is the reason why human raters can make a judgment on the quality of the text (see Appendix B). Zhang (2013) states, “Trained human raters are able to recognize and appreciate a writer’s creativity and style (e.g., artistic, ironic, rhetorical), as well as evaluate the relevance of an essay’s content to the prompt” (p. 2). Likewise, a human rater can evaluate the critical thinking skill of an examinee, including the factual accuracy of the claims as well as the quality of argumentation presented in the essay.

Despite strengths, there are limitations such as human raters’ specialized training requirements, experience in assessing writing, individual variations in understanding, interpretation and implementation of a rubric. Moreover, raters must be educated in how to understand and apply a scoring rubric which can be costly. All these issues are reflected in rating competencies which are not always consistent and bias-free. It is not always possible to avoid all the problems mentioned as mentioned earlier, especially if many essays are supposed to be assessed. According to Williamson at al. (2010), the process of essay scoring in which human effort is used is also time-consuming and thus if a considerable quantity is required to be scored, it becomes cumbersome. The other notable disadvantage of human essay scoring includes its limitations of consistency and objectivity.

In the light of the reviewed literature, it can be concluded that humans possess the ability to make holistic conclusions under the impact of numerous interacting factors. Understanding weaknesses of human raters can help to minimize disagreements and accept individual perspectives of each marker.

Automated Essay Scoring
Automated essay scoring systems provide fine-tuned and instantaneous feedback that is helpful in practicing and improving writing skills simultaneously. One of the unique strengths of the automated essay scoring system is its efficiency and consistency. Since the automated essay scoring system is based on a computer application, it is not influenced by any external factors such as deadlines, nor is it attached emotionally to any piece of work. According to some researchers, there is no bias, preconceptions or stereotypes in a computer-based application. From this perspective, the automated essay scoring system has the potential to achieve greater objectivity when compared to a human essay scoring system.

Dikli and Bleyle (2014) argue that the increased reliability of the automated essay scoring system has led to increased demand for this type of system. The recent development of automated essay scoring can, therefore, boost the number of writing assignments. Shermis and Burstein (2003) examined various computerized feedback, and scoring methods originated from cognitive psychology and computational linguistics. Based on their research, students need more opportunities to write as they can profit from immediate computer-based feedback. This type of feedback can also motivate them and help to improve their results prior to submitting their assignments for assessment.
Incorporating large numbers of writing assignments challenges instructors. The effort to evaluate writing assignments is inevitable for the educational process to support educational achievements. An essay or open-ended question-based testing encourages students’ critical thinking and a deeper level of knowledge. Thus, grading and feedback on written texts are essential not only as an assessment tool but also as a feedback device supporting students' learning, thinking and writing.

According to Foltz, Laham and Landauer (1999), "essays have been neglected in many computer-based assessment applications since there exist few techniques to score essays directly from a computer" (“Introduction,” para 1). In their study, a statistical analysis of essays scored by computer programs proves the accuracy of the computer-based feedback. The analysis of the text is based on Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA). They prove that LSA can capture semantic similarity of words as well as recognize the coherence of texts on readers' comprehension. Based on numerous statistical analysis and 'text training,' LSA scored as well as average test-takers.

There are several factors involved in evaluating a writing assignment, from mechanical features, such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation, to abstract features, correctness, the fluency, elegance, and comprehensibility. Evaluating all these features is not difficult but evaluating content, argument, comprehensibility, and aesthetic style are more problematic as each influence the other because each depends on the choice of words (Foltz et al., 1999). The first attempts of computational scoring focused primarily on measures of style (Page, 1994) while LSA methods focus on the conceptual content and the knowledge communicated in an essay as LSA was trained on domain-representative texts (such as textbooks, samples of writing, journal articles).

As Foltz et al., (1999) explains, "several techniques have been developed for assessing essays. One technique is to compare essays to ones that have been previously graded. A score for each essay is determined by comparing the essay against all previously graded essays" (“Evaluating the effectiveness of automated scoring,” para 1). This holistic scoring method evaluates the overall similarity of content, actually, it determines how adequately the overall meaning resembles that of previously graded essays. This approach is similar to the holistic scoring approach used by human markers. The research also judges LSA's reliability which is equivalent to human raters’ reliability.

Dikli (2006) points out, “Automated Essay Scoring (AES) is defined as the computer technology that evaluates and scores the written prose. AES systems are mainly used to overcome time, cost, reliability, and generalizability issues in writing assessment” (p. 3). On the other hand, Williamson et al. (2010) argues that human scoring is not the only option today, where technology is available everywhere, to score the constructed-response (CR) items. However, much practical experience and years of research demonstrate many challenges.
comparable feedback for use at school, classroom, state, or district level. The rapid growth of automated essay scoring can be observed on a significant scale and is probably due to the reason that the system has the potential capability to produce the scores quicker and more reliably. Be that as it may, it is considerably costlier (Topol, Olson & Roeber, 2010). On the other hand, Zhang (2013) points out that the noticeable shortcomings to be found in the human essay scoring system can be eliminated by using the automated essay scoring systems available online. The state-of-the-art systems of today involve the construct-relevant combination of quantifiable text features for computer-based scoring to measure the quality of a written essay. Deane, (2013) claims that AES systems exhibit clear similarities with overall performance and can adequately distinguish between students and apply a broader writing construct from those for whom text production constitutes a significant barrier to achievement. Nevertheless, an automated essay scoring system works solely with variables that are to be extracted as well as combined mathematically (Roscoe, Crossley, Snow, Varner & McNamara, 2014).

Zhang (2013) also adds to the discussion by favoring the automated essay scoring system, stating that it has the potential capability to assess the essays across grade levels. The improvement of automated writing scoring tools has made it possible to complement lecturer input with immediate scoring and qualitative feedback to inform students' writing development. Zhang’s (2013) findings added to previous work on the usefulness of such programs and justified the use or non-use of automatically generated scores for classroom-based formative assessment (Li, Link, Ma, Yang & Hegelheimer, 2014).

**Scoring with Professional and Online Automated Scoring Applications**

There are two types of AES systems available for individual as well as classroom applications:

1. Professional Scoring Applications
2. Online Scoring Applications

**Professional Automated Scoring Applications**

These applications were designed directly for classroom implementation. School authorities in different countries use standardized tests for different subjects to evaluate individually and collectively to ensure the quality of language education in various educational settings. One of the most common and most frequently used components is essay writing. In some countries, educators evaluate the essays of their students and determine their scores accordingly, while in other countries, including Canada and United States, educators use two blind raters to evaluate the essays of their students (Burstein, Tetreault & Madnani, 2013). These blind raters involve the scoring process in the standardized tests. However, when both blind raters agree on the gained score, the score is defined as satisfactory. On the other hand, when both blind raters do not agree on the gained score, a third rater is used to help with the final decision (Smolentzov, 2013).

Testing Service (ETS), the most significant educational assessment and testing organization, has been using the professional computer application for the last two decades. ETS research (2017) concentrated on its holistic scoring features. The professional application
developers’ driving concept focused on the same features that human raters focus on. From the beginning, they used the scoring guide for the human raters, and the priority was not to measure essay length. Based on the Burstein and Chodorow (1999) study,

The features currently used by the system are syntactic features, discourse cue words, terms and structures, and topical analysis, specifically, vocabulary usage at the level of the essay (big bag of words) and at the level of the argument. An argument, in this case, generally refers to the different discussion points made by the writer. (p. 69)

The criteria used by ETS for the evaluation of the writing skills is a web-based service using ETS providing an instant score reporting, as well as diagnostic feedback. This instructor-led, web-based application is used to help students plan, write, and (if required) revise their writing. The main purpose of the application is to give the students instant diagnostic feedback as well as the opportunity to practice the writing skills at their own pace. Students use this feedback to evaluate their writing skills and thus can identify the areas they need to improve (Ramineni & Williamson, 2013). A significant advantage of using this application includes the ability for the students to develop written skills independently, as they receive automated and constructive feedback.

According to ETS Research (2017), the specific features of the application include:
- mechanics such as capitalization
- usage of prepositions
- grammatical errors such as subject-verb agreement
- discourse structure, the thesis statement or the main points
- style, for example, word repetition
- sentence variety
- vocabulary usage, the relative complexity of vocabulary
- discourse quality
- source use

Murray and Orii (2012) point out that standardized test should not be evaluated by using ‘manual effort’ to score the written work of students. This is because the latest technology has advanced machine learning methods that can not only save time and effort but also reduce the chances of errors. Their paper also compares the two versions of the specialized computer applications. It focuses on the specific features such as mechanics, discourse structure, the thesis statement or the main points, style, namely word repetition, sentence variety, vocabulary usage, the relative complexity of vocabulary, discourse consistency quality, and source use.

One of the new features included in the new version of the application used by ETS is the qualitative feedback. According to Burstein and Wolska (2003), the output focuses on the feedback errors such as grammatical, sentence structure and usage, and other mechanics. This feedback also includes the comments related to the writing styles. Some of the new features of this application include standardized checking of the length of an essay submitted and altering a definition to take account of non-monotonic relationship along with the human score. There are some other distinguishing features that make this version generate standardized scores (Ramineni & Williamson, 2013).
Burstein, Marcu, and Knight (2003) believe the application as mentioned above automatically identifies the sentences used in an essay that correspond to essay-discourse categories. The application uses natural language processing such as the background of the topic, statement of the thesis, presentation of the main idea, and the conclusion methods. The overall score is calculated considering the individual items including the score of the thesis, the main points, the supporting ideas, and the elements used in the conclusion of the essay. Some of the other features are lexical complexity, usage of prompt-specific vocabulary, and essay length.

Attali and Burstein (2006) conclude, the application “…uses a small and fixed set of features that are also meaningfully related to human rubrics for scoring essays” (p. 19). Their study shows that the advantages of the new features integrated into the latest version can be utilized to generate the automated essay scores and thus, are considered as standardized across the different stimuli without losing the performance. This happens because the features of the new version have higher agreement rates than that of the human scores.

Moreover, Quinlan, Higgins, and Wolff (2009) hold the opinion which states that the scoring done by the described application contains a broad set of measures having a proven ability to predict human holistic scores. Since this new version has its ‘features,’ large sets of scores can be aggregated into a small set of readily recognizable categories. They also conclude that the prediction of human scores can be considered as one type of score validity, whereas the construct validity can be taken separately. For example, if the essay length is to be considered, it would not be wrong to state that predictors may have lesser or greater construct relevance in modeling human holistic scores (Weigle, 2013).

In the light of the secondary data, it can be concluded that the new version of the Automated Essay Scoring application used by ETS contains more human-based holistic scores as compared to the previous version. The primary purpose of the tool is to give students instant diagnostic feedback as well as the opportunity to practice the writing skills at their own pace. Studies by many researchers conclude that the advantages of new features integrated into the new version of this professional Automated Essay Scoring application, can be utilized to generate automated essay scores and thus be considered as standardized across the different stimuli.

**Online Automated Scoring Applications**

Applications which were designed to be accessed by the public have two versions, free or paid. Both types help people write and communicate more efficiently. They do not require specific training to use. These are useful tools as they quickly assist in checking for various mistakes. The most advanced ones (paid applications) have been complementing teaching and learning environments since their introduction to the market. It is a fact that proofreading of one’s writing can be a very demanding task. Most students who write for academic success understand that proofreading before submitting the task is essential. With proofreading, every help is welcome. The autocorrect and spell-check tools most word processors have been useful tools, but they are basic. Some paid applications can fix numerous types of errors, and they provide plenty of other features that may help students improve their grammar, vocabulary style and sentence structure.
problems such as word order. They also provide detailed information about each error which can serve as a study aid:

- The style checkers detect wordiness and redundancies.
- The vocabulary enhancement tool offers synonyms and suggestions for word use.
- These applications also check for contextual spelling, grammar and punctuation inconsistencies, comma splices, the subject-verb disagreement, and they suggest proper corrections.
- Some also offer adjustments of the genre-specific writing styles, a plagiarism checker, and a vocabulary enhancement tool.
- They identify possible solutions and explanations for mistakes.

**Impact on Learning**

Smolentzov (2013) discusses, “Essay scores may be used for very different purposes. In some situations, they are used to provide feedback for writing training in the classroom. In other situations, they are used as one criterion for passing/failing a course or admission to higher education” (p.1). The current research emphases how rubrics can assist learners to learn, think and meet the writing requirements. Little research on AES feedback on learning has been undertaken. In general, rubrics have been designed to support and evaluate student learning. Rubrics are written in language that students can understand, they define and describe the quality of work, they point out common weaknesses in students' work and indicate how such weaknesses can be avoided. Rubrics make assessing student work faster and more efficient. “At their very best, rubrics are also teaching tools that support student learning and the development of sophisticated thinking skills. When used correctly, they serve the purposes of learning as well as of evaluation and accountability” (Andrade, 2000, p. 13).

Present days studies analyze the use of computer-assisted grading rubrics compared to other grading methods based on the efficiency and effectiveness of different grading processes for tests and writing assignments. Studies recommend using this system as it is much faster than traditional hand-grading systems. Moreover, researchers also advise using computer-assisted grading applications as they “did not negatively affect student attitudes concerning the helpfulness of their feedback, their satisfaction with the speed with which they received their feedback, or their satisfaction with the method by which they received feedback” (Anglin, Anglin, Schumann, & Kaliski, 2008, p. 51). Finally, many researchers proposed implementing AES as complementary methods of proofreading, learning and scoring to improve: (a) writing classroom practices, (b) student learning autonomy – using accessible applications on a regular basis can help students to improve bad writing habits and (c) avoid plagiarism (learning how to paraphrase, summarize and cite).

**Conclusion**

The review of the presented study reveals that it is important how we introduce technology into the educational environment. Utilizing technology can ease the burden human markers are under, however, student-instructor interaction can never be entirely replaced.
Offering immediate analytical feedback is nearly impossible for human raters, as it is difficult in large classes. As mentioned in the reviewed literature, with the aid of automated essay scoring systems, it is quite easy to evaluate essays through intelligent computer programs. On the other hand, human raters are most often trained to give their feedback focusing on a specific grade range that is associated with a specific set of tasks and a specific rubric.

To summarize, automated essay scoring systems (either professional or online applications), when developed or used carefully, can contribute to the efficient delivery of essay scores. It can be an important aid in the improvement of educational writing skills. As this critical review indicates, there are some logistical obstacles to incorporating technology. If we think about technology-based teaching writing or assessment in the educational environment, schools should have access to reliable and affordable essay scoring systems. Moreover, well-trained educators who understand how to use such programs is an imperative requirement. Technology-based assessment has great potential, however some of the above challenges may explain why it is not yet widely used. Alternatively, some easy accessible online applications can help to take the teaching of writing into the 21st century. Can they replace a human proofreader? The short answer is no. They still overlook some mistakes; they still do not always provide the context or feedback that a human proofreader offers.

Incorporating more technology into assessments has the potential to make teaching, learning and testing a less cumbersome task for educators and free them for more face to face interaction with the student. Online applications, instructor feedback and human markers all have something to contribute to the enhanced efficiency of language instruction.

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About the Author:
Dr. Beata Lewis Sevcikova is an experienced educator who has participated in numerous in-house and international workshops and symposiums. In her research, she focuses on teachers’ experiences in the use of new technology in the classroom. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4347-0489

References
Human versus Automated Essay Scoring: A Critical Review

Lewis Sevcikova


Appendix A. Raters’ Bias Samples

Please correct these two pieces of writing:

1. It is without doubt that the advancement in technology has caused social media to be a common socialize and marketing tool for much people. Unlike before, where business people had to physically meet with their customers in order to make a sale; the social media has changed this process to be an easy and efficient one. Authenticity of doing business while both party being mile apart has essentially helped in improving the global economy.

   [Corrected text is good but needs sufficient organization of ideas and structure.]

2. One can say that it is their parents' duty to guide their child on a suitable way, but my parents completely sacrifice with everything for me. My parents' behaviors have influenced on me as they show me how to think clearly and give reasonable decisions about all my affairs, especially when I am student young.

   [Originality of thought was good, but the student writes using her Arabic grammar rules for this English text!]
Human versus Automated Essay Scoring: A Critical Review

Lewis Sevcikova

1. It is without doubt that the advancement in technology has caused social media to be a common socializing and marketing tool for many people. Unlike before where business people had to physically meet with their customers in order to make a sale, the social media has changed this process to be an easy and efficient one. Authenticity of doing business while both party being mile apart has essentially helped in improving the global economy.

   Spelling, punctuation, and grammatical mistakes detected. Poor language that needs more proof-reading, editing, and polishing lack of appropriate transitions, and so the writing is incoherent.

2. One can say that it is their parents’ duty to guide their child on a suitable way, but my parents completely sacrifice with everything for me. My parents' behaviors have influenced on me as they show me how to think clearly and give reasonable decisions about all my affairs especially when I am student young.

   Vague ideas, major grammatical mistakes that hinder the proper delivery of content. Poor language. Lack of suitable transitions. Disconnection of successive ideas.
Appendix B. Judgments on the Quality of the Text Samples

Please correct these two pieces of writing:

1. It is without doubt that the advancement in technology has caused social media to be a common socialize and marketing tool for much people. Unlike before where business people had to physically meet with their customers in order to make a sale, the social media has changed this process to be an easy and efficient one. Authenticity of doing business while both party being mile apart has essentially helped in improving the global economy.

   Interesting ideas but we will start.
   
   Your use of subordinate clauses is an indicator of developed proficiency, however, I would advise you to rewire the grammatical rules regarding the use of the comparative and the use of plural forms. More readers will certainly develop your lexicon and will help you choose the more appropriate terms.

2. One can say that it is their parents' duty to guide their child on a suitable way, but my parents completely sacrifice with everything for me. My parents' behaviors have influenced on me as they show me how to think clearly and give reasonable decisions about all my affairs especially when I am student young.

   An interesting [idea/opinion] personal opinion of how your parents behavior sacrifice for you but to make it even better, I would advise you to rewire the grammatical rules of concord (1), prepositional (2 & 3), and qualifying noun (4). Make sure you also review your spelling for type mistakes before you make your final submission. All in all, your writing is well developed you are using subordinate clauses which indicates that you are developing but all you need is just some work on your prepositions, concord and qualification.
Table 1. *Strengths and weaknesses in human and automated scoring of essays*

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<th><strong>Strengths</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weaknesses</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Human Raters</strong></td>
<td><strong>Can:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cannot maintain consistency while evaluating assignments.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Comprehend the meaning of the text being graded.</td>
<td>- Cannot completely avoid certain subjectivity in the evaluation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Evaluate critical thinking.</td>
<td>- Different standards of strictness.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Assess creativity.</td>
<td>- After marking numerous assignments, scale shrinkage errors appear.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Judge the content relevance (in depth).</td>
<td>- Stereotyping errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Evaluate logic and quality of argumentation.</td>
<td>- Require highly specialized training in marking and calibrating marks.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Assess factual correctness of content and claims.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Judge audience awareness.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Automated</strong></td>
<td><strong>Can:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cannot maintain consistency while evaluating assignments.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scoring Applications</strong></td>
<td>- Detect a surface-level content.</td>
<td>- Cannot completely avoid certain subjectivity in the evaluation.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Correct grammar and mechanics.</td>
<td>- Different standards of strictness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Evaluate organization and style (some).</td>
<td>- After marking numerous assignments, scale shrinkage errors appear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Detect plagiarism.</td>
<td>- Stereotyping errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Evaluate vocabulary and suggest an enhancement.</td>
<td>- Require highly specialized training in marking and calibrating marks.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Assess objectively (not influenced by emotions).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Be consistent in grading.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Provide the same scoring over time.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Offer explanations of errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Online Automated</strong></td>
<td><strong>Can:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Do not have background knowledge.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scoring Applications</strong></td>
<td>- Evaluate based on genre (academic, business, technical, etc.).</td>
<td>- Cannot assess creativity, quality of argumentations, logic, quality of ideas and content development.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Can be costly.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Costly maintenance and upgrades.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Features of Automated Essay Scoring</td>
<td>Limitations of Automated Essay Scoring</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Correct grammar and mechanics.</td>
<td>- Some free applications do not detect all mistakes in grammar and mechanics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evaluate organization and style (some).</td>
<td>- Cannot assess creativity, quality of argumentations, logic, quality of ideas and content development.</td>
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<td>- Detect plagiarism (some).</td>
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<td>- Evaluate vocabulary and suggest an enhancement.</td>
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<td>- Assess objectively (not influenced by emotions).</td>
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<td>- Be consistent in grading.</td>
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<td>- Provide the same scoring over time.</td>
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<td>- Offer explanations of errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Some are free.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Do not require funds for maintenance and upgrades.</td>
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*Figure 1. Stages of Cognitive Development in Writing Skills*  
(Adopted from Kellogg, 2006)
Does Curriculum Help Students to Develop Their English Competence? 
A Case in Indonesia

Dwi Poedjiastutie  
Department of English and Education, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

Fida Akhyar  
Postgraduates Program, Department of English and Education  
University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

Deviy Hidayati  
Postgraduates Program, Department of English and Education,  
University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

Fajriyah Nurul Gasmi  
Postgraduates Program, Department of English and Education,  
University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

Abstract
To sustain its future competitive employment both at national and international level, Indonesia Government needs to invest more in its human resources. Therefore, education is the critical aspect to prepare highly educated and well-trained human resources for an innovation driven global competitiveness. In education, when curriculum fails to provide sufficient skills and competence for learners, human resources will not likely to move up to higher development level. This article aims at exploring the issues and challenges encountered by Indonesia government in improving the most crucial aspect needed for global competitiveness that is English communication competence. English communication level of Indonesian learners is considered low and satisfactory. Since Indonesian students obtain English from schools and classroom teaching, curriculum objectives should help them achieving the target of learning. However, there are three major issues found in Indonesia curriculum: top-down approach, the absence of Needs Analysis (NA) studies, and no curriculum evaluation. In nutshell, those three factors are suspected to contribute the underdeveloped English communication competences of Indonesian learners. In view of this, Indonesian can learn from other countries that have succeeded in reforming and developing English curriculum while taking into account the uniqueness of its own context.

Keywords: Curriculum development, English competence, challenges, Indonesian learners, Global competition

Introduction

To sustain its future competitive employment both at national and international level, Indonesia Government needs to invest more in its human resources. Therefore, education is the critical aspect to prepare highly educated and well-trained human resources for an innovation driven global competitiveness. More specifically, one of the indicator of qualified human resources for nowadays global competition is the citizens’ possession of high level of language of networking that is English.

The fact that English in Indonesia ranked below other Asian countries had been reported by English Proficiency Index (EPI) in 2017. Eighty countries were surveyed, Indonesia ranked 39 falling behind Singapore, Malaysia, and Vietnam. The survey used the English components such as grammar, reading comprehension, and vocabulary as the basis of its index assessment system. Based on this rank, Indonesia was considered having low English proficiency level with other Asian countries such as Vietnam and Thailand. This study clearly shows that the development of English teaching in Indonesia is still low and unsatisfactory.

EPI is the world’s largest English proficiency ranking for the global scope. Indonesia should consider this data of EPI as a feedback for the English teaching since it is now we are moving to the integration of ASEAN Economic Competition (AEC), the emergence of English as a global language has made English a socially desirable language in Indonesia and elsewhere in the world. In AEC, the quality of human resources has critical roles and more specifically the institutions that prepare future human capital for the country (Nurcahyo, Harahap, & Gharnaditya, 2015). Consequently, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has constituted a major part of the curriculum in private and public institutions in Indonesia over several decades since high level of English proficiency become a fundamental requirement to participate in this worldwide trade, economy, industry, and education collaboration (Choi & Lee, 2008). In other words, developing human resources’ English proficiency level will bring potential benefits for the countries to participate in wider opportunities and global workforce. Based on the points above, examining the development of teaching English in Indonesia is deemed necessary since it will provide clear picture of English for global demands. (Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017; Zainal & Ching, 2016; Fitzpatrick & O’Dowd, 2014; Cohen & Weaver, 2005; Coleman, 1988).

Indonesian Government has conducted several efforts to develop English competence level of its teachers and learners. One of the efforts was curriculum revision and change. However, the revision occurs in relatively short period of time. Tobias & Wales (2014) explain that the changes which include the transformation of content-based approach to competency-based approach; teacher-centered to students-centered approach; and centralized to decentralized system require the educational actors to adjust the adopted approaches in relatively short period of time as well. (Ilma & Pratama, 2015; Exley, 2004).

In education, when curriculum fails to provide sufficient skills and competence for learners, human resources will not likely to move up to higher development level. As a matter of fact, there are three major issues found in developing curriculum in Indonesia. They are top-down approach, the absence of Needs Analysis (NA) studies, and no curriculum evaluation. The following section will discuss in more detail.
Top-down process to curriculum development


One of critical issues in Indonesian national curriculum is formulated using the top-down approach. Top-down process implicates the political nuance and the problem with top-down system is giving less or no room for the school to think critically and creatively in its implementation (Madya, 2007; Choi & Lee, 2008). As the result, school as the executor of curriculum is unable to develop their creative programs relevant to students’ needs and their ability level. In addition, the diverse characteristics of students in Indonesia make centralized curriculum fail to address students’ specific needs. Okoth (2016) suggests that curriculum should allow teachers or any educational practitioners to manage their lesson suitable for their learners’ needs.

The curriculum reforms which are solely based on the single perspective of policy-makers will unlikely match with stakeholders as the participant in the major of educational reform. The roles of stakeholders are vital to support and to provide feedback towards the global demand. Taylor (2005) argues that stakeholders’ participations are supposed to take place throughout the entire curriculum development process, including planning, delivering, and evaluating. Dharma (2008) adds that the vital role of stakeholders in curriculum development is also to ensure relevance of curriculum towards the need of life, social life, business, and industrial life. By incorporating both sides: the government and stakeholders in developing curriculum, the challenges and discrepancies in educational reform can be respectively minimized (Thanosawan, 2017). Therefore, it is deemed necessary that the changes of English curriculum have to redirect society and language users to adapt with the future demands that is to be competitive in global economy and industry where the national development will be our goals.

Kirubahar, Santhi, & Subashini, (2010) claim that high English communication competence has strong relationship with the employability. Employability means one’s potency to be accepted in job markets, maintain them and (or) move to highest position. In many cases, especially in the context of Indonesia nowadays, this will depend on the ability to speak English fluently and to effectively communicate ideas as well as having competences in reading and writing. However, the curriculums often mismatch with the organization skills (Lie, 2007). As the result, even though learners have been learning English for six years, their communication competence neither reached the expected level required for overseas collaboration nor competitive work force industries.

The absence of Needs Analysis (NA) study as the essential part of curriculum development

Another crucial issue in Indonesian curriculum is the absence of Need Analysis (NA) studies. Brown (1995) defines that NA is systematic collection of both subjective and objective information. A Need Analysis is very crucial step in the development of curriculum for it can identify learners’ target situation. course (Poedjiastutie & Oliver, 2017, Chaudron, Doughty, Kim, Kong, Lee, J., Lee, Y., & Long, Rivers, & Urano, 2005)
A number of NA studies have considered students’ and teacher’s perspectives essential in developing the language curriculum (e.g., Tsao, 2011; Gorsev & Volkan, 2010; Watanabe, 2006). For instance, Watanabe (2006) found that integrating both students’ and teachers’ needs and perspectives in a language curriculum are of vital relevance. Subsequently, it leads to more autonomous policy-making process rather than endorsing learning objectives voiced by those who are distant from the classrooms. He further states that the absence of NA in curriculum development may lead to potential disconnection between learning opportunities and the essential communication outcomes. This highlights the importance of NA as the first and vital step in reconciling such disparities views among stakeholders involved in education. It is crystal clear that a thorough and comprehensive NA should be conducted before designing English curriculum and setting of the competencies. The findings of this need analysis should enable schools to make a more realistic alignment of curricular objectives and the student needs (Lie, 2007).

Despite its advantage, the use of NA in Indonesian curriculum development, is not considered vital. Lauder (2008) states Indonesian’s education is lack of discovery on how much people need to learn English, the importance and the function of English for their life. The absence of NA will result in no clear direction of learners’ learning and communication goals.

The no clear direction of communication goals is exacerbated with insufficiency time allocation for English teaching. The newest curriculum (Curriculum 2013) has provided four hours per-week for English from junior up to senior high school level. However, this time allotment remains low compared to other Asian countries. Hong Kong and The Philippines allocate 10 hours per-week for English despite the fact that English is as a second language in both countries (Choi &Lee, 2008).

Further, Panggabean (2015) affirms that Indonesian learners take very long time to acquire English since they do not make English conversation as habit and have a little English exposure. This is in stark contrast with the principle of curriculum development presented in Gallo and Renandya (2001) who argue that curriculum must help students to establish the habit by providing appropriate teaching strategy for the learners and that must be supported by the availability of time. Furthermore, in the classroom setting, Panggabean (2015) also found that the teacher rarely gave students’ tasks in order to produce the language. Even if they do so, the time allocation for speaking practice is relatively short for the big size of speaking class.

Similar issue is reported by Marcellino (2008). He said that the large class might result in less exposure of English. It is due to inadequacy time for teacher to focus on everyone progress in acquiring English. Time allotment should provide learning opportunities for students understanding other elements of language as pronunciation, idioms and other English expressions (Rachmawati & Madkur, 2014).

No evaluation prior to curriculum change

Another essential issue is curriculum evaluation. Curriculum evaluation should be conducted to assure the quality, the effectiveness and the value of a program, product, project, process, objective of curriculum (Worthen & Sanders, 1998). Taylor (2005) conceptualizes evaluation as a vital process to determine the extent to which the communication and learning
outcomes has matched curriculum objectives. In Indonesia, the present curriculum is also meant
to answer the criticism of the previous English Curricula which allegedly fail to help Indonesian
students to readily compete with those from other nations (Lengkanawati, 2005). As a matter of
fact, only a few numbers of studies were conducted as an evaluation of the previous curriculum
(Darsih, 2014).

One of the studies is reported by Ilma and Pratama (2015) mentioning several issues
regarding the evaluation of curriculum 2013. First, curriculum 2013 is seen to be too early to
implement without prior pilot project. Saryono (2013) gives the example that during the
administration of the newest curriculum, especially in East Java, there were only few teachers who
understand the curriculum very well. The transformation from the previous curriculum Kurikulum
Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) or School-Based Curriculum to Curriculum 2013 (K-13) has
brought some significant impact of changes. The new curriculum 2013 use scientific approach,
authentic methodology and assessment (Mulyati, Nurkamto, Suwandi, Slamet, & Andayani 2017)
which are not introduced and employed in the previous ones. The government is expected to
provide adequate time to introduce the concept of new curriculum and explain the result of
evaluation from the previous one as its basis of curriculum changing. This way will help teachers
to understand why the changes needed and to know how to adequately implement every single
element suggested inside the new curriculum (K-13). Orafi (2013) states that curriculum
implementation must be described in a concrete way, especially how to put the concept into an
actual practice. According to Punia (2008), Indonesian curriculum is difficult to be implemented
due to lack of teachers’ perspective in the curriculum evaluation. Darsih (2014) states that new
curriculum requires a thorough assessment for every integrated theme and teachers need a lot of
time to prepare for writing lesson plans, creating teaching aids, or making students’ narrative
assessment.

Ornstein and Hunkins (2013) explain some reasons why teachers mostly resist changes of
curriculum. First, they are lack of ownership, lack of benefit, lack of administrative and training
supports and sudden wholesale change. Especially for English subject, Darsih (2014) claims
teachers have failed to implement K-13 due to lack of authentic assessment, delivery skill and time
allotment for the English practice. Due to this, many teachers remain using the approach and
teaching strategy that they have already known in previous curriculum rather than uncover the
objectives and benefits of the current curriculum. The lack of training may potentially contribute
failures of implementing the new one Consequently, the socialization of this newborn curriculum
needs to be intensive due to the complexity of its classroom application. The complexity can be
viewed in understanding the principles and practices. Lengkanawati (2005) asserts that there are
two major things that teachers must understand from the recent curriculum: the content and the
process. The content covers the holistic teaching principles, skills, and knowledge in classroom
discourse. The process refers to the ways such as how content should be delivered, how classroom
should be managed, how and how many times learners should be assessed, are all the assessment
aspects given by the same teacher or different teachers, are other teachers in other subject involved.
The level of teachers’ understanding both the content and the process greatly contribute to the
teacher’s readiness to face the current model of national curriculum.
The changes have affected not only teachers but also learners in their learning process. Ornstein and Hunkins (2013) state sudden changes in the curriculum might cause the decline in students’ achievement. Students may not easily adjust to the learning system in the new curriculum.

For example, the current transformation from KTSP (School-Based Curriculum) to K-13 or Curriculum 2013 has brought some differences in learning activity; from exploration, elaboration, and confirmation focus and to observing, questioning, processing, presenting, summarizing, and creating focus (Prihantoro, 2015). School-based curriculum (KTSP)- the previous curriculum authorized schools to create learning objectives and goals based on the region or geographical conditions and needs. Whereas, curriculum 13 (K-13) focuses on a certain acquisition that should be obtained by learners regardless their diverse conditions and needs. Consequently, students will not instantly be able to change their learning style and need intensive trainings to adjust the principles of new curriculum.

Intensive trainings for both teachers, educators, and students, affect budget allocation respectively. Generally, in attempt to improve the access of quality of educational service, teachers’ quality, and better learners’ outcomes, governments had set twenty percent from their national budget for all provinces areas across Indonesia. Provincial and regional governments are also required to allocate the same portion of the budget (Sulisworo, Nasir, & Maryani, 2017; Korompot, 2012). This shows that the government deliberately takes serious measurement in distributing the budget for educational purposes, and the actualizations can be seen in providing the program of certification, professional training, and additional incentives for teacher. Among those programs, professional teaching training has the significant movement to improve teachers’ communication competences in its professional development training (Rowden, 2011).

Dasuki (2009) states four aspects are covered to improve teachers’ professionalism: personal competence, social competence, pedagogical competence, and professional competence. By covering those aspects, teachers are expected to be able to present better teaching capacity, and especially for English teacher, it is expected to raise students’ willingness to communicate as well as the improvement of learners’ proficiency level. The government eagerness will be pointless without clear and strong supports from teachers as the curriculum executors at classroom level. Hasan and Bahrain (2014) in his study found that many teachers have lack of commitment to participate in professional development activities. For instance, English teachers who need to develop their performance in teaching speaking, requires practical training not just having discussion or workshop. They need more challenging training conducted overseas. The overseas training will open wider opportunities for teachers to obtain wealth knowledge of language teaching and possibly shift from learning to know a language to learning to use a language. The shift of the new teaching paradigm will direct them to best performance as well as maintain classroom interaction in which students will actively engage to communication. This is in line with Margana (2013) who said that Indonesian government now facilitate bilingual teachers to be actively involved in training programs as sending and facilitating them to undertake higher degree overseas.
Last but not least, the government disparity distribution attention towards the national budget in remote and rural area. The inequity of budget allocation in rural area caused many teachers unable to participate in some professional development trainings. Qoyyimah (2015) also found in her study that even the opportunities of joining some development training have been provided by government, teachers in remote and rural area have less opportunities compared to those who teach in big cities. Teachers in big cities pose better performance in term of updating their lesson plan, skill, or even using technology for teaching as the outcome of the training. Pasassun (2003) states that the improvement of teacher’s English proficiency will not be able to upgrade to higher level with inequality of budget distribution. Even though remote areas teachers occupy 40% of national population, they are a hundred per cents of Indonesia future development.

Implication for English teaching in Indonesia

Indonesia is very unique and diverse. The differences cover almost in any aspect of life. Daily communication among Indonesian people of the same ethnic and linguistic background is conducted in their mother tongue and there are almost 700 of ethnic languages exist in Indonesia. However, social interaction between people of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds mainly occurs in Bahasa Indonesia. Throughout Indonesia the need for English learning has increased over time; however, the impetus for developing English language proficiency differs across various regions of the nation. For instance, in remote and rural areas, the need for English might be viewed as less immediate. On the other hand, it is likely to be stronger in the big cities such as Jakarta, Denpasar, and several other provincial capitals where international networks are required and where, due to tourism and the employment of English-speaking expatriates, direct contacts with native-English speakers is more common. Government should be open to several alternatives of its curriculum implementations to across regions in Indonesia depending on several factors mentioned above and the readiness in terms of, region needs, human and budget resources. For example, some schools should be allowed to adopt KTSP (School-Based) curriculum and some others may be allowed to adopt K-13 when they are ready.

Since the result of English proficiency level of students may be different between schools using School Based curriculum (KTSP) and schools employing K-13, government should have screening institutions which have the authority to recommend school leavers based on their English proficiencies level to study at particular university. The government can assess university ranking in its particular regional and provincial areas on schools’ academic research and reputation. For example, the low English proficient student is strongly recommended to study at university match to its ranking. This is to minimize the teaching problems occur when those students moving to higher or tertiary level. At English Department at tertiary level, for example, up to now there are still a lot of complaint and students’ communication development are considered unsatisfactory. English speaking teachers are struggle a lot since many upper secondary graduates from remote areas with very limited English proficiency enrolled at the universities located in Metropolitan cities. The significant differences in English proficiency level between students from remote areas where English communication is not their priority needs and students from cities where English becomes their priority create more chaotic classroom teaching situation. Due to the high disparity of students’ English proficiency level between high school graduates from remote areas and big cities put teachers additional burden in improving students’ communication competences when they are at universities.
As it has been mentioned earlier that the NA procedure not only can be used by the Indonesian Government as the empirical data for designing any language program and its curriculum but also can be used to develop appropriate Professional Development (PD) useful for developing teachers’ capacity. Many studies suggest that teachers need professional development training dealing managing large size of class, managing mixed ability groups, designing learner-centred classes, and understanding new teaching approaches and paradigms.

Professional development training also should not only from Ministry of Education officials but also from people and expertise in a wide range of backgrounds such as English teachers, curriculum designers, English material developers, translators and interpreters, early childhood teachers, foreign language course managers, motivators, psychologists, school counsellors, home schooling teachers, university professors and classroom researchers. This would give teachers a complete picture of stakeholders’ current needs, issues, and trends of English learning. This approach will possibly connect classrooms with real life employment and reduce mismatch.

Where English is a foreign language, it can be very difficult for language learners to find out opportunity to use for communication because they do not use for daily interactions. Yet wider exposure to English would give students greater opportunities of using it. Teachers can invite committed English users of particular groups or individual such as native speakers or expatriates who were living local to meet students in schools. They can share their experiences and description of their cultures in English. Such activities could be conducted either regularly or as an incidental program. In addition, teachers can also invite some English school teachers, English courses instructors, parents who are able to speak English to functions held for students at schools. The more opportunities teachers can create for students to hear English spoken and use their own English skills, the more confident students will become.

Conclusion

In short, curriculum is small aspect in the big picture of education system of one country. However, if the curriculum is not designed with no careful identification of factors and the development ignores complexity of educational issues, the effect will not accordingly support the development and implementation of language policies at both macro and micro levels, with far-reaching consequences. the government has done several efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. One of the efforts is the shift of curriculum. However, changes do not always guarantee that it will meet the expectation due to many factors such as programs, processes, and people. This should be used to inform the Ministry of Education about the complexity and the difficulties associated with the implementation of the current centralized and top-down curriculum. Therefore, to design more locally-sensitive syllabi and to plan more relevant in-service and pre-service teacher training programs to support effective implementation are considered crucial measurement. Moreover, the use of NA by educators in a range of contexts to ensure the relevance of curriculum content and design.

So far, the implementation of Indonesian curriculum proves that it always faces a lot of resistances and fails to fulfil the standard communication competence. The absence of need analysis lead to discrepancy between teacher’s and learner’s need; a mismatch between the reality
Does Curriculum Help to Develop Students’ English Proficiency and Curriculum Expectations. In addition, the lack of evaluation on the previous curriculum inhibits teachers to implement the new one.

About the Authors:
Dwi Poedjiastutie is an English Lecturer at Department of English and Education, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia. She holds a PhD degree in education from Curtin University, Australia. She has more than 20 years working experience in EFL teaching. Her research interest includes curriculum development in EFL context, English for Specific Purpose material development.

Fida Akhyar Postgraduates Program, English Education at Muhammadiyah University of Malang Indonesia.

Deviy Hidayati, Postgraduates Program, English Education at Muhammadiyah University of Malang Indonesia.

Fajriyah Nurul Gasmi, Postgraduates Program. English Education at Muhammadiyah University of Malang Indonesia.

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Use of First Language in the Classroom: Non-native EFL Teachers’ Beliefs in Teaching English to Adult Learners in Bilingual Context

Iftikhar Ahmad
Department of Humanities & Administrative Sciences, Unaizah Community College, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Noor Raha Mohd Radzuan
Centre for Modern Languages & Human Sciences, University Malaysia Pahang, 26600 Pekan, Pahang, Malaysia

Muhammad Sabboor Hussain
Preparatory Year Programme (PYP), Main Campus, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
This study aims to investigate the perspectives of non-native English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers across mother tongue and gender, and their male and female adult students, regarding the use of Arabic in the EFL classrooms at the university level in Saudi Arabia. The study specifically seeks to investigate the perspectives of non-native Arab and non-Arab EFL teachers as they, working in the native Arab setting, often resort to Arabic (Al-Nofaie, 2010; Machaal, 2012). However, there are glaring research gaps about non-native EFL teachers’ and adult learners’ beliefs on the use of first language (L1) in the classroom. For this purpose, the study used quantitative research design, and administered two questionnaires, one for the teachers and the other for the students. Students’ questionnaire complemented that of the teachers. Forty teachers and sixty students were selected based on stratified random sampling. The findings of the study revealed that all camps of teachers, Arab, non-Arab, male, female, and students were in favour of judicious bilingual approach. The study finds statistically significant difference between the beliefs of Arab and non-Arab EFL teachers about the use of L1. The findings suggest that Arab EFL teachers’ use of Arabic is extensive, while non-Arab EFL teachers’ use of Arabic is well-timed. The study suggested practical implications for the improvement of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Saudi Arabia by recommending planned, occasional and judicious use of L1 while teaching EFL adult learners.

Keywords: adult learners, bilingual approach, L1 in classroom, non-native EFL teachers

Introduction

English Language Teaching (ELT) in Saudi Arabia has a unique history which presents an ever growing ELT scenario. ELT has been introduced in the Saudi Arabian educational system since 1928 (Al-Seghayer, 2011) to furnish the students with one of the living languages, in addition to their first language (L1), to acquire knowledge and serve humanity (Al-Hajailan, 2003). Ever since, English has been growing at a fast pace in the educational institutions (Machaal, 2012), and has now become a compulsory subject at school level (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013) and the medium of instruction in most of the universities in Saudi Arabia (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015). This growth in English language teaching generated demands for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers, resulting in the appointment of a large number of teachers from several countries by the Saudi ministry of education (Javid, 2014).

EFL teachers can be classified according to their teaching approaches and limitations. In the Saudi Arabian educational system at the university level, there are three kinds of EFL teachers: native English speaking EFL teachers, native Arab EFL teachers and EFL teachers from India and Pakistan (Khan, 2011). According to Khan, native English speaking EFL teachers cannot use bilingual strategies to teach English, the native Arab EFL teachers are ineffective because of their traditional Grammar Translation Method (GTM), and the third group of teachers is not aware of the realities of the Saudi Arabian context.

The non-native EFL teachers are the special focus of the present study. This category of EFL teachers have been working in the Saudi Arabian context since English was inducted into its educational system. Non-native EFL teachers working in the native Arab setting often resort to Arabic (Al-Nofaie, 2010; Machaal, 2012) which needs a research probe to investigate the frequency and effectiveness of L1-use in the classroom. However, little attention has been paid to the issue of using L1 in the context of the Saudi EFL classroom (Al-Nofaie, 2010), especially at the upper secondary school level (Aljohani, 2011), and thus, few studies have been conducted regarding the beliefs of teachers in the use of Arabic in EFL classrooms (Assalahi, 2013). Hence, there is not enough research on the role of Arabic in EFL classes within native Arab setting (Althobaiti, 2017) and no study is available to inform the magnitude of L1-use by the non-native EFL teachers.

There are glaring research gaps about EFL teachers’ and adult learners’ beliefs on the use of L1 in the classroom. Certain studies have attempted to investigate the beliefs of teachers and students about the use of Arabic (e.g., Al-Nofaie, 2010; Al-Shammari, 2011; Machaal, 2012); however, no comprehensive study is available regarding the use of Arabic in the Saudi Arabian EFL context, involving both teachers and students across gender and mother tongue. The perspectives of Arab and non-Arab EFL teachers and their students about the use of L1 (Arabic) in the Saudi Arabian context are yet to be investigated. Thus, this study attempts to fill this gap
and holistically investigate the phenomenon. It attempts to investigate the perspectives of native Arab and non-Arab EFL teachers across gender and their mother tongue about the use of Arabic in EFL classrooms at the university level. Moreover, the study also takes into consideration students’ perspective about their teachers’ use of Arabic in EFL classrooms. Investigating Arab and non-Arab EFL teachers’ and their students’ perspectives about the use of Arabic in EFL teaching and learning will enhance our understanding of the use of Arabic in the Saudi EFL context, and hence improve the standard of ELT in the Saudi Arabian setting.

Thus, the study attempts to investigate the following research questions:

1. What role do the Arab and non-Arab EFL teachers see in making use of L1 (Arabic) in EFL classrooms at the university level in Saudi Arabia?
2. What role do the male and female EFL teachers see in making use of L1 (Arabic) in EFL classrooms at the university level in Saudi Arabia?
3. What is the perspective of Saudi Arabian EFL adult learners about their teachers’ use of Arabic in EFL classrooms?

Literature Review

One of the major debates that have dominated the field of second language acquisition (SLA) is the use of the first language in teaching and learning the target language (de la Campa & Nassaji, 2009; Machaal, 2012; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2003; Tang, 2002). This controversial issue has resulted in several opposing and supporting arguments (Kavari, 2014). Macaro (2009) has categorized these various points of view about L1-use into virtual position, maximal position and the optimal position. Macaro maintains that virtual position focuses on the exclusive use of the target language and sees no pedagogical value in the use of the first language; while maximal position contends that target language can be learned only through the use of the target language, although few structured references to L1 are permitted. On the contrary, the optimal position supports judicious use of L1.

There have been many arguments against L1-use in the EFL classroom. The basic argument against L1-use rests on the assumption that using L1 may prevent learners from learning the new language (Kavari, 2014). Opponents of L1-use advocate virtual use of the target language by arguing that classroom is the only place for most learners where they are exposed to second language (L2) (Littlewood & Yu, 2011). The proponents of monolingual approach argue that L2-learning process is similar to L1-learning process and thus, attribute success in the target language to L2 input alone (de la Campa & Nassaji, 2009). Therefore, if teachers use L1, they deprive learners of the opportunity to receive input in the target language (Krashen, 1981).
However, the findings of a great amount of research conducted to date examining the effects of using L1 highlight the facilitative effect of L1 in learning L2 (Mohebbi, 2012). These studies report that the advantages of using L1 can outweigh its disadvantages, if it is applied systematically and judiciously (Al-Nofaie, 2010). Moreover, supporters of bilingual approach have forwarded cognitive and psychological reasons of L1-use. Their views rest on the assumption that the use of L1 removes psychological barriers between the brains of the learners and the language input provided to them, and thus, helps learners get rid of anxiety in learning L2 (Kavari, 2014).

The review of the literature reveals strong arguments in favour of L1-use and suggests the usefulness of the use of the first language as a cognitive and mediating tool in teaching and learning the target language (Machaal, 2012). For example, Swain and Lapkin (2000) acknowledge the use of L1 as an important cognitive tool in carrying out tasks that are cognitively and linguistically complex. Similarly, Eldridge (1996) reports that there is no empirical evidence to support the notion that restricting mother tongue use would necessarily improve learning efficiency. He argues that code-switching in the target language classroom is highly purposeful which is related to pedagogical goals.

The use of L1 in teaching and learning the target language is gaining importance (Swain & Lapkin, 2000). Teachers and learners consider using L1 as a productive mediating tool which facilitates and negotiates the teaching and learning process (Storch & Aldosari, 2010). Researchers (e.g., Auerbach, 1993; McCann, 2005; Cameron, 2001) have listed several purposeful uses of L1 in the target language classroom, including maintaining discipline in the classroom, giving feedback, explaining errors, presenting grammatical rules, to name a few.

Research has also investigated students’ reasons for switching to L1 in the target language classroom. For example, in Kharma and Hajjaj’s (1989) study, majority of the Arab students were in favour of using L1, especially when they could not express their ideas in L2. A similar position is taken by Cameron (2001), who mentions that learners prefer using L1 when seeking help from peers and teachers. Similarly, in a study by Swain and Lapkin (2000), learners’ purposes for using L1 were for interpersonal interaction and focused attention on grammar and vocabulary. Moreover, Nation (2003) also investigated learners’ intention of using L1, and found that learners tended to apply L1 either because they were not proficient, or were unmotivated to communicate in the target language.

**Methodology**

**Participants**

The participants in this study were 40 native Arab and non-Arab EFL teachers. The teachers were symmetrically distributed into male and female teachers, thus, there were 10 native Arab male EFL teachers, 10 native Arab female EFL teachers, 10 non-Arab male EFL teachers and 10 non-Arab
female EFL teachers. The non-Arab EFL teachers, who participated in this study, could communicate with their students in Arabic. Moreover, 60 of their students also participated in the study, out of the 60 students, 30 were male and 30 were female students. The students’ sample was taken from under graduate students. Teachers’ and students’ sample was based on stratified random sampling.

<table>
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<th>Respondents</th>
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<td>Female Arab</td>
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<td>Male non-Arab</td>
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</table>

**Research Instruments and Procedures**

This study attempted to approach the research questions using quantitative paradigm. Thus, the study used two five-point Likert scale questionnaires, one for the teachers and the other for the students. The questionnaires were developed on the basis of existing recent literature about the use of L1 in teaching and learning the target language. The questionnaire items were designed focusing on teaching the target language grammar which is a major teachable content for EFL teachers and learners. Both questionnaires consisted of two sections. Section A consisted of demographic part and section B consisted of ten statements about the use of L1. Students’ questionnaire served to complement teachers’ questionnaire to triangulate the study mainly with a view to capturing a comprehensive picture. Both questionnaires were administered simultaneously.

The questionnaires focused on the ineffectiveness of English-only approach and the usefulness of restricted and purposeful use of L1 (Arabic) in English grammar classes in an EFL context. Since Arabic is the language used by the Saudi students for all of their affairs in all areas of life, they tend to find everything easy and relaxing that is presented to them in Arabic. Since grammar teaching/learning is a technical and difficult job, students may be relaxed and supported by the restricted use of Arabic during the class. The focus of the present study is on using Arabic for the following purposes:

- Contrastive analysis of the structures of English and Arabic to make students focus on the points of differences and be conscious about these differences while using the English grammar.
- Relaxing students so that they may be able to concentrate better while learning English grammar.
• Saving time by translating necessary explanations of difficult English grammatical items in Arabic.
• Maintaining discipline in class so that the students may focus on learning grammar.
• Giving instructions so that the students may understand better what they are supposed to do while solving an exercise.
• Developing better and closer relationship between the teacher and the students so that the students build the much-desired trust on their teachers and discuss their confusions about specific problems they face in learning English grammar.
• Getting feedback from students; this may not only give confidence to the students to participate in the feedback discussions/sessions but also make them more confident to talk about their problem areas in English grammar.
• Making language input more comprehensible for the students so that they understand every bit of knowledge and information conveyed to them in the class.

The validity of the questionnaires was checked by a group of three PhDs in applied linguistics. The internal consistency reliability of the teacher questionnaire was found to be .741, while that of students’ questionnaire .751. Teachers’ and students’ data were entered into SPSS ver. 21. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to answer the research questions. In order to find differences in the beliefs of Arab and non-Arab EFL teachers across mother tongue and gender, t-tests were applied. Similarly, the means of male and female students’ responses, and teachers’ and students’ responses were compared to know the differences in their perspectives regarding the use of L1 (Arabic) in EFL class.

Data Analysis and Discussion
Data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially. Inferentially, independent samples t-tests were calculated comparing the means scores of EFL teachers across gender and mother tongue. The result of t-test reveals no statistically significant difference in the beliefs of EFL teachers across gender. However, the result of t-test reveals statistically significant difference in the beliefs of EFL teachers across mother tongue, as shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig (2-tailed)</th>
<th>mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.064</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>.949</td>
<td>-.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother tongue</td>
<td>6.488</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to find the magnitude of difference in the beliefs of teachers about the use of L1 across mother tongue, *eta squared* was calculated following Pallant’s (2011) formula. According to this formula, the magnitude of difference is \((6.488)^2 / (6.488)^2 + 20 + 20 − 2 = 0.25\). According to
Pallant, the usual interpretation of *eta squared* is that .01 = small effect, .06 moderate effect, and .14 = large effect, which means that the magnitude of difference in the beliefs of EFL teachers about the use of L1 (Arabic) across mother tongue in the Saudi Arabian context is very large. The result indicates that Arab EFL teachers believe in the extensive use of Arabic, while non-Arab EFL teachers believe in the limited use of Arabic while teaching English to adult learners.

Descriptively, the means and standard deviations of the teachers were analyzed for the ten variables across mother tongue and gender, as shown in Table 3.

| Table 3. Comparative analysis of EFL teachers’ beliefs across mother tongue and gender |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                  | Arab            | Non-Arab        | Male            | Female          | Male            | Female          |
| Ineffectiveness of English-only approach in EFL classroom. | 4.05 ± .51     | 3.80 ± .61     | 3.85 ± .48     | 4.00 ± .64     | 4.20 ± .69     | 4.20 ± .63     |
| Limited use of Arabic in EFL class not minimizing exposure to English. | 4.20 ± .61     | 4.20 ± .69     | 4.20 ± .61     | 4.20 ± .69     | 3.90 ± .74     | 3.90 ± .78     |
| Use of Arabic to explain structural differences. | 3.90 ± .78     | 3.65 ± .74     | 3.65 ± .74     | 3.90 ± .78     | 3.90 ± .74     | 3.90 ± .78     |
| Use of Arabic to get students relaxed. | 3.85 ± .87     | 4.10 ± .96     | 3.90 ± .91     | 4.05 ± .94     | 4.20 ± .69     | 4.20 ± .69     |
| Use of Arabic to save time. | 3.95 ± .68     | 3.85 ± .58     | 3.85 ± .74     | 3.90 ± .51     | 4.10 ± .71     | 4.10 ± .71     |
| Use of Arabic for giving instructions in EFL class. | 4.10 ± .71     | 4.05 ± .68     | 4.05 ± .68     | 4.10 ± .71     | 1.30 ± 1.30    | 1.30 ± 1.30    |
| Use of Arabic to discipline the class. | 4.35 ± .58     | 2.10 ± .64     | 3.30 ± 4.0     | 3.15 ± 1.26    | 1.30 ± 1.30    | 1.30 ± 1.30    |
| Use of Arabic to build better relationship between teachers and students. | 4.15 ± .58     | 1.75 ± .55     | 2.90 ± 7.0     | 3.00 ± 1.33    | 1.10 ± 1.10    | 1.10 ± 1.10    |
| Use of Arabic to get feedback from students. | 3.85 ± .74     | 2.15 ± .58     | 3.25 ± 6.0     | 2.75 ± .96     | 4.40 ± .50     | 4.15 ± .48     |
| Limited use of Arabic to make language input more comprehensible for the students. | 4.40 ± .50     | 4.15 ± .48     | 4.30 ± .47     | 4.25 ± .55     | 4.40 ± .50     | 4.15 ± .48     |

The results in Table 3 reveal that there is no difference in the beliefs of male and female EFL teachers about the use of L1 (Arabic) in teaching English grammar in the Saudi Arabian setting. However, there is a mild difference in their perspectives about using Arabic for getting feedback from students. More male teachers than female teachers believe in using Arabic for feedback purposes. The findings of the study about using L1 for giving instructions and for maintaining discipline in the classrooms are consistent with the findings by Assalahi (2013), where
teachers maintained that they used L1 (Arabic) for such purposes because of the low proficiency level of the students in English. Moreover, the result of the study about the use of Arabic to make language input more comprehensible for the students is consistent with the findings of Al-Shammari (2011) and Al-Nofaie (2010) where teachers used Arabic to clarify difficult items and to enhance comprehension for the weak students so that they did not lag behind their peers. However, the findings of the study regarding the use of Arabic for giving instructions and for explaining L1-L2 structural differences are inconsistent with the findings of Al-Shammari (2011) and Al-Nofaie (2010), where teachers avoided using Arabic for such purposes in order to provide students with sufficient opportunities to practice English. Furthermore, the findings of the study about the productivity of the limited use of Arabic and using Arabic for saving time are consistent with the findings of Al-Shammari (2011) where teachers believed that the use of Arabic could save them precious time and that the limited use of L1 was more efficient for achieving rapid understanding of the target language.

The beliefs of the respondent teachers in the present study echo Miles’ (2004) advocacy for bilingual approach. Miles discredits monolingual approach for three obvious reasons, that is, it is not practical; native teachers are not necessarily the best teachers, and exposure alone to the target language is not sufficient for learning it. This perception is similar to the stance taken by Atkinson (1987) in favour of bilingual approach and the proposed ‘judicious use theory’ maintaining that use of L1 is a vital source for the teachers and the students. Along similar lines, Machaal (2012) argues that English-only approach could be useful in ESL contexts; however, it is not useful in EFL contexts, like Saudi Arabia, where ‘Arabic is a key learning strategy [for EFL students] that has been ingrained in their learning culture and experience’ (p. 215). Machaal develops the claim that ‘local problems require local solutions, and opting for what works in the classroom could prove more rewarding for the students as it would maximize their learning outcomes’ (p. 216).

Table 3 also reveals that Arab and non-Arab EFL teachers have almost similar beliefs about the use of L1 for seven out of the ten variables. However, for the three variables, that is, using L1 for discipline purposes, for building better relationship between teachers and students, and for getting feedback from students, the two camps have sharp differences in their beliefs. The findings of these three variables reveal that overwhelming majority of Arab EFL teachers favour the use of Arabic for these purposes. However, the non-Arab EFL teachers overwhelmingly disapprove the use of Arabic for these purposes. The findings display that Arab EFL teachers’ beliefs are more in line with GTM, as Celce-Murcia (1991) claims that the use of target language is little in this method and teaching is mostly carried on in students’ native language. Thus, there is more emphasis on translation. This seems to be one of the reasons that Saudi students’ proficiency level
is very low in English (Grami, 2010). These results confirm the evidence that the situation of ELT in Saudi Arabian universities is beyond satisfaction (Shah et al., 2013).

**Table 4.** Comparative analysis of male and female students’ beliefs about their Arab and non-Arab EFL teachers’ use of L1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male Students</th>
<th>Female Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>Non-Arab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineffectiveness of English-only approach in EFL classroom.</td>
<td>4.46 .51</td>
<td>4.33 .48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited use of Arabic in EFL class not minimizing exposure to English.</td>
<td>4.46 .51</td>
<td>4.53 .51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic to explain structural differences.</td>
<td>4.33 .48</td>
<td>4.00 .65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic to get students relaxed.</td>
<td>3.93 .88</td>
<td>4.06 1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic to save time.</td>
<td>4.20 .56</td>
<td>4.06 .45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic for giving instructions in EFL class.</td>
<td>4.13 .74</td>
<td>4.00 .53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic to discipline the class.</td>
<td>2.26 1.03</td>
<td>2.06 .45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic to build better relationship between teachers and students.</td>
<td>2.20 .86</td>
<td>1.73 .59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic to get feedback from students.</td>
<td>3.93 .70</td>
<td>3.80 .56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited use of Arabic to make language input more comprehensible for the students.</td>
<td>4.40 .50</td>
<td>4.06 .59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 4 demonstrate that there is no difference in the beliefs of male and female students about their Arab and non-Arab EFL teachers’ use of L1, and hence, male and female teachers. The results demonstrate that male and female students agree with their Arab and non-Arab EFL teachers’ use of Arabic for the given purposes, except two. Both groups of students do not agree with their teachers that the use of Arabic by teachers to discipline the class makes them more focused. Similarly, they disagree with their teachers that the use of Arabic helps build better relationship between students and teachers.

Moreover, the results obtained from the questionnaire survey, comparing the perspectives of teachers and students, reflect a mixed picture. Table 5 shows that there are many instances where
the calculated t-value is greater than the tabulated t-value, that is, there are differences between students and teachers in their opinion about the effectiveness of the use of Arabic in the English grammar classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Calculate d t-value</th>
<th>Tabulated t-value</th>
<th>D f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ineffectiveness of English-only approach in EFL classroom.</td>
<td>3.92 .57</td>
<td>4.36 .48</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>9 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited use of Arabic in EFL class not minimizing exposure to English.</td>
<td>4.20 .64</td>
<td>4.50 .50</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>9 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic to explain structural differences.</td>
<td>3.77 .76</td>
<td>4.05 .56</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>9 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic to get students relaxed.</td>
<td>3.97 .91</td>
<td>4.26 .76</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>9 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic to save time.</td>
<td>3.90 .63</td>
<td>4.06 .60</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>9 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic for giving instructions in EFL class.</td>
<td>4.07 .69</td>
<td>4.01 .67</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>9 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic to discipline the class.</td>
<td>3.22 1.29</td>
<td>3.88 .64</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>9 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic to build better relationship between teachers and students.</td>
<td>2.95 1.33</td>
<td>3.86 .56</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>9 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Arabic to get feedback from students.</td>
<td>3.00 1.08</td>
<td>3.88 .45</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>9 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited use of Arabic to make language input more comprehensible for the students.</td>
<td>4.27 .50</td>
<td>4.20 .54</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>9 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The shaded cells in Table 5 reflect a difference in the means of the responses of the two groups, students and teachers. There are six variables for which there are differences in the means of the responses of the groups: the ineffectiveness of English only approach in EFL classroom, limited use of Arabic in EFL class not minimizing exposure to English, use of Arabic to explain structural differences, use of Arabic to discipline the class, use of Arabic to build better relationship between teachers and students, and use of Arabic to get feedback from students. A closer look at the means of the responses for these variables reflects that overall teachers and students consider English-only approach not very effective, and find a limited and purposeful use of Arabic in the English grammar classes beneficial, especially in the explanation of structural rules, and for
maintaining discipline in the class. However, students, like their teachers, are unsure about the usefulness of Arabic for creating better relationships between teachers and students as well as for getting feedback from students.

The findings of the study about students favoring L1-use are in line with Schweers’ (1999) findings, where students supported using L1 in EFL classes. They believed that use of L1 could lead to better comprehension of L2 which made the students relaxed. Hence, the students are encouraged to learn more English. Similarly, the results of the two variables, use of Arabic does not minimize exposure to English and use of Arabic saves time, are consistent with the findings by Tang (2002), where students argued that limited use of L1 did not reduce their exposure to English, and also, it was less time-consuming. Table 5 shows that a great majority of both teachers and students favour using Arabic for explaining structural differences; however, this finding is inconsistent with the findings of Al-Nofaie (2010) where teachers avoided using Arabic for contrastive analysis, while students favoured learning English by contrasting it with Arabic. The results of the study about the use of L1 for giving instructions, relaxation, and comprehension are consistent with the findings by Burden (2001), where both teachers and students believed in the importance of L1 for these purposes.

Conclusion
The study sought to fill the research gap by providing a snapshot of the current status of non-native EFL teachers’ beliefs across mother tongue and gender, as well as their students’ perspective, about the use of L1 (Arabic) in the Saudi Arabian context. The findings of the study displayed that the use of Arabic by both teachers and students in EFL classrooms was an unavoidable phenomenon. An overwhelming majority of all groups of teachers and students agreed on the productivity of limited, judicious and systematic use of Arabic for several purposes in EFL classrooms in Saudi Arabia. The results of the study are in line with that of Al-Nofaie (2010), Al-Shammari (2011), Kim Anh (2010) and Tang (2002) where teachers and students responded positively towards the use of L1, maintaining that judicious and balanced use of L1 by teachers and students could be helpful in the EFL teaching and learning process. However, the findings of the study also suggested that Arab speaking EFL teachers did not make the best use of Arabic for some purposes.

The present study contributes quantitatively to the existing body of knowledge about a major debate in SLA whether or not to use students’ mother tongue in teaching and learning the target language. The findings of the study favour a well-planned use of the mother tongue. However, the study argues that extensive use of the mother tongue is counter-productive to both teaching and learning the target language.
The study presents certain implications for the stakeholders. Teachers will be better informed about the validity of the judicious and limited use of Arabic, and the detrimental effect of extensive use of Arabic. Harmony between teachers and students are recommended so that teachers use Arabic for the required purposes, and not for every purpose. Judicious bilingual approach may enhance the motivational level of EFL students, specifically students with low proficiency level in English. The use of L1 needs to be supplemented at the earlier stages of EFL teaching and learning process, and later on, gradually decrease its amount. Bilingual approach may be applied as a pedagogical tool to facilitate the teaching and learning process, and thus, make the L2 learning process easy and meaningful. Moreover, continuous classroom observations are suggested to avoid the overuse of Arabic.

The study was conducted with certain limitations. The study used only belief questionnaires to know the perspectives of teachers and students. However, the addition of classroom observations and interviews could better illuminate the findings about the stated beliefs and actual classroom practices of EFL teachers and students regarding the use of L1 (Arabic). Further studies are suggested about the use of L1 with the administration of mixed methods approach to capture a multi-dimensional picture of the phenomenon. Similarly, an experimental study is also recommended to investigate the impact of the use of Arabic on Saudi EFL students’ learning outcomes.

About the authors:
Iftikhar Ahmad is lecturer in English at the Department of Humanities and Administrative Sciences, Unaizah Community College, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. He is pursuing his PhD in Applied Linguistics from University Malaysia Pahang, Malaysia. His main area of interest is Applied Linguistics, especially teacher cognition, bilingualism and ELT. http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0725-6573

Noor Raha Mohd Radzuan, PhD, is a senior lecturer and the Head of English Language Department at the Centre for Modern Languages and Human Sciences, University Malaysia Pahang. She did her Master’s Degree from University of Nottingham and PhD from University Sains Malaysia. As an academician, she is active in conducting research, writing journal articles and presenting papers at conferences both locally and abroad. Her main interest is in Applied Linguistics research, specifically in second language oral communication, English for Specific Purposes and English language teaching. http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7418-6360

Muhammad Sabboor Hussain, PhD, is currently teaching at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia on deputation. He is an Assistant Professor of English in Federal Government in Pakistan. He holds PhD in Applied Linguistics. He has diversified experience (19 years) of teaching English at different levels and at various places to the adult English language learners of various nationalities.
His research interests include Psycholinguistics, Applied Linguistics, and issues related to ELT (EFL and ESL). He has numerous publications in reputed journals to his credit. http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2448-1043

References


Correlation between Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate in the Indonesian EFL Context

Yana Shanti Manipuspika
English Department, Faculty of Cultural Studies
Universitas Brawijaya
Malang, Indonesia

Abstract
This present study probes the relationship between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students’ language anxiety and their willingness to communicate. The research questions are threefold: a) What are the types of anxiety experienced by the students, b) What is the anxiety level of them, and c) What is the correlation between foreign language anxiety (FLA) and the willingness to communicate (WTC) of the students. Quantitative descriptive approach was employed and the data were collected from 98 participants in an English Department by making use of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and Likert-type WTC Scale. Pearson Correlation test was run to provide answers of the research questions. The results of this study indicated a strong positive correlation between learners’ foreign language classroom anxiety and their willingness to communicate. Fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communication apprehension were the students’ types of anxiety. In addition, students had high level of anxiety, which in turn, made them difficult in dealing with language learning process and tend to have low desire to speak. Therefore, this study tries to highlight whether anxiety is a significant barrier to WTC, to determine the types and level of FLA, as well as to provide suggestions to help minimize the anxiety.

Keywords: EFL learners, Indonesian context, language anxiety, willingness to communicate

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Introduction
The fact that many language learners face intrapersonal difficulties has been acknowledged in many researches in the area of second/foreign language learning. Anxiety is one of them. Many studies have confirmed that language anxiety has a negative effect on the performance of foreign language (FL) and second language (L2) learners (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Furthermore, anxiety has been considered as one of the most influential elements of Willingness to Communicate (WTC). In this case, helping the students to reduce language anxiety and enhance a willingness to use the foreign language inside the classroom will make teaching result in authentic communication, and not only in linguistic and structural competence.

Anxiety has been defined as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object (Huang, 2012). There are three categories of anxiety, namely: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). According to Zheng (2008), the differences between these three categories can be identified on a continuum from stability to transience. In other words, trait anxiety, which is related to a generally stable tendency to be nervous in a wide range of situations, forms one end, and “a moment-to-moment experience of transient emotional state” (p. 2) forms the other. Situational anxiety, representing the probability of becoming anxious in a particular type of situation, falls in the middle of the continuum. According to MacIntyre & Gardner (1994), language anxiety is a form of situation-specific anxiety. Also, Horwitz et al. (1986) recognizes that language anxiety is a situation-specific anxiety construct, “largely independent of the other types of anxiety” (p.127). It is basically the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning.

The term second language anxiety is used as an umbrella term for other more specific anxiety inducing situations. MacIntyre & Gardner (1994) found that anxiety in interpersonal settings and associated with recall of vocabulary and learning is communicative anxiety. Communication is referred to a helpful instrument in order that one can positively or negatively influence other people and in this regard, interaction is taken as the most important tool for communication among them. In addition, it is thought that learning inside classroom may bring about positive atmosphere which is fostering student involvement and in contrast reduce passivity (Sidelinger & Booth-Butterfield, 2010).

People, and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in particular, have different levels of willingness to communicate (WTC) due to their different communication behaviors. Some are active participants, whereas others tend to speak only when spoken to; individuals tend to constantly verbalize with some interlocutors but remain silent with others. Language anxiety has been considered as one of the main barriers for WTC.

Anxiety has potential to negatively affect foreign language learning process, therefore, it is important to conduct a research in this topic. Anxiety makes learners afraid of making mistakes in speaking, which then leads to hesitation to communicate. By knowing the sources of anxiety, EFL learners can handle their fears on foreign language classroom. Teachers also must be aware
that by decreasing the anxiety of their students, it will make the classroom becomes less-threatening for them.

Researchers such as Bailey (1983, as cited in Young, 1991) analyzes the relationship between the competitiveness of learners and self esteem as a potential source of learner anxiety. She finds out that anxiety might be the consequences of the competitive nature of L2 learning, on the one hand, and language tests and learners’ perceived relationship with their teachers, on the other. These aspects that Bailey identified were supported in subsequent studies, specifically, in Young’s (1991) study. According to Young (1991), six potential causes of language anxiety are involved in students’ language learning, which include personal and interpersonal, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures and language tests. As can be seen, Young (1991) identifies the causes from three aspects which are the aspects of learners, teachers and instructional practice, to which Bailey’s findings also complied. This current study tries to figure out the correlation in another EFL context, Indonesian in particular.

As previously stated, this present study attempts to identify students’ anxiety and elaborate on the relationship between language anxiety and willingness to communicate in EFL contexts as Indonesian, specifically in Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya, in order to find the sources of anxiety and strategies to minimize them in such contexts. Therefore, the following research questions are formulated: (1) What are the types of anxiety perceived by the students, (2) What is the anxiety level perceived by those students, and (3) What is the correlation between students’ anxiety and the willingness to communicate of the students.

Regarding the significance, this study aims at giving a meaningful contribution to students and lecturers to determine and solve their problems in class activity by knowing the correlation between students’ anxiety level and willingness to communicate level they have. Lecturers can get benefits from this study as it provides an overview of what level of anxiety that affects their students on willingness to communicate in English. The lecturers can use the data findings as a tool to develop strategies that improve student’s spoken English ability. Students can also try to find out their learning strategies in order to improve their English speaking proficiency based on the anxiety levels and types displayed in this study.

**Literature Review**

**Anxiety**

In relation to foreign language, there is foreign language anxiety. It is worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language (Young, 1991). In addition, Horwitz et al. (1986) state that anxiety is subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and wrong associates with an arousal of the autonomic nervous. It means that when learners are trying to explore their language, there is a feeling, known as anxiety, which makes them not confident in doing it. Sometimes, that feeling affects their readiness to speak up, even make them doing some mistakes in grammar, spelling, and pronouncing some English words.
Foreign language anxiety may not be easily detected and can affect the goal of learning language. This feeling is very common for EFL learners since it affects communicative aspects of language learning, such as listening and speaking (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Anxiety in foreign language may prevent them from performing successfully in learning language. Liu (2007) conducted a study showing that Chinese students experience anxiety when they have a single performance such as a presentation in English class. It causes the students have lack of vocabulary, low English proficiency, and have memory disassociation.

However, anxiety that is experienced by EFL learners might be different from one another, depending also on the situation. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), there are three kinds of foreign language anxiety namely communicative apprehension, test anxiety, and negative evaluation.

Communication apprehension is one kind of shyness characterized by fear of communicating with people. This type of anxiety can hinder learners to communicate with society. They usually avoid communicating with people because they are not comfortable when expressing something in front of people. This type of anxiety usually makes learners unable to communicate correctly or understand what people say. In a classroom, quiet students may be regarded as good students. However, there are quiet students who have communication apprehension. This makes them hesitate to respond and participate in communication.

Another type of anxiety is test anxiety, which refers to a type of performance anxiety stemming from fear or failure. This type of anxiety relates to the fear towards examination, test, or other assignment used to evaluate learners’ performance. Test anxiety can disturb their focus during the test. Students also develop the negative perceptions toward test. It may lead them to make errors, even for prepared students.

The last is fear of negative evaluation, which is defined as apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluation situation, and the expectation that others would evaluate one negatively. Although it is similar to test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation is broader in scope because it is not limited to test-taking situations. Rather, it may occur in any social test, such as interviewing for a job or speaking in a foreign language class.

With regard to the level of anxiety, according to Horwitz et al. (1986), there are three categories: low, moderate, and high level of anxiety. These levels of anxiety can be indicated by knowing the result of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) score. The score of FLCAS ranges from 33 to 165. The students whose score is lower than 99 are categorized as having low anxiety level, while the students who get higher score than 99 are categorized as having high level anxiety. However, if the score is exactly 99, they are categorized as cut-off line, which means they have moderate level of anxiety.

Willingness to Communicate
When given a situation to use a foreign/second language, some learners take the opportunity to speak up and some others remain silent. MacIntyre & Gardner (1994) state that willingness to
communicate refers to individual readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a second language. While based on McCroskey and Baer (1985 as cited in MacIntyre & Charos, 1996), willingness to communicate is defined as a stable predisposition toward communication when free to choose to do so. It means that a person who is willing to communicate tends to have no obstacle in doing so. The proper objective to learn second language is to create willingness to communicate. Higher willingness to communicate among learners provides more opportunities to practice in second language and facilitate authentic second language usage (MacIntyre et al, 2001).

There are some variables that lead to different level of willingness to communicate (McCroskey, 1990). He describes it as antecedents of willingness to communicate which consist of introversion, self-esteem, communication competence, cultural diversity, and communication apprehension. These antecedents are examined to have correlation on willingness to communicate.

In relation to introversion, introvert persons are characterized as shy, timid, and quiet. The more introvert an individual, the less he or she initiates for communicating and takes less value on communicating. This kind of individual tends to be inner-directed and introspective. Compared to the extroverts, introverts tend to be less sociable and less dependent on other’s evaluation.

The second antecedent influencing willingness to communicate is self-esteem. It means person’s evaluation of his or her own worth. It is the indicator how people perceive their self-worth. If a person is categorized as having low self-esteem, it might be expected that the person tends to have low willingness to communicate because that person believes that others would respond negatively to what would be said.

Regarding communication competence, some people are known to be reticent, and when they are, they tend to avoid social interaction and say so little. It is contrary with how one is expected to be willing to communicate. It is undeniable that many people try to avoid communication because they are apprehensive about communicating, yet researchers such as Phillips (1977, as cited in McCroskey, 1990) still focuses on communicative skills. Phillips finds that when skills are increased, WTC also increases. It shows that some people who are less willing to communicate might be caused by their not knowing about how to communicate.

Cultural diversity is another antecedent. According to McCroskey (1992), when a person finds her/himself in environment in which her/his subculture is in minority position, this person may be described as culturally divergent. Culturally divergent people generally have deficient communication skill. They do not know how to communicate effectively. They tend to be less willing to communicate to avoid failure and possible negative consequences. On the other hand, a person who lives in the environment in which his/her subculture is in majority position, he/she tends to have more willingness to communicate and is comfortable to communicate effectively.

Lastly, communication apprehension is a level of fear or anxiety with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons (McCroskey, 1990). It is predicted that...
persons who have higher communication apprehension tend to avoid communication because of their negative experiences from anxiety that influence their performance. McCroskey explains that communication apprehension level of a person probably is a single best predictor of the person’s willingness to communicate. The higher communication apprehension level a person has, the lower willingness to communication level perceived by him or her. It does not mean persons who have high communication apprehension do not engage in interaction. They have less frequency of involving in communication than those who are not afflicted with the communication apprehension under the same situation. They may have less willingness to communicate and select occupations that have low communication responsibilities to avoid communication.

There are different levels of willingness to communicate based on what context and with whom they communicate. In order to identify it, the appropriate instrument is by using Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Scale proposed by McCroskey. The WTC scale includes items related to four communication contexts which are public speaking, talking in meetings, talking in small group, and talking in interpersonal conversation, and also three types of receivers which are strangers, acquaintance, and friends.

Previous Studies
Rastegar & Karami (2015) investigated the relationships among foreign language classroom anxiety, willingness to communicate, and the scholastic success of Iranian EFL learners. The participants were 74 senior and junior students majoring in English Literature and English Translation at Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman. The results of this study revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety and willingness to communicate. The relationship between foreign language classroom anxiety and scholastic success was also found to be significantly negative. However, a significant positive relationship was found between willingness to communicate and scholastic success.

In Indonesian context, Muamaroh & Prihartanti (2013) conducted a research describing Indonesian university student’s willingness to actively engage in English language learning and their self-reported anxiety levels. They used questionnaire and interview to obtain the data. Their study shows there is a correlation between language anxiety and willingness to communicate. This study also shows that the level of willingness to communicate from the participants is very low (scored 14.21 on WTC scale) while their anxiety is at moderate level (scored 39.66 on FLCAS scale). Only half of the students (51%) have low willingness to communicate in English. More than half (68%) of the students indicate that their language anxiety influences their willingness to communicate in English, while 12% of them does not show that their anxiety influence their linguistic behavior.

There have been numerous studies discussing anxiety and willingness to communicate (Muamaroh & Prihartanti, 2013; Rastegar & Karami, 2015) however those only discussed the correlation between the two variables and have not investigated other elements (levels of anxiety and types) to enrich the finding as being revealed in this current study. Another study from Murtiningsih (2016) revealed students’ anxiety and willingness to communicate in Vocational
Program Universitas Brawijaya. She used 67 participants and employed Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) scale. The research findings suggest that English students of vocational program Universitas Brawijaya have high level of anxiety and low level of willingness to communicate. In addition, this study reveals that there is a sufficient negative correlation between students’ anxiety and their willingness to communicate.

**Research Method**

**Research Design**

This study employed quantitative descriptive approach since it was considered as the most appropriate approach to analyze the degree of anxiety, willingness to communicate, and also their correlation perceived by the students of English Study Program Universitas Brawijaya. This study used correlation procedure which shows the extent to which change in one variable is associated with change in another variable (Ary et al, 2002, p.143).

**Participants**

The participants in this study were the students of English Department Universitas Brawijaya Malang, Indonesia. The first-year students (of academic year 2016/2017) were taken as population based on preliminary assumption that they have higher level of anxiety (nervousness) compared to the second or third year students since they are starting their university study. Moreover, there will still be plenty of time to improve their communication skill in English since they have three more years until they get the degree.

**Research Instrument**

Two questionnaires were employed in this study, namely Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Scale.

Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) is a self-report measure which assesses the degree of anxiety, as revealed by negative performance expectancies and social comparisons, psycho-physiological symptoms, as well as avoidance behaviour (Horwitz et al, 1986). It is the most commonly used tool for assessing Foreign Language Anxiety. This instrument is composed of 33 items, each of which is answered on the five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree with values 1 – 5 assigned to them respectively. The higher the score, the more anxiety the students have. Since the item 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, 32 were negative, the score was reversely computed.

The second questionnaire employed in this study was Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Scale by McCroskey (1992). This instrument measures a person’s willingness to initiate communication. The face validity of the instrument is strong, and results of extensive research indicate the predictive validity of the instrument. Alpha reliability estimates for this instrument have ranged from .85 to well above .90. Of the 20 items on the instrument, 8 are used to distract attention from the scored items. The twelve remain items generate a total score, 4 context-type
scores, and 3 receiver-type scores. The sub-scores generate lower reliability estimates, but generally high enough to be used in research studies. For WTC Scoring, the following is the guide:

Context-type sub-scores—

Group Discussion: Add scores for items 8, 15, & 19; then divide by 3.
Meetings: Add scores for items 6, 11, 17; then divide by 3.
Interpersonal: Add scores for items 4, 9, 12; then divide by 3.
Public Speaking: Add scores for items 3, 14, 20; then divide by 3.
Receiver-type sub-scores—
Stranger: Add scores for items 3, 8, 12, 17; then divide by 4.
Acquaintance: Add scores for items 4, 11, 15, 20; then divide by 4.
Friend: Add scores for items 6, 9, 14, 19; then divide by 4.
To compute the total WTC score, add the sub scores for stranger, acquaintance, and friend. Then divide by 3. All scores, total and sub-scores, will fall in the range of 0 to 100.

Norms for WTC Scores:
Group discussion: >89 High WTC, <57 Low WTC
Meetings: >80 High WTC, <39 Low WTC
Interpersonal conversations: >94 High WTC, <64 Low WTC
Public Speaking: >78 High WTC, <33 Low WTC
Stranger: >63 High WTC, <18 Low WTC
Acquaintance: >92 High WTC, <57 Low WTC
Friend: >99 High WTC, <71 Low WTC
Total WTC: >82 High Overall WTC, <52 Low Overall WTC

Data Collection
In order to collect the data, the following steps were taken:
1. Distributing the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) scale to students. Before distributing the questionnaires, the students were given instructions and were asked to faithfully answer the questionnaires.
2. Collecting the questionnaires.
3. Informing the participants the result of the questionnaire would be kept confidential. This is related with research ethics that all names should be pseudonym.

Data Analysis
After collecting the data from the participants, the following steps of data analysis were taken:
1. Inputting the data gathered from FLCAS and WTC Scale.
2. Finding the result of students’ type of anxiety.
3. Measuring the anxiety level of students.
4. Calculating the correlation between students’ anxiety and their willingness to communicate using SPSS 20.
5. Interpreting the results of correlation based on Pearson’s correlation.
6. Drawing conclusion based on the results of analysis.
Findings and Discussion
Types of Anxiety
The 98 students of the first year in English Study Program Universitas Brawijaya Malang as the participants of this study show the following results (see Table 1) concerning the anxiety types they possess. Type of anxiety is determined by the results of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by measuring the mean score of each anxiety type. The mean score of communication apprehension was from items number 1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30, 32. Meanwhile, the mean score of test anxiety was obtained by measuring items number 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, and 28. Lastly, the result of fear of negative evaluation was obtained by assessing the mean score of items number 2, 7, 13, 19, 23, 31, and 33.

Table 1 Fear of negative evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I don’t worry about making mistake in language class.</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am.</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>It embarrassed me to volunteer answers in my language class.</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven’t prepared in advance.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Overall mean score</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.28</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 1, fear of negative evaluation got 3.28 mean score. This score was higher than communication apprehension and test anxiety. The table also shows that the statement which receives the highest score is item 33, which states “I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven’t prepared in advance”.

Table 2 Communication Apprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>It frightens me when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Correlation between Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I would <em>not</em> be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I get upset when I don’t understand what the teacher is correcting.</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall mean score** 3.21

The above table presents the mean score of communication apprehension of the respondents. The mean score was 3.21 and highest score statement was item 9, which states “I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class”.

**Table 3 Test Anxiety**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I tremble when I know that I’m going to be called on in language class.</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>It wouldn’t bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I don’t understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.</td>
<td>3.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I often feel like not going to my language class.</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in on the classes.</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall mean score** 3.1
Table 3 presents the scores of test anxiety (mean=3.10), which is the lowest among all types of anxiety. Item 10 stating “I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language classes” got the highest score.

Based on the result, it is evident that the first year students of English Study Program Universitas Brawijaya perceived all types of anxiety: fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety, respectively.

Levels of Anxiety
The second research problem deals with anxiety level of the first-year students of English Study Program Universitas Brawijaya. In order to analyze the anxiety level, the participants were asked to fill the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The scales of the questionnaire range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The data were analyzed by summing respondents’ total score and calculating the mean score. The result is presented on the following table:

**Table 4 Minimum and maximum score respondents’ foreign language anxiety**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum score</th>
<th>Maximum score</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid N</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>104.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 displays the students’ anxiety level. N is the total respondents who completed the questionnaires. It consists of 98 students from the first year in the English Study Program.

Based on the result, the minimum score of anxiety owned by the individuals was 78, while the maximum score was 136, which left the mean score of 104.74 indicating high anxiety level. This is based on Horwitz et al (1986) who said that if the score is higher than 99, the participants are categorized as having high level anxiety.

Correlation between Students’ Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate
The aim of this study is to examine the correlation between students’ anxiety and willingness to communicate as formulated in the third research problem. Pearson Product Moment Coefficient Correlation was used to measure the correlation between the two variables. By using SPSS 20 software, the following data were obtained:

**Table 5 Correlations between FLA and WTC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>anxiety</th>
<th>willingness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.653**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>willingness Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.653**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
Based on the analysis, the correlation value was 0.653 (as shown in Table 5). This value indicates that foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate has high correlation. p value 0.00 shows that there is a positive correlation between the variables. In other words, $H_0$ is rejected and it reflects that there is a correlation between foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate.

In addition, this study also measures the result of willingness to communicate level, each context type level, and each receiver type level from the participants. This was found by measuring the mean score of willingness to communicate and interpreting it based on the WTC norms scores.

**Table 6 Context types sub-scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Group Discussion</th>
<th>Meeting</th>
<th>Interpersonal Conversation</th>
<th>Public Speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean scores</td>
<td>63.26</td>
<td>52.03</td>
<td>56.56</td>
<td>58.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7 Receiver types sub-scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Stranger</th>
<th>Acquaintance</th>
<th>Friend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean scores</td>
<td>42.08</td>
<td>56.02</td>
<td>74.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 8 Total WTC score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>WTC score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>42.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>56.02</td>
<td>57.56 (Moderate Level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>74.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Norms of Willingness to Communicate score:** >
82 High WTC, <52 Low WTC

**Discussion**
The discussion part is organized based on the research questions.

**Types of Anxiety**
There are three types of anxiety according to Horwitz et.al (1986) namely communication apprehension which deals with the fear of getting into a real communication with others, test anxiety which happens toward academic evaluation which makes students anxious about failing in test, and the last is fear of negative evaluation which appears because learners are anxious about negative impression of people toward their performance. The following table sums up the respondents’ anxiety type based on the mean score from FLCAS.
Table 9 Ranks of Anxiety Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Mean score</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear of Negative Evaluation</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Apprehension</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Anxiety</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the table, fear of negative evaluation ranks the first, followed by communication apprehension and test anxiety. However, if it is reviewed from the mean scores, there is only slight difference between fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension. This means that both types of anxiety really affect the respondents. This might be influenced by the position of the respondents who are the first-year students who are still hesitant to speak and communicate in English language and afraid if they are judged by others.

Findings of computation of mean of the statements of FLCAs demonstrated that the main sources of language anxiety were unpreparedness of teachers’ questions, fear of failing class and fear of forgetting vocabulary and structures. In addition, the main sources provoking fear of negative evaluation was leaving unfavorable impressions on others, negative judgment by others, and fear of doing and saying wrong things. Calculating values indicated that the fear of negative evaluation is a strong source of foreign language class anxiety, as it ranks the first among the other two types of anxiety.

According to the results of previous research, communication apprehension is a significant source of anxiety (Koch and Terrell, 1991; Price, 1991, cited in Shabani, 2012). Communication apprehension deals with negative feeling to communicate with others, and as stated by McCroskey (1990), communication apprehension can lower the desire to speak. Based on the calculation, with only 0.007 different from fear of negative evaluation, this anxiety type also highly influences language learners. Moreover, Young (1991) states that teachers’ beliefs about teaching a foreign language is one of the factors provoking anxiety, however, based on the results of this study there are additional factors such as not being prepared for speaking in class, communication apprehension with teachers, and teachers’ correction, which play an important role in determining the level of anxiety.

Furthermore, the findings of this study demonstrate that test anxiety ranked the lowest in anxiety types, which indicated that the respondents also had burden in facing academic test. Usually learners who have this anxiety assume that no matter how hard they prepare for the test, it will not make them succeed in it. This feeling can make learners nervous in doing the test. As a consequence, learners may not focus and it can be a reason of failure in the test. From the finding, item 10 which states “I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language classes” got the highest score.

Anxiety Level
Regarding the anxiety level of the participants, it was revealed that the mean score was 104.74 which indicate that the freshmen in English Department Universitas Brawijaya had high level
anxiety. This is derived from Horwitz’ statement that the score under 99 is indicated as low anxiety, the 99 score means moderate level, while high anxiety is indicated by having more than 99 score.

The participants of this study are the English Department students who, of course, had high frequency to learn and use English primarily in the campus and classroom activities like conversation, discussion, and presentation. Most of the course subjects use English as the medium of communication. They also got specific speaking subject such as Academic Speaking and Speaking for Transactional Purpose. It can be presumed that they are very familiar with English speaking, yet it is evident from the result of this study that their anxiety level was still categorized as high level.

Anxious students fear they will not understand all language input and that is consistent with communication apprehension. Based on the results of the questionnaires, the students believe that in order to have any chance of comprehending the target language message, they have to understand every word that is spoken. Anxious students also fear being less competent compared to their fellow students. They also fear being evaluated by them. Anxiety also happens when there is competitiveness among students. As students assume that there are students who are categorized as best students in classroom, they will compare their ability to them and feel that best students have better performance than them. Moreover, they can assume that the ability of those students is the ideal performance while theirs are not. As found out by MacIntyre & Gardner (1994), students with high anxiety would find difficulty to express their own idea and tend to underestimate their own ability.

Another influencing factor is related with teacher’s role. The way a teacher reacts to his students’ mistakes is also influential in a foreign language classroom. This is in line with Young’s (1991) research findings that instructor’s characteristics such as non-harsh attitude toward error correction, a positive, friendly, and relaxed general attitude toward students can reduce students’ anxiety.

**Correlation between Students’ Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate**

This study used Pearson’s correlation coefficient, a statistical measure of the strength of a linear relationship between paired data. Positive values denote positive linear correlation, negative values denote negative linear correlation, a value of 0 denotes no linear correlation. The closer the value is to 1 or -1, the stronger the linear correlation.

Correlation is an effect size and can verbally describe the strength of the correlation using the guide that Evans (1996) suggests for the absolute value of r.

- .00 – .19 = very weak
- .20 – .39 = weak
- .40 – .59 = moderate
- .60 – .79 = strong
- .80 – 1.0 = very strong
Correlation between Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate

From the statistical analysis, it was revealed that there was a correlation between foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate of the students of English Study Program Universitas Brawijaya. It was indicated by the p value (significance value) of 0.00 which means that the correlation between two variables is significant. The coefficient correlation \( r \) was 0.653 which reflects strong correlation.

The results of this study indicated a strong positive correlation between foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate. Based on the present research results, if EFL learners’ language anxiety is high, they are less willing to communicate in the L2 and if their anxiety decreases, their willingness to communicate increases. This finding is in accordance with McCroskey & Richmond (1990) who stated that willingness to communicate has tendency affected by individuals’ anxiety. When learners are able to speak in the classroom, it means they have ability to raise their confidence and do not feel intimidated by peers or teachers’ judgments.

Willingness to Communicate (WTC) scale includes items related to three types of receivers and types of communication context. Types of receiver refers to whom a person willing to communicate, comprising friends, acquaintances, and strangers. There are also four communication context types, which are speaking in public, talking in meetings, talking in small groups, and having interpersonal conversation. In receiver type, the respondents were found to have more willingness to communicate with friends (74.48) reflecting moderate level and followed by acquaintances and strangers with 56.02 (low) and 42.08 (moderate) respectively.

In context type, this present study found that respondents had more willingness to communicate in group discussion, meeting, and public speaking, which were all categorized into moderate level of WTC. This is in line with Murtiningsih’s (2016) finding revealing the same context type. Interpersonal communication showed a low level of WTC.

From this study results, it is necessary for respondents to increase their desire to speak since the category among three receiver types are not at high level. As English program students, having willingness to communicate with people around them is crucial.

Conclusion
The present study revealed the relationship between EFL students’ language anxiety and their willingness to communicate. The results indicated a strong positive correlation between learners’
foreign language classroom anxiety and their willingness to communicate. This means that learners who were more anxious about language classroom tended to be more apprehensive about communicating in the L2. Previous studies had also confirmed this study’s finding that the participants’ unwillingness to communicate and their foreign language anxiety were significantly correlated to their English language proficiency.

This study also uncovered the types of anxiety of the students namely fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and communication apprehension. According to the mean score of each anxiety type, the fear of negative evaluation got the highest score. Therefore, it can be claimed that most of the freshmen in the English Department get nervous whenever they are in a situation that requires them to communicate in English in the classroom, implying that in educational contexts a great deal of attention should be paid to the construct of anxiety. By paying attention to their anxiety, learners can boost their willingness to communicate and their ultimate success.

Another finding of this study suggests the anxiety level perceived by respondents was high (104.74). Learners who have high anxiety usually find difficulties in language learning process and tend to have low desire to speak. From this study, it can be presumed anxiety is not merely caused by how long learners learn the foreign language or the learners’ lack of practice. This study showed that even English college students also felt high anxiety.

In addition, the result from willingness to communicate scale showed that respondents did not have high willingness to communicate with three receiver types and four context types. In receiver types, the respondents displayed moderate level in communicating with friend and acquaintance, while low level for stranger. In context type, the respondents had moderate level in group discussion, meeting, and public speaking, and low level in interpersonal conversation. Overall, the score of willingness to communicate of respondents was categorized as moderate level (mean score: 57.56).

From this study results, it is suggested for students who experience anxiety not to feel discouraged or frustrated. Those who have anxiety do not mean they cannot be successful learners. They need to do more effort to find strategies to ease their feeling in learning language and not to negatively affect their willingness to communicate.

In order to achieve the goal, English teachers should get familiar with the construct of language anxiety; besides, they should try to identify the factors that create language anxiety for foreign language learners and find strategies that help the learners reduce their anxiety level. In this way, the students can increase their willingness to communicate and thus their eventual academic achievement.

This study had not displayed comparison of anxiety and willingness to communicate between first year students and their more experienced peers. Future research is expected to fill that gap and figure out whether how long learners learning English and on what stage they are is influential to anxiety.
Correlation between Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate

About the Author:
Yana Shanti Manipuspika is a lecturer in Study Program of English Faculty of Cultural Studies Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia. She earned her Master Degree (2009) in Applied Linguistics from The University of Newcastle, Australia. Her research and teaching interests include Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Pragmatics, and Translation Studies. ORCiD ID: 0000-0002-3885-7232

References


The Effects of Learning and Communication Strategies Instruction on Economics Undergraduates’ Oral Communication Ability in Thailand

Mintra Puripunyavanich
Language Institute
Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand

Kittitouch Soontornwipast
Language Institute
Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand

Abstract

This study investigates the effects of learning and communication strategies (LACS) instruction on economics students’ oral communication ability in Thailand and explores their perceptions toward the instruction. The study involved 23 third-year economics undergraduates at a public university in Thailand who were explicitly taught 13 learning and communication strategies in class. The impacts of the LACS instruction on oral communication ability were assessed by the participants’ pre- and post-oral presentation tests, and the perceptions of the participants as well as their strategy use were obtained from students’ reflective journals (SRJ), semi-structured focus group interviews, and the teacher’s observation notes. The findings reveal that all students’ oral presentation test scores significantly improved and confirm that teaching a combination of different LACS could enhance oral communication ability. The qualitative results indicate that all 23 students had positive perceptions of the strategies instruction. Furthermore, it is revealed that strong students used a combination of all three types (cognitive, metacognitive, and affective) of learning strategies (LS) and a communication strategy (CS) of self-repair, while moderate and weak students employed a combination of two types (cognitive and affective) of LS and self-repair. Nonetheless, this study would argue that strong, moderate, and weak students did apply metacognitive strategies, as evidenced by their reflections on their strategy use in the journals and the self-assessment form, but some students were not aware of it. Consequently, future studies should emphasize raising students’ awareness of their metacognitive strategy use.

Keywords: communication strategies, economics students, learning strategies, oral communication ability, strategy instruction

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Introduction

Due to the spread of English and improved communication systems in this globalized era, speaking skills have played an important role in communication (Timmis, 2016). It has been claimed that the ability to speak the target language when learning a second language serves as an indicator that learners are competent and know the language (Brown & Yule, 1983). It is, thus, necessary for “teachers to teach students how to speak strategically for effective communication” (Moradi & Talebi, 2014, p.1224).

In the context of Thailand where English is commonly used as a second language in communication, business, education, and tourism, teaching speaking in Thailand presents some challenges. The first challenge lies in the current English proficiency level of Thai students. A data of English proficiency TOEFL test score means shows that the total score mean of Thai test takers was 78 out of 120 points and was lower than those of test takers from six Southeast Asian countries, including Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Myanmar (Educational Testing Service, 2017, p.14). With regard to speaking, the score mean of Thai test takers was 19 out of 30, equal to that of Cambodian and Lao test takers, and was the lowest among the six countries (Educational Testing Service, 2017, p.14). The next challenge involves problems that students usually encounter in oral English communication classrooms at Thai universities such as large classes, mixed-ability classes, an overemphasis on group work, and unrealistic dialogs in role plays (Bruner, Singwongsuwat & Radić-Bojanić, 2015). According to the course evaluation in 2016, the university where this research study took place was also faced with difficulties brought about by a large class size and mixed-ability students for oral communication courses. All of these problems hindered the improvement on students’ speaking skills and certainly put pressure on teachers to come up with solutions.

The present study took place in the Oral English Communication for Economics (OECE) course, which was a speaking course for economics junior students at a public university in Thailand. The course is aimed at enabling students to 1) deliver oral presentations on economics-related issues, 2) participate in discussions, informal and formal meetings, and 3) answer questions about the assigned listening materials on economics-related topics.

Several problems in the four areas – 1) teaching and learning, 2) the previous course book, 3) materials available on the market, and 4) assessments – were identified by the economics students, the course instructors, and the course coordinator in the course evaluation in 2016.

Problems regarding teaching and learning stemmed from the fact that students had never formally learned how to deliver a presentation or participate in a meeting in a professional manner before taking the OECE course, and the course book used on the course did not focus on teaching those skills. Therefore, they felt they wanted to learn about these skills more. Secondly, students found that the learning contents in the course book, Market Leader Intermediate (Cotton, Falvey, & Kent, 2010), the oral assessments, and the self-study tasks were irrelevant to economics as they all focused on marketing not economics. The irrelevance of the learning contents demotivated students from learning, as they were unable to apply their background knowledge in economics when doing their learning tasks and the oral assessments. The course instructors also reported that they had to do extra work in finding supplementary materials for teaching presentation and meeting
skills, which were not focused on in the course book. Also, teaching mixed-ability classes of more than 27 students, which were considered large classes, was a challenge for all of the instructors because they had to find suitable approaches to help students with different English proficiency levels in large classes to improve their oral communication ability, which refers to the ability to effectively deliver formal presentations and participate in meetings.

Problems concerning the previous course book consisted of 1) the irrelevance of the content to economics, 2) the insufficient amount of listening and speaking activities that helped students to fully develop their listening and speaking skills for delivering presentations and participating in meetings, and 3) the time constraint, which put pressure on the teachers to cover nine units within seven teaching weeks. As for problems with the materials available on the market, a course book appropriate for economics undergraduates had been thoroughly searched. Unfortunately, none met one of the course’s objective, which is aimed at developing students’ presentation and meeting skills, and consisted of unit themes relevant to economics. Course books available on the market either concentrated solely on presentation or meeting skills or consisted of economics themes with an emphasis on four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Finally, in terms of the course assessment, the majority of the students felt there were too many oral assessments (six assessments), and the teachers felt the assessments lacked students’ involvement in evaluating the performances of themselves and their friends.

In an attempt to solve the aforementioned problems, three major solutions – 1) the development of a new course book, 2) the adjustment of course assessments, and 3) the implementation of the explicit strategy instruction – were implemented on the OECE course in the academic year of 2017. This paper, nonetheless, will focus only on the implementation of the explicit strategy instruction.

One of the promising solutions to tackle challenges pertaining to teaching speaking in Thailand and in the present research context is an implementation of learning and communication strategies instruction. It is especially important that language learners in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context are encouraged to learn strategies, which can help them succeed in second language communication (Jamshidnejad, 2011). Language learning strategies (LLS) are perceived as “tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence,” (Oxford, 1990, p.1). In teaching speaking, it is useful to also integrate and teach communication strategies (CS) because they can facilitate learners in overcoming communication problems, enhancing communication effectiveness, and negotiating meaning (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). Thus, teaching a combination of these two types of strategies (LS and CS) to EFL learners, and following nine principles for developing oral communication ability, which were adapted from Ginkel and colleagues (2015), could facilitate the learners in preparing for and performing speaking tasks and in evaluating their performances after the tasks as well as help them develop their oral communication ability more effectively. The following sections, which review previous empirical studies, illustrate positive effects of explicit strategy training on students’ learning and oral performance.

Based on a rigorous review of literature, different aspects of learning strategies and communication strategies have been explored separately over the past 30 years. In terms of the
topics on learning strategies, some studies have examined the use of learning strategies between high-ability and low-ability students (Gani, Fajrina & Hanifa, 2015; Gerami & Baighlou, 2011). A study by Gani, Fajrina & Hanifa (2015) indicates that strong students used all kinds of learning strategies more than weak students for improving their speaking skills. Also, they employed more learning strategies consciously and appropriately compared to the weak students. In addition, strong students used a wider range of learning strategies than weak students. Furthermore, strong students often employed metacognitive strategies, while weak students used cognitive strategies more (Gerami & Baighlou, 2011). In terms of the impacts of explicit strategy training of learning strategies, some empirical research studies have shown that explicit learning strategy instruction has positive effects on speaking proficiency (Dadour & Robbins, 1996; O’Malley, Chamot et al., 1985). For instance, the findings of O’Malley, Chamot, and colleagues’ (1985) study reveal that the post-test scores on speaking were significant with the metacognitive group (Group 1) scoring the highest. This experimental group received a strategy instruction, which combined metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies. Thus, this study suggests that teaching a combination of different learning strategies could enhance oral communication ability. Another interesting study was conducted by Dadour and Robbins (1996). Their findings indicate that the learning strategy instruction significantly affected the students’ speaking performance regardless of their English proficiency levels (first- or fourth-year students’ proficiency) in the experimental groups, which outperformed the control groups. Also, the experimental groups used strategies more frequently than the control groups.

Regarding the areas of communication strategies, topics on the effects of communication strategy instruction have been popular and studied by several researchers (Dörnyei, 1995; Nakatani, 2005; Paranapiti, 2014). Dörnyei’s (1995) study, which examines the teachability of communication strategies at a high school level, reveals that the experimental group had a significant improvement in the quality and quantity of strategy use and in their overall oral performance. In addition, participants in the experimental group had positive attitudes toward the strategy instruction. Nakatani’s (2005) research findings indicate that the strategy training group significantly outperformed the control group in their oral proficiency tests. In addition, the strategy training group used longer utterances and more achievement strategies than the control group. In the context of Thailand, effects of communication strategy instruction on English speaking ability of university students have also been investigated (Paranapiti, 2014). Paranapiti’s (2014) study results show a positive effect of the explicit communication strategy instruction on undergraduates’ speaking ability and reveal that there was a statistically significant difference between pre- and post-test scores, and students had positive attitudes toward the strategy instruction. Nevertheless, the strategy instruction had no effect on the level of students’ confidence in speaking as there was no statistically significant difference between pre- and post-strategy instruction.

Despite a wide array of previous studies regarding learning and communication strategies, there are no studies that examine the effects of the instruction of learning strategies in a combination with communication strategies on the development of oral communication ability for economics students, particularly oral presentation skills, in Thailand or in other countries. Thus, the present study attempts to fill in this knowledge gap in the literature by providing new insights into the field of strategy instruction with regard to the effectiveness of the learning and
communication strategies (LACS) instruction in helping learners improve their oral communication ability.

This study was conducted to explore the two aspects of the LACS instruction, including its effects and students’ perceptions toward the instruction, based on the following research questions:

1. What are the effects of the LACS instruction on economics students’ oral communication ability?
2. What are economics undergraduates’ perceptions of the LACS instruction in helping them improve their oral presentation skills?

3. Literature Review

In this section, a number of literature related to designing frameworks of LACS and the LACS instruction as well as principles for developing oral communication ability is presented.

Communicative Competence

In the scope of the present study, communicative competence refers to the ability to use spoken language effectively in oral presentations. Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) propose four components – grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence – that contribute to communicative competence.

Grammatical or linguistic competence refers to knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). It enables learners to understand and use English language structures accurately, which lead to fluency (Shumin, 2002). Sociolinguistic competence is the ability to communicate accurately, appropriately to, and acceptably by sociocultural norms and contexts (Goh & Burns, 2012). Discourse competence concerns cohesion and coherence, which help speakers communicate in a meaningful way (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1991). Strategic competence is the ability to use language appropriately and to deal with communication and comprehension problems (Shumin, 2002). This competence comes in both forms of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies employed to handle communication breakdowns (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Learning Strategies (LS)

O’Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990) propose two frameworks for learning strategies (henceforth referred to as LS). The O’Malley and Chamot’s (1990) framework consists of three strategy types: 1) metacognitive, 2) cognitive, and 3) social/affective. Strategies categorized as metacognitive would include making plans for one’s learning, thinking about one’s learning process, monitoring one’s learning task, and evaluating one’s own learning progress. Cognitive strategies are those where one engages with the content and materials to be learned, for instance, working with it mentally or physically, or using a particular technique to complete a task. Social and affective strategies are those where one learns through the assistance of another or utilizes affective control to accomplish a learning goal.

Oxford (1990) proposes a strategy system for learning strategies, consisting of six strategy types, which are divided into two classes – direct and indirect. Direct strategies directly support learning, which involve memory, cognitive, and compensation. Indirect strategies contribute indirectly to learning, including metacognitive, affective, and social. Direct and indirect strategies
are equally important and support each other. Three strategy types: one direct (cognitive) and two indirect (metacognitive, and affective) learning strategies from Oxford’s framework were included in the framework of LACS for instruction in this study. Cognitive strategies enable learners to manipulate the language material. Metacognitive strategies are used for managing the learning process, and finally, affective strategies help learners deal with feelings.

In this study, three types of learning strategies – 1) metacognitive, 2) cognitive, and 3) affective – from the frameworks proposed by O’Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990) are included in the framework of learning and communication strategies for instruction on the OECE course. Social strategies are not part of learning strategies in this study but are combined with cooperative strategies in communication strategies to avoid duplication of strategies.

**Communication Strategies (CS)**

Communication strategies are divided into two groups – reduction or avoidance and achievement or compensatory strategies (Dörnyei, 1995; Færch & Kasper, 1983). Reduction strategies are those that avoid solving communication difficulties through topic avoidance, message abandonment, and meaning replacement (Dörnyei, 1995; Færch & Kasper, 1983). On the other hand, achievement strategies attempt to tackle the communication problem directly through code switching, intralingual and interlingual transfer, cooperative strategies, and non-linguistic strategies (Færch & Kasper, 1983). Achievement strategies can be subdivided into two categories: non-cooperative strategies and cooperative strategies. Non-cooperative strategies do not require assistance from interlocutors, while cooperative strategies do.

In this study, only achievement strategies were selected for the LACS instruction because they allow learners to adhere to the original communicative goal by developing alternative plans to use available resources (Færch & Kasper, 1983). Also, such strategies facilitate learners in developing oral communication ability.

**Principles for the Oral Communication Ability Development**

The nine principles in three categories – instruction, language activities, and assessment – for developing students’ oral communication ability on the OECE course were adapted from Ginkel and colleagues (2015) and followed. Four principles in instruction ensured that 1) learning objectives were explained to students, 2) the strategy instruction was explicit and followed the three steps in the LACS instructional framework, 3) learning activities were authentic and relevant to economics, and 4) students would receive sufficient scaffolding. Two principles in learning activities ensured that students were provided with opportunities to 1) observe models of their friends or experts for delivering presentations and participating in meetings, and 2) practice their oral presentations and meetings. Three principles in assessment ensured that 1) feedback was explicit and specific, 2) the involvement of peers was encouraged, and 3) self-assessment through watching video clips was implemented.

**Framework of LACS for Developing Economics Undergraduates’ Oral Communication Ability**

The framework of LACS consists of 13 learning and communication strategies. There are eight learning strategies (LS): 1) getting the idea quickly, 2) note-taking, 3) recognizing and using language exponents, 4) planning for a language task, 5) self-monitoring, 6) self-evaluation, 7)
lowering anxiety, and 8) encouraging yourself. LS 1-3 are cognitive, LS 4-6 are metacognitive, and LS 7-8 are affective learning strategies. These LS were selected from the frameworks of O’Malley and Chamot (1990) and Oxford (1990). Although these eight LS could help students prepare for and perform speaking tasks, as well as evaluate their performances, they did not teach students what to do when they encountered communication problems such as misunderstanding, stumbling, or wanting more time to think of what to say. Thus, five communication strategies (CS), including 1) asking for repetition, 2) asking for clarification, 3) asking for confirmation, 4) use of fillers and hesitation devices, and 5) self-repair, were selected from the studies of Dörnyei and Scott (1997) and Nakatani (2005) and added to the framework. In this framework, LS and CS were taught in a combination to help students develop their oral communication ability.

The instruction of 13 LACS was integrated into seven weekly three-hour sessions to help students develop their oral communication ability in an informative presentation and an informal meeting. However, this paper focuses only on students’ oral communication ability in an informative presentation. Students were explicitly taught strategies and provided with opportunities to practice the strategies and reflect their usefulness in their reflective journals.

**LACS Instructional Framework**

The LACS instructional framework in this study, which was adapted from Chamot (2004 & 2005), consists of three stages: pre, while, and post. The pre stage includes two components: preparation and presentation. In this stage, the teacher first identified students’ current strategies for learning tasks, then presented new strategies, and finally illustrated how to use them to students. In the while stage, which consists of two components: practice and expansion, students were provided with opportunities to practice using different strategies in doing learning activities in the course book and to transfer them to other similar tasks such as the oral assessment tasks. The practice of strategy use was conducted with listening activities and speaking activities that were similar to the oral assessment tasks and the preparation sessions for the oral assessment tasks to promote transferability to new tasks in similar situations. Also, teacher’s guidance in the strategy use was gradually removed to encourage students to become autonomous in their strategy use. Finally, in the post stage, which involves two components: self- and teacher assessment, students were encouraged to assess the effectiveness of the strategies they used in assisting them to perform an oral assessment task in their reflective journals. In addition, the teacher evaluated students’ use of strategies and impacts on their oral performances in her observation notes.

The framework guided the explicit LACS instruction, which was fully integrated into the regular classroom curriculum of the OECE course and employed when teaching both LS and CS. Also, the strategies were taught explicitly because an empirical study by Dadour and Robbins (1996) shows that this type of instruction enables learners to see new ways of learning and provides them with a structured approach to language tasks. An explicit strategy instruction in this study means an instruction in which learning and communication strategies were presented in strategy boxes in the course book and taught to students on how and when to use them for different learning activities and oral assessment tasks.
Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed in this study to collect data for answering the two research questions. A one-group pre-test post-test design was integrated to examine the effects of the instruction of LACS on oral communication ability of economics students. This design was the most feasible design because one of the researchers was assigned to teach one section of 23 students and the class time of all five sections was the same, on every Wednesdays 1-4 p.m. Consequently, it was not possible to conduct the study with two groups of students. Lacks of random sampling and assignment and a small sample size (23 students) are potential weaknesses of the study, and as a result, the study does not attempt to claim generalizability of the results to the wider population but would rather focus on transferability to similar contexts. Due to these potential weaknesses, a variety of data collection methods were utilized to triangulate the findings.

The sample of the study consisted of 23 economics junior students in one section of the OECE course in the first semester of the 2017 academic year (August–December) at a public university in Thailand. The quantitative data of this study was obtained from the pre- and post-tests of an informative presentation. In each test, students were assigned to deliver a presentation on a topic related to economics. Both the pre- and post-tests and the scoring rubric were checked for the content validity by three experts in language assessment. Furthermore, students’ presentations, which were recorded on videos, were rated by two independent teacher raters. Then, the pre- and post-test scores given by the two raters were computed on the SPSS to find inter-rater reliability using Pearson’s correlation coefficient. It was revealed that there were significant positive correlations between the pre-test scores of oral communication ability rated by rater 1 and rater 2, \( r(21) = .99, p < .001 \), and between the post-test scores rated by rater 1 and rater 2, \( r(21) = .72, p < .001 \). In addition, pre- and post-test scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations. Then, a paired-samples \( t \)-test (or dependent-samples \( t \)-test) was conducted to compare the mean scores of oral communication ability in an informative presentation before and after the implementation of the LACS instruction to find out whether there was any significant difference in the mean scores before and after the instruction. Next, inferential statistics of Cohen’s \( d \) were calculated to identify whether the effect size was small (\( d = .20 \)), moderate (\( d = .50 \)), or large (\( d = .80 \)) in order to present the effect size. The results of a paired-samples \( t \)-test and Cohen’s \( d \) are presented in the Results and Discussion section.

The qualitative data, focusing on students’ perceptions of the LACS instruction, was obtained from students’ reflective journals (SRJ) and semi-structured focus group interviews. Like the pre- and post-tests, questions in the journal and the interview were also validated by two different groups of three experts. Procedures in writing the journal and participating in the interview were clearly explained to the participants before these two activities took place in order to ensure that the participants understood what to do. Regarding the semi-structured focus group interviews, 23 participants were divided into three groups of 7-8 participants (strong, moderate, and weak students) based on their oral ability levels through their mean scores of four oral assessments. This division of interview groups was conducted to ensure homogeneity of interviewees because focus groups are more effective if participants are homogeneous (Dörnyei, 2007). In addition, the teacher’s observation notes were employed to investigate students’ strategy.
use during the pre- and post-tests. Then, the qualitative data from the journals, interviews, and the teacher’s notes were analyzed thematically.

Results and Discussions

The findings of this study, which respond to the two research questions, are divided into two parts: 1) effects of the LACS instruction on oral communication ability and 2) students’ perceptions of the LACS instruction.

Effects of the LACS on Oral Communication Ability

This section responds to the first research question, “What are the effects of the LACS on economics students’ oral communication ability?” The result of oral communication ability in the present study was obtained from the pre- and post-tests for an informative presentation.

Pre- and Post-Tests of an Informative Presentation Task

A paired-samples t-test was run on a sample of 23 students to determine whether there was a statistically significant mean difference between the mean scores of oral communication ability before and after the implementation of the LACS instruction. As presented in Table 1, the paired-samples t-test showed a statistically significant difference in the pre-test mean scores of oral communication ability ($M = 6.43, SD = 1.58$) and the post-test mean scores ($M = 7.63, SD = 1.08$); $t(22) = 5.1, p < .001$. In addition, Cohen’s effect value ($d = 0.89$) reveals a large practical significance.

Table 1. Findings from the pre- and post-tests of an informative presentation task

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<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td>1.58</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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*p < .001

The gain score of the post-test mean is positive (1.2 points), which indicates that students’ oral communication ability improved as a result of the LACS instruction.

In summary, results of the inferential statistics obtained from the paired-samples t-test and Cohen’s $d$ show that there were statistically significant differences between pre- and post-test scores of students’ oral communication ability in the informative presentation test. Also, Cohen’s effect value indicates a large significance. Thus, it can be concluded that the explicit instruction of LACS has a positive impact on students’ oral communication ability regardless of their English proficiency levels as shown in the positive gain score in the post-test. The quantitative result of the present study is in line with those of the studies conducted by O’Malley, Chamot, and colleagues (1985), Dadour and Robins (1996), focusing on LS, and Dörnyei (1995), Nakatani (2005), and Paranapiti (2014), concentrating on CS, which reveal that the strategy instruction
significantly improves students’ oral test scores. In addition, the present study’s finding confirms that teaching a combination of different LACS could enhance oral communication ability.

Students’ Perceptions of the LACS Instruction

This part answers the second research question, “What are economics undergraduates’ perceptions of the LACS instruction in helping them improve their oral presentation skills?” Data of students’ perceptions were thematically coded and analyzed from 23 students’ reflective journals and semi-structured focus group interviews of three groups: Group 1 consisted of weak students (WS), Group 2 moderate students (MS), and Group 3 strong students (SS).

**Overall Impressions toward the LACS Instruction**

Perceptions of all 23 students on the LACS instruction were positive. They all reflected in their reflective journals that learning LACS on the OECE course was very useful, regardless of their English proficiency levels, because of the three reasons as follows:

1) **Learning LACS helped students prepare and deliver presentations more effectively on this course:**
   SS7: Learning LACS in class helped me prepare for the oral assessments more effectively, especially LS 4 – Planning for a language task, which helped me plan and organize the presentation and select appropriate language exponents.

2) **Learning LACS boosted students’ self-confidence:**
   MS4: I think learning LACS had helped me become more confident because I’d learned how to organize the information I’d like to talk about. This had really helped me prepare my speeches better, and I could present the information more confidently.

3) **Students could apply LACS on other courses and in their future work:**
   WS6: I think strategies taught in class were useful, and could be applied in other subjects I studied and my future work.

The students’ comments above show that they had positive attitudes toward the LACS instruction. This finding is similar to the findings of the studies by Dörnyei (1995) and Paranapiti (2014). In addition, their comments accentuated the transferability of LACS explicitly taught on this course to other contexts such as other subjects they took and the future work.

**Most Useful Strategies**

When asked to voice their opinions in the interview sessions on the most useful strategies, which they often used to help them perform their oral assessment tasks in the focus group interviews, students in three groups reported that they used different LS.

LS 7 – Lowering anxiety (affective strategy) and LS 2 – Note-taking (cognitive strategy) were the most useful strategies among weak students as shown in the following excerpts:

WS2: The most useful strategy for me was LS 7 – Lowering anxiety. I tried to take a deep breath and relax by not worrying about anything before taking the oral assessments.
WS6: Before taking this course, I wrote my full scripts on an A4 sheet of paper, but now I used LS 2 – Note-taking when preparing my note cards for presentations writing only main ideas in key words in bullet points.

LS 8 – Encouraging yourself (affective strategy) was the most useful LS among moderate students:

MS4: I believe the most important thing for speaking well is having confidence. So, the most useful strategy for me was LS 8 – Encouraging yourself, which made me feel more confident knowing that I was in control and I could do it. Actually, this kind of mentality made my speech flow and really increased my confidence level.

LS 4 – Planning for a language task (metacognitive strategy) was the most useful strategy among strong students:

SS6: The most useful strategy for me was LS 4, which I used when preparing for every oral assessment and preparing my presentations in other subjects. The strategy reminded me to carefully read what the tasks required, to plan how I’d do the tasks step-by-step, to write scripts, and to plan how I’d handle questions from the audience. Before taking this course, my planning was not this thorough, but after I learned this strategy, I understood the importance of planning and have paid more attention on it.

Problems Faced by Three Groups of Students and Their Solutions

While delivering a presentation in the post-test, students encountered different problems as follows:

1) Nervousness
Regardless of their different English proficiency levels, the majority of students (15 students) in all three groups reported in their journals that they were nervous during the presentation. 12 students further reported that their nervousness made them forget some parts of their scripts.

WS5: I got nervous during the post-test, and it made me forget some parts of my script.

2) Other problems
Besides anxiety, other problems students experienced included the following:

3.1 Lack of fluency in giving a presentation:
WS1: I wasn’t prepared well enough, so I wasn’t fluent when presenting the information.

3.2 Ineffective use of body language:
MS6: My body language was not effective during the presentation.

3.3 Some difficulty with pronouncing some words:
SS7: I felt I didn’t pronounce some words clearly.

3.4 Fast pacing:
SS1: I spoke a bit too fast during the presentation.
Some of these problems were spotted by the students during their self-assessment on their performances through watching the video clips.

**Three Approaches to Solving Problems**

Three approaches to tackle problems were employed. First, some students applied strategies taught on the course. Second, a few students used other strategies they discovered, and finally, some students did not use any strategy to solve their problems, but instead made future plans for improvement.

1) **Strategies Used as Solutions**

In order to tackle the anxiety problem, two affective LS: LS 7 – Lowering anxiety through deep breathing and LS 8 – Encouraging yourself through saying positive statements to themselves were employed. 10 students from three groups (2 weak, 4 moderate, and 4 strong students) used LS 7, making it the most frequently used strategy to deal with anxiety. Interestingly, three students (1 weak and 2 strong students) used LS 7 in a combination with LS 8, and only one moderate student applied LS 8.

Besides affective LS, LS 5 – Production monitoring, a metacognitive LS, was applied by a strong student who had difficulty with word pronunciations:

**SS7:** *When I felt I didn’t pronounce some words clearly, I tried to self-monitor which words I had difficulty pronouncing so that after the post-test I could practice pronouncing them more.*

In addition to LS, one moderate student reported her use of CS 5 – Self-repair, reflecting that she self corrected the parts she stumbled:

**MS4:** *Whenever I said something wrong, I corrected myself by restating the whole sentences again to make sure other people understand what I wanted to say.*

Noticeably, only one student reported the use of a CS in her journal. However, the teacher’s observation notes showed that CS 5 was also employed by other three students (WS1, MS7, and SS8) in the three groups, and no one used CS 4 – Use of fillers and hesitation devices during the post-test. The reason that those students did not report their use of CS 5 in their journals might be because they were not aware that they were using this strategy during the test. In this instance, the teacher’s observation notes could prove useful in providing additional information that students forgot to mention. Furthermore, the teacher’s notes indicated that the frequency of the CS 5 use was higher in the pre-test than the post-test, which could be implied that students might be more nervous giving a presentation for the first time on this course and might not be well-prepared. Thus, they tended to trip more often. Nonetheless, the use of CS 1-3 is not reported in this paper because they are cooperative strategies, which could not be used by the students in a one-way communication task like an informative presentation in the pre- and post-tests where there was no Q&A session. Besides CS 5, the teacher’s notes showed that students in all three groups used LS 3 – Using language exponents about delivering a presentation more in the post-test than in the pre-test.
2) Emergence of New Strategies

Apart from using LS 7 and 8 to handle their nervousness during the presentation, three students used other strategies, which were not introduced in the classroom. The first two strategies that two students, one weak and one moderate, used had to do with interacting with the audience:

WS5: I asked the audience questions to calm myself down to gain time to recall the main points he wanted to talk about.

MS4: Maintaining eye contact whenever I forgot my script and was nervous made me feel calmer and showed that I was still with the audience. Also, it helped me recall the main points more quickly.

The other strategy had to do with a tool:

SS3: I found a technique for reducing anxiety on the Internet, which recommended using an aromatic inhalant. So, I tried to sniff it before taking the oral assessments, and it worked very well for me. It really calmed me down and helped me concentrate better.

3) Future Plans for Improvement

Future plans that the students wrote in their journals involved rehearsals. Two weak students reflected in their journals that they felt they did not deliver a presentation fluently in the post-test. This kind of problem could not be solved instantly during the presentation. Therefore, the students wrote their future plans to improve their fluency as follows:

WS1: I didn’t use any strategy, but I know I need to prepare my presentation well in advance and rehearse it more frequently.

WS6: I realized that I needed to rehearse more, especially with my friend so that she could give me feedback for improvement.

One moderate student, who noticed that his body language was not very effective during the presentation, planned to practice speaking in front of a mirror to observe and work on his body language.

MS6: For the future oral assessments, I plan on using techniques I’ve learned in class and on practicing my speech in front of a mirror to improve my body language.

Finally, one strong student, who noticed that he spoke a bit too fast, planned to reduce his speed and to rehearse with a friend for feedback.

SS1: After I had watched my performance on the video, I realized I spoke quite fast, so next time I’ll slow down and use pauses to make my presentation more effective. Also, I’ll rehearse my presentation with my friend in order to get his feedback on my performance.

Their journal excerpts show that all these four students realized the importance of rehearsals, and thus, planned to rehearse their presentations in front of a mirror or with their friends in order to get some feedback for improvement.
Other Qualitative Findings on Students’ Use of LS

The students’ journals revealed that the majority of strong students (5 students) used a combination of different LS for performing the post-test task. Four students employed all three types of cognitive (LS 3 – Recognizing and using language exponents), metacognitive (LS 4 – Planning for a language task and LS 5 – Self-monitoring), and affective (LS 7 – Lowering anxiety and LS 8 – Encouraging yourself) LS. In addition, moderate and weak students applied only cognitive (LS 1 – Getting the idea quickly and LS 3) and affective (LS 7 and 8) LS, with an exception with one moderate student who also applied LS 4 (metacognitive). This particular finding aligns with the result of the study by Gani, Fajrina & Hanifa (2015) in that strong students used a wider range and all kinds of learning strategies more than weak students for improving their speaking skills. Also, it supports the finding of Gerami and Baighlou’s (2011) study in that strong students usually applied metacognitive strategies whereas weak students employed cognitive strategies more.

Although none of the students reported their use of LS 5 – Self-monitoring concerning strategy monitoring and LS 6 Self-evaluation regarding ability evaluation, their reflection in the journals and feedback in the self-assessment forms clearly illustrated that these two strategies had been implemented by all three groups of students. However, the quality of their reflection and self-assessment varied. The majority of strong and moderate students wrote thorough and comprehensive reflections and feedback, whereas the majority of weak students wrote only a few comments and sometimes did not elaborate much. As a result, this study would argue that strong, moderate, and weak students did apply metacognitive strategies, but the quality of their metacognitive output, which showed through their reflections and feedback in the journals and the self-assessment forms, varied depending on their reflection ability.

To summarize, interview scripts and students’ journals indicate that students knew what to do to solve problems and were capable of solving the problems they encountered while delivering a presentation. Most of the students used LACS they had been taught in class, while others used strategies they discovered. Those who did not use any strategy to solve problems at least wrote their plans for improvement.

Conclusion

This study investigates the effects of LACS instruction on economics students’ oral communication ability in Thailand. The findings indicate that the students who received explicit LACS instruction significantly improved their oral presentation test scores. The qualitative data analysis reveals that all 23 students had positive perceptions of the LACS instruction. They found that learning LACS in class was useful because such strategies could be applied on the OECE course and in other subjects when they had to prepare and deliver presentations and could be used when working in the future. Furthermore, students’ reports in their reflective journals and self-assessment forms show that strong students used a combination of all three types (cognitive, metacognitive, and affective) of LS and CS 5 – Self-repair, while moderate and weak students employed a combination of two types (cognitive and affective) of LS and CS 5. Nonetheless, their ability to monitor the learning tasks, to reflect on their strategy use, to plan for future improvement, and to evaluate how well they had performed indicate that strong, moderate, and weak students, in fact, applied metacognitive LS without realizing it.
Recommendations for Further Studies

The present study was conducted with only one group of a small number of participants within a short period of time. Thus, future studies could be conducted with two groups of a larger number of participants to compare the impacts of explicit strategy instruction on the experimental group. In addition, future studies could emphasize raising students’ awareness of their metacognitive LS use to greatly benefit from them. Furthermore, future studies could conduct a delayed post-test to examine whether the positive effects of the strategy instruction on the students’ oral communication ability could be retained over a period of time after the treatment. Equally interesting, future studies could investigate the extent to which the selected LACS in this study are transferrable to other courses the participants will take in the future.

About the Authors:

Mintra Puripunyavanich is a full-time lecturer at Chulalongkorn University Language Institute, Thailand. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Language Institute of Thammasat University majoring in English Language Teaching. Her research interests include language learning and communication strategies instruction, and materials development. http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3672-5268

Assistant Professor Kittitouch Soontornwipast, Ed.D. is a full-time lecturer at Language Institute of Thammasat University. His research interests include teacher training, instructional media, action research for English teachers, and teaching methodology. http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0461-7775

References


Lexical Frequency Effect on Reading Comprehension and Recall

Nadia Nouri
Faculty of Education, Mohammed V University
Rabat, Morocco

Badia Zerhouni
Faculty of Education, Mohammed V University
Rabat, Morocco

Abstract
The present study investigates the effect of lexical difficulty, as measured by frequency, on reading comprehension and recall. It also estimates the relationship between vocabulary size, vocabulary depth, reading comprehension, and recall. To this end, 80 English as a foreign language (EFL) undergraduate university students are administered three standardized instruments including two vocabulary tests and a reading comprehension test. The latter comprises two similar passages (in terms of length and topic) one of which is adjusted by replacing 18% of its words by their low-frequent synonyms, and both passages are estimated lexically to measure their difficulty. Paired samples t-test results show that comprehension and recall are significantly low ($p<.001$) in the modified passage. This finding further confirms that lexical frequency measure is an effective estimate in determining reading material difficulty. Furthermore, for the second objective, Pearson product-moment analysis reveals a significantly high correlation between size and comprehension, a moderate to low correlation between depth and comprehension, and a moderate correlation between depth and recall tasks. Consequently, the study suggests estimating the complexity of EFL reading academic material with lexical difficulty measure using frequency criterion to cope with students’ reading deficiencies, and encourage explicit lexical instructions at EFL undergraduate university levels mainly.

Keywords: lexical frequency, reading comprehension, recall, vocabulary depth, vocabulary size

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Introduction

Research has shown that lexical knowledge constitutes a “pressure point” in reading comprehension (i.e. the linkage between word recognition and text comprehension) (Perfetti, 1985; Perfetti & Hart, 2002; Perfetti, 2007). This is the reason why several researchers have been interested in estimating text difficulty for comprehension. They have designed traditional readability formulas (e.g. Lively & Pressey, 1923; Patty & Painter, 1931; Ojemann, 1934) as well as modern computerized measures (e.g. Lexile, 2007; Milone & Biemiller, 2014; McNamara et al., 2014). These assessment tools show high reliability with reading complexity (Nelson et al., 2012). However, given the different features estimated in these formulas such as word syllables, sentence length, and frequency, it is unclear which aspect better determines reading complexity. An alternative to these formulas is testing text difficulty by word complexity estimate (Chen & Meurers, 2016, 2017). This research paper has opted for this option because it seems more appropriate to the study objectives. The latter, therefore, focuses on investigating the extent to which word difficulty, as measured by frequency, affects reading comprehension and recall, and examining the relationship between Moroccan EFL students’ vocabulary size, depth, reading comprehension, and recall.

Literature Review

Vocabulary Knowledge: Aspects Definition and Relationship

Some researchers contend that knowing a word is characterized by its form, meaning, and use (e.g., Alderson, 2000; Read, 2000; Schmitt, 2000; Nation, 2001). For other researchers, word knowledge includes meaning, usage, grammatical and semantic constraints, associations, and morphology (e.g., Koda, 2005; Bernhardt, 2005; Zhang, 2012). These frameworks are all appropriate to define the construct of interest. However, a better understanding of a word relies on dissecting lexical knowledge into small manageable aspects for insightful testing. In this study, vocabulary knowledge is conceptualized by size and depth dimensions. Vocabulary size is defined as knowing the single meaning of a word, and is estimated by Vocabulary Size Test (VST) (Nation & Beglar, 2007). Vocabulary depth, on the other hand, refers to the degree in which a word is well known, and is measured by Word Associates Test (WAT) (Read, 1993). Anderson and Freebody (1981) are the pioneers of this framework. They advance that internalizing words begins with a shallow knowledge, and as learners proceed in learning, their word mastery deepens as well. Thus, size and depth seem to constitute a continuum, even though some researchers tend to contrast them as two distinct dimensions. In the following paragraphs, discussion will be centered on the relationship between these two aspects of vocabulary knowledge as tested by Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) and Word Associates Test (WAT) in particular.

One of the studies that investigated this issue was conducted by Qian (1998) who investigated the relationship between vocabulary depth, size, and reading comprehension. The sample included 74 learners attending English as second language (ESL) intensive classes in Ontario Universities. His results revealed a significantly strong correlation between VLT and WAT $r=.82$, $p<.05$. After some modifications on the depth measure, Qian concluded that depth adds a unique contribution to reading comprehension. One probable reason for such a finding is that some words from the reading test are also part of the depth measure. Therefore, participants
who responded correctly to the target words in the depth test might probably have found it easier to comprehend these items in the reading test context. To account for this side effect, Qian varied the order of the tests’ administration in each testing session by administering, for example, the reading test before depth and size tests in one session and administering depth test first followed by size and reading measures in another session. However, possible learning of the target words may still happen if depth test is administered before reading.

In a sequel study, Qian (2002) investigated a large sample composed of 217 students attending an intensive ESL program at Toronto University and coming from nineteen first language (L1) backgrounds. Results revealed that correlation between VLT and WAT was not as high as in his 1998 findings, with a coefficient of $r=.70$, $p<.01$. One possible explanation of such finding might be the diversity of participants’ L1 backgrounds. It is quite probable that one sub-sample of participants might have a better developed lexical knowledge than other sub-samples given different learning experiences and the amount of lexical input they might have accumulated. Besides, lower correlations have been found as well in the VLT-WAT comparison conducted by Zhang and Horiba’s studies (2012) on Chinese learners with a coefficient around $r=.52$, $p<.01$.

It should be noted, based on the findings of most studies conducted on this issue, including those reported in this section that no negative correlation has been revealed between vocabulary size and depth. This may indicate that these two lexical dimensions are not separate entities as supported by a number of researchers (Read, 2004; Milton, 2009; Henriksen, 1999). However, size and depth seem to converge more largely at advanced proficiency levels.

Concerning measurement of lexical size, there is a fundamental difference between a diagnostic measure and an overall performance test. Thus VLT, despite its high reliability and close relation to depth is only a diagnostic test, as it merely estimates ‘slices’ of lexical items across five frequency levels (i.e. 2000, 3000, 5000, the university word list, and 10000 word level). Therefore, even though it is widely used in lexical studies, it should not be interpreted as an estimate or even a proxy measure of size (Nation, personal communication). For this reason, the present study has opted for an alternative estimate: Vocabulary Size Test (VST) (Nation & Beglar, 2007). It consists of 14 frequency levels, including 10 items per level. However, given the limited lexical competency of the present study participants, and based on the test piloting, it was judged adequate not to include the last four levels in the administered version though Nation (2012) recommends completing the whole test. This omission was based on the researchers’ belief that it would not distort the overall measure, and, at the same time, would reveal the actual lexical proficiency of the participants. Another reason for choosing VST is its ability to distinguish different vocabulary sizes, which plays a highly important role in reading comprehension investigation (Stuart & Kramer, 2015).

Few researchers working on vocabulary size and depth have been concerned with text difficulty even though performance in reading comprehension is not only related to readers’ lexical knowledge, but also to the complexity of the reading material. Generally, the latter issue is tackled through deletion, instruction, and substitution studies of vocabulary. However, to the best of the
researchers’ knowledge, it has not been fairly related to vocabulary size and depth. The following sections discuss the role of lexical difficulty in estimating text complexity, and shed light on word information level of texts, which is central to the present study.

**Lexical Frequency, Word Information Level, and Reading Comprehension**

Based on the ‘Lexical Quality Hypothesis’ (Perfetti & Hart, 2002), word frequency is the result of the benefits of language learning experience. Higher frequency words make their meaning and form “a more stable constituent compared with the lower frequency meaning” (Perfetti et al., 2002, p. 194). This concept is associated with the semantic aspect of lexis mainly. Besides, Anderson and Freebody (1979) define frequency as “a characteristic of a word which probably is very strongly related to the chances that the word will be known” (p. 23). For this reason, performance in reading comprehension can be analyzed from a lexical perspective.

Frequency researchers have conducted several studies to determine the cut-off line between high and low-frequency levels, using English corpora. For example, Nation (2001) suggests that 2000-word families are the upper line of high frequency. He also contends that a critical goal of 8000-word families is what learners need to read complex written texts (Nation, 2006). Academic material is specifically the most demanding in reading as it may require this threshold to attain comprehension and learning (Schmitt, 2010). A good question to ask here is whether Moroccan EFL learners reach this threshold at the undergraduate university level. Another point worth inquiring in further studies is whether, with this objective, a cut-off line of high frequency is still 2000-word families. Schmitt (2010) indicates that it is difficult to stop at this category line of high frequency, and suggests three frequency bands to bridge the gap between high and low frequencies: 1000-3000 word families range is high, 3000-7000 is mid, and 8000-10000 is low frequency (Schmitt, 2014). Based on Schmitt (2014) categorization, academic EFL material may fall within the mid-low category.

Furthermore, text coverage is highly related to comprehension. Thus, in reading, 95% (Laufer, 1989) and 98% (Hu & Nation, 2000) of the running words in texts should be familiar to readers. In this regard, Schmitt (2010) clarifies that these rates have become a rule of thumb thanks to the number of studies reporting them and that specialists of texts coverage did not intend in the first place to make these figures a reference given the limited number of participants in their studies and the small number of texts analyzed. One should question, therefore, whether these ratios are universal for reading comprehension. Practically, it seems unrealistic to teach systematically the lexical knowledge needed for 95% or 98% of text coverage in an EFL context.

Mezynski (1983), on the other hand, points out interestingly that the proportion of unknown words within a text is not as important as that of words with high information level. This claim puts coverage equations into query. From these conflicting perspectives, one may question whether readers need to know only the words with high information level to achieve comprehension. Unlike marginal words, items with high information value give significant information about the meaning of sentences in a passage. Adams and Bruce (1980) clarify this by the following example “the discovery of a number of fossilized porbeagles in Kansas is intriguing” (p.8). If one does not know
that porbeagles are ‘large ocean-dwelling fish’ and that ‘intriguing’ means ‘fascinating’, it will be difficult to comprehend the meaning of this sentence (Mezynski, 1983, p. 261). Though this seems self-evident, it is still unclear whether such category of words serves comprehension or percentages of text coverage mentioned before do so.

Researchers using cloze technique reveal the importance of lexical information value. They have shown that skilled readers are able to understand texts where up to 30% of the words have been omitted (Nacke, 1970; Martin & Pantalion, 1973). In this regard, Mezynski (1983) states that “the important factor in these deletion studies is the information level of the words. The absence of low information words does not hinder comprehension considerably” (p. 261). Similarly, Stratton and Nacke (1974) indicate that “readers more frequently encounter problems with inadequate vocabulary when a word of high information value is unfamiliar” (p.186 in Mezynski, 1983, p. 261).

To examine the effect of word frequency on reading comprehension, Marks, Doctorow, and Wittrock (1974) conducted a reading experiment wherein 15% of lexical items in five texts were substituted into low and high frequency levels. T-test analysis results showed that when learners were exposed to ‘hard’ versions of the texts followed by ‘easy’ ones, comprehension was remarkably low at the beginning but improved later. However, when ‘easy’ versions were given first, there was no difference in comprehension. In this study, one would draw two conclusions: learners seem to learn low-frequency words meaning from their high frequent synonyms when easy versions of texts are administered first, and low-frequency words seem to deteriorate comprehension performance when no prior simplification was provided.

Anderson and Freebody (1981) reported two experiments of reading using sixth-grade pupils. The first experiment controlled the number of unknown words, and the second one varied the importance level of unfamiliar items with regard to the passage. The post-reading tasks required were free recall, writing a summary statement, and sentence recognition (i.e. deciding whether some ideas belong to the texts). Findings indicated in the first experiment that comprehension was not highly affected when only one out of six words (1/6) was replaced with a low-frequency synonym. However, when one out of three (1/3) words was substituted, comprehension declined significantly in the sentence recognition task especially. This means that in 1/3 there are two chances of encountering an unfamiliar word in a six-word string. In other words, the density of unfamiliar words influences comprehension. One question to raise concerning these experiments is whether the substituted words are key items in the texts. The variance of word information value is another crucial point to highlight in the second experiment. The effect of unfamiliar words with high information level is unclear since they are altered by low information ones. Thus, the variety of these interactions may cause some confusion in the results. For this reason, interpretations of the second findings should be cautious.

Measuring Text Difficulty with Lexical Complexity

As mentioned earlier, a large number of readability formulas have been designed to estimate text complexity. Several criteria have been employed in these measures causing different
interactions between aspects. The latter makes it difficult to know which element determines text complexity most. None of the formulas, however, focuses exclusively on the effect of frequency on reading comprehension (Chen & Meurers, 2016).

There is a consensus among specialists in reading research that lexical coverage and vocabulary knowledge are strong predictors of reading comprehension (Laufer, 1992; Qian, 1998, 2002; Nation, 2001, 2006). A reader’s vocabulary knowledge is highly attributed to the amount of lexical input to which they have been exposed (Chen et al., 2016). This is referred to as ‘frequency effect’ (Perfetti et al., 2002; Chen et al., 2016, 2017). Ryder and Slater (1988) have confirmed that frequency predicts word difficulty. It seems thus that high-frequency words are perceived more quickly than low frequency ones (Rayner & Duffy, 1986). Therefore, estimating text difficulty on a frequency basis is fundamental in reading research.

Frequency effect is discussed in the literature based on a cognitive model. It assumes ‘high activation’ for frequent words in the mental lexicon while a reader is processing written texts (Just & Carpenter, 1980). This goes in line with the ‘Lexical Quality Hypothesis’ (LQH) initially labeled as ‘Verbal Efficiency Theory’ (Perfetti, 1985) and later developed by Perfetti and Hart (2002). LQH suggests that words with high representation are likely to be ‘effortlessly’ accessed by readers. This means that a word form and meaning are strongly linked to one another and can be retrieved whenever the item is encountered in reading. Moving beyond this basic notion, Ellis (2012) states “frequency distribution of input is a key determinant of language acquisition, with regularities emerging through the learner’s exposure to the distributional characteristics of the language input” (p.85). Hence, estimating text complexity in terms of word difficulty provides insightful considerations to EFL acquisition.

While findings reviewed here suggest the crucial role of low-frequency words in reading comprehension, it is unclear what type of information level these words have. This explains the choice of the present study to substitute high information value words by low-frequent synonyms. Furthermore, estimating the whole text difficulty with frequency measure highlights the role of high information value words in comprehension, and puts into question text coverage of 95 and 98% suggested by Laufer (1989) and Hu & Nation (2000) respectively as mentioned earlier.

The Current Study

As mentioned earlier, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between lexical frequency, reading comprehension, and recall. Approximately, 18% of the most important words in one of two texts used in the study have been substituted by low frequent synonyms to examine the extent to which a small proportion of unknown words may influence participants’ reading comprehension (Mezynski, 1983) and recall (Anderson & Freebody, 1981). Text difficulty is thus measured in terms of word frequency to highlight the importance of lexical frequency model in estimating readability at EFL university level (Chen & Meurers, 2016). Frequency here is mainly characterized by the semantic variable, referring to readers’ ability to relate text words to their pre-existing vocabulary knowledge (Marks et al., 1974; Ryder & Slater, 1988). Semantic variable of word frequency has been found to account for the variances in reading comprehension (Marks et
al., 1974). Also, based on the Lexical Quality Hypothesis (Perfetti & Hart, 2002), this investigation examines the relationship between vocabulary size, depth, and reading comprehension.

**Methods**

**Participants**

Eighty EFL third-year university students from Mohammed V University-Rabat, Morocco participated in this study. The sample consisted of 47 females (58.75%) and 33 males (41.25%) with an age range between 20 and 27 years.

One single university level has been involved in this study for two reasons. First and foremost, third-year students are assumed to constitute the ideal target population for the present research given the considerable amount of lexical knowledge they have accumulated thanks to the language input they have been exposed to during their EFL learning experience. Second, because of the study complexity, it has been judged preferable to limit its scope to one educational level.

**Measures**

Data has been collected based on two lexical tests and one reading comprehension test. Each of these instruments is discussed in the following sections.

**Vocabulary Size Test (VST)** designed by Nation and Beglar (2007) is used to examine students’ vocabulary size. It has a high Cronbach’s alpha reliability of 0.92, based on the 10th 1000-word families used. As mentioned before, the last four levels were removed due to their difficulty level for the study sample. Besides, VST estimates mainly acquired vocabulary. In each item, the test provides non-contextualized sentences and closely related options in meaning. Thus, informed guessing is difficult to make (Nation, 2012). In scoring, 1 point is worth every correct answer and the total score is multiplied by 100.

**Word Associates Test (WAT)** developed by Read (1993) is used to measure students’ vocabulary depth. It examines how well learners know vocabulary in three word aspects: synonymy, polysemy, and collocations. Forty adjectives are tested in this measure with an indirect insight into nouns. In scoring, each correct response is worth 1 point with originally a 160 maximum possible score. After piloting the test, however, four difficult items were removed. Therefore, the actual maximum possible score is 144 instead of 160 points. Moreover, WAT has a high Cronbach’s alpha reliability of 0.96, which confirms previous studies’ reliability estimate (e.g. Read, 1993, 1995).

**Reading Comprehension (RC)** is a standardized multiple choice question test used to examine basic comprehension. It is drawn from ‘Scholastic Assessment Test’ (SAT) in ‘Critical Reading for SAT’ testing manual (Paul & Roger, 2008, pp. 15-23). RC section in SAT examines academic English for students willing to pursue their studies in US College. The main reason for using this test as an RC estimate is the similarity in terms of length and topic of the two passages it includes. Both are around 552 tokens in length and related to politics. Another reason is that its comprehension questions do not relate to one another, revealing students’ actual understanding of
the passages. To investigate the effect of a small percent of unfamiliar words on comprehension, only the first passage (hereafter RC₁) was adjusted. Hence, 18% of its high information value words were replaced with their low frequent synonyms. The objective was to examine the extent to which a low percent of this type of words may influence comprehension and thus estimate text complexity in terms of lexical difficulty, and foreground the importance of teaching this lexical category.

The two passages include multiple-choice questions that are straightforward and literal with a maximum possible score of 17 (nine questions for RC₁ and eight for RC₂). Indeed, there was a need to reduce RC length due to the large number of items in the lexical tests in order to lessen examinees’ fatigue and maximize their motivation to answer the three tests items completely. Finally, like the vocabulary tests, RC measure has a high parallel-form reliability of 0.81, indicating estimation of the same skills: text word meaning recognition and comprehension.

Recall is the second sub-section of RC test wherein students are required to write the ideas they retain from each passage to assess their comprehension. Texts analysis into different levels of idea units was based on Zerhouni’s hierarchy (1998). Thus, at the highest level are main ideas of the text (allotted 2 points), followed by secondary ideas directly supporting them (allotted 1.5); then tertiary ideas of less importance (allotted 1); and at the last are quaternary ideas which constitute minor ideas (i.e. details) (allotted 0.5) (Zerhouni, 1998, p. 66). This classification helps to determine which type of ideas students with different lexical knowledge understand and recall. In statistical analysis of results, recall of RC₁ and RC₂ were compared to one another and correlated with vocabulary size and depth.

Frequency was estimated to determine the lexical difficulty of both reading passages. Following Chen et al (2016) method, the present study measured the mean and standard deviation of the word-frequency levels in each passage. Prior to this are two steps to report here. First, words were tokenized wherein all function items and proper nouns were eliminated because they are highly frequent and carry less meaning. Passages were then manually entered into software called range (available in Nation’s official website) to supply the number of word tokens and types. This operation revealed that RC₁ counted 130-word types and RC₂ 145. Word type was used as a basis for this analysis because it provides a better estimate of text difficulty than that of word token (Chen & Meurers, 2017). The second step consisted in matching word types of the passages with the stratified frequency lists of headwords developed from British Nation Corpus (BNC) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Nation, 2012). Indeed, using two corpora that cover a wide range of written as well as spoken lexis in natural language learning enables a better estimate of word frequency (Chen et al., 2016) and receptive lexical knowledge of learners.

Data on frequency estimate is ordinal (i.e. from the highest to the lowest levels). Sums of lexical items in each frequency level were counted and divided by the total number of word types.

For instance, in RC₁ the percentage of words in the 2nd 1000 frequency level is \( \frac{15}{130} = 11.54\% \) whereas in RC₂ it is \( \frac{34}{145} = 23.45\% \). Figure 1 presents graphically the percentages of
word types across the frequency spectrum. It shows that the second passage contains a large number of high-frequency words and low percentages of low frequency words starting from the fourth frequency level, RC₂ (\(M= 1.64, SD= 1.12\)). The first passage, on the other hand, consists of more low frequency words, RC₁ (\(M= 1.98, SD= 1.84\)). The means and standard deviations presented here reveal that RC₁ is lexically more difficult than RC₂.

![Type Model](image)

**Figure 1.** Word frequency percentages of passage 1 & 2

**Procedure**

Test administration took place before the final exams of the academic year (March 2016). Prior to testing, professors were briefed about the objectives of the study and the instruments used to collect data. Students were informed then about the reasons of the researcher’s visit and the importance of participating in this study to contribute to research. Students willingly accepted to take the tests for their curiosity to find out the quantity and quality of their vocabulary knowledge. Besides, the testing maximum time was two hours, and the number of students in every session - ranging from five to 17 - was manageable for supervision with a total of six sessions. All tests were in paper-and-pencil format and students were allowed to take five minutes break in between tests.

**Data Analyses**

Data collected from the three instruments, namely VST, WAT, and RC is interval in nature. This is because the present study attempts to look into the effect and type of relationships among variables. Data was analyzed through SPSS 22 software. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were run. Inferential statistics include paired samples t-test to check the significance level of the effect of lexical difficulty on comprehension and recall, and Pearson product-moment correlation to estimate the relationship between scores on vocabulary size, depth, comprehension, and recall. For the purposes of the present study, scores of the three tests were converted into 100 to be evenly analyzed.
Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables. The first row concerns the vocabulary size test (VST); the second row is devoted to vocabulary depth (WAT); the third and fourth rows (RC₁ and RC₂) refer to the first and the second sub-measures of reading comprehension respectively; and the fifth and sixth rows are devoted to recall of passage 1 and 2.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum of all research variables (N=80)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VST</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>93.00</td>
<td>62.88</td>
<td>16.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAT</td>
<td>29.86</td>
<td>88.89</td>
<td>61.97</td>
<td>14.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC₁</td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>67.67</td>
<td>39.32</td>
<td>15.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC₂</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>59.53</td>
<td>19.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall 1</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>40.50</td>
<td>17.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall 2</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>45.75</td>
<td>20.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a reminder, the first objective of the study is to investigate whether lexical difficulty, as estimated by frequency, has an effect on reading comprehension and recall. Frequency variable is analyzed here from the semantic perspective since it has a direct impact on reading comprehension (Marks et al., 1974). As shown in descriptive statistics (Table 1), the mean of RC₁ is lower than that of RC₂, indicating a low performance in the first passage and higher scores in the second one. Similarly, the mean of the first passage recall is lower than that of the second passage. However, it is unclear at this stage whether the difference is statistically significant. Table 2 shows paired samples t-test results where scores on RC₁ and RC₂ as well as the first and the second recalls are contrasted.

The second objective is to estimate the relationship between scores on vocabulary size, depth, comprehension, and recall. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to measure these relationships, with vocabulary knowledge (i.e. size and depth) being the independent variable and comprehension and recall the dependent variables. As shown by research (e.g. Qian, 1998, 2002), vocabulary knowledge has a close relationship with reading, however, it is unclear which aspect of lexical knowledge is more required to ensure comprehension. Analyzing the variables’ connections helps also to determine the lexical threshold Moroccan EFL BA (Bachelor of Arts) learners reach. In fact, this paper focuses on basic comprehension to foreground previous findings relative to this question. Table 3 presents the results concerning this objective.
Table 2. Paired samples t-test of RC and recall (N=80)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig (1-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RC1 - RC2</td>
<td>-20.20160</td>
<td>-12.892</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall 1 - Recall 2</td>
<td>-5.25000</td>
<td>-2.651</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance level p< 0.01 (one-tailed)

Regarding the first objective of the study, a one-tailed paired samples t-test revealed that students scored less in the first sub-test of reading comprehension (RC1) ($M = 39.32, SD = 15.85$) compared to their performance in RC2 ($M = 59.53, SD = 19.30$), t(79) = -12.892, $p<.001$. Results, in Table 2, showed a statistically significant difference between participants’ performance in RC1 and RC2. As mentioned earlier, RC test has a high reliability of 0.81 using parallel form analysis to account for the similarity of the skills estimated in both sub-tests. The two passages differ only in terms of the difficulty created in RC1 through the substitution of a small percent of frequent lexis of high information level by less frequent synonyms compared to the high frequencies of key words in RC2. Measurement of the overall lexical difficulty of the passages shows that frequency mean and standard deviation of (RC1) is ($M = 1.98, SD = 1.84$), whereas that of RC2 is ($M = 1.64, SD = 1.12$). This indicates that RC1 is more demanding than RC2 given the lexical difficulty of the first passage. Stratifying frequency levels of the words into bands (i.e. high, mid, and low) gives an insightful description (Schmitt, 2014). It confirms that the first passage has more mid-low frequency words than the second passage.

As also revealed by t-test results of free recall task (Table 2), participants recalled fewer ideas from RC1 ($M = 40.50, SD = 17.56$) compared to RC2 ($M = 45.75, SD = 20.17$), t(79) = -2.651, $p<.01$. RC1 recall protocols included minor details but fewer major points due to the difficult words substituted for the passage high information level words which, most probably, hindered comprehension.

Table 3. Correlations between VST, WAT, RC1&2, and recall 1&2 (N=80)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>VST</th>
<th>WAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAT</td>
<td>.677**</td>
<td>.440**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC1</td>
<td>.717**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RC2</td>
<td>.594**</td>
<td>.384**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall 1</td>
<td>.499**</td>
<td>.506**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recall 2</td>
<td>.590**</td>
<td>.568**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significance level p< 0.01 (one-tailed)
Concerning the second objective, Table 3 shows high, moderate to low correlations among variables. To begin with the results of lexical knowledge, tested through vocabulary size (VST) ($M=62.88$, $SD=16.01$) and vocabulary depth (WAT) ($M=61.97$, $SD=14.50$), Pearson’s $r$ data analysis revealed a significantly moderate positive correlation, $r = .677$, $p < .01$. That is, students who scored high in vocabulary size had somewhat high scores in depth and vice versa. As for the relationship between VST and RC$_1$ ($M=39.32$, $SD=15.85$), the correlation coefficient was significantly high, $r = .717$, $p < .01$, whereas it was remarkably low, $r = .440$, $p < .01$ for the WAT - RC$_1$ relationship. Lower correlation coefficients were also found between the two lexical aspects and the second reading sub-measure. VST and RC$_2$ ($M=59.53$, $SD=19.30$) had a moderate positive correlation, $r = .594$, whereas relationship between WAT and RC$_2$ revealed a significantly low correlation, $r = .384$. These results show that VST correlates higher with RC$_1$ and RC$_2$ whereas WAT lags behind considerably, and that performance in RC$_1$ required more lexical competence compared to RC$_2$.

As exhibited by table 3, recall had significantly moderate to low correlations with VST and WAT. A Pearson product-moment $r$ analysis revealed a low positive correlation between VST and recall 1 ($M=40.50$, $SD=17.56$), $r = .499$, $p < .01$. Interestingly, the correlation between WAT and RC$_1$ recall was higher, with a coefficient of $r = .506$. On the other hand, scores on RC$_2$ recall ($M=45.75$, $SD=20.17$) correlated moderately with VST and WAT, $r = .590$, $r = .568$, $p < .01$ respectively. To sum up, performance in recall can be ascribed to the degree to which the lexicon used obscures the passage meanings.

Discussion

The present study explored the effect of lexical difficulty estimated by frequency (Chen & Meurers, 2016) on reading comprehension and recall. It also investigated the relationship between vocabulary size, depth, reading comprehension, and recall.

For the first objective, the level of lexical complexity seems to have an effect on reading comprehension and recall. Thus, lexical difficulty hinders both comprehension and recall. Table 2 shows a statistically significant difference between scores obtained in students’ performance in passage 1 as compared to passage 2. These results corroborate those of previous studies, which came to the same conclusion (Marks et al., 1974; Anderson et al., 1981). Consequently, the lexical frequency model is confirmed to estimate efficiently text difficulty (Chen et al., 2016, 2017). Unlike Anderson et al. (1981) findings, however, free recall seems to decrease in the lexically difficult passage. This discrepancy is probably due to the variety of information level of substituted words in their experiments.

Thus, the lexicality of a text is fundamental to comprehension, particularly if the proportion of unknown words is of high information value (Stratton & Nacke, 1974; Mezynski, 1983). For this reason, comprehension performance declined in the first passage while it was higher in the second one as table 1 shows. More importantly, skilled readers are known for having high representations of lexis in their mental lexicon (Klare, 1968). These representations are probably the different aspects of words that can be epitomized in high and low frequently used synonyms, as it can be exemplified in word use and its different meanings. Hence, students with poor or low
lexical representations do not exhibit a good control of comprehending texts while reading. Vocabulary learning, therefore, seems to be learners’ burden (Nation, personal communication) since it highly influences other language skills such as reading. However, if learning is generally fine-tuned to students’ levels and needs, they can achieve better results. For example, estimating the difficulty of academic materials might be the initial solution to resort to at the EFL undergraduate levels. This is not to be considered as an extra load of work for teachers, but a necessary step for the reform of university educational system. Hence, assembling a corpus of estimated reading material can be an effective method to start with.

Recall of the two passages has further confirmed participants’ level of understanding and retrieving ideas from the reading material. Thus, students scoring high in vocabulary size and depth recalled more ideas than those with lower scores in the lexical tests. As a reminder, ideas in the recall task have been categorized according to Zerhouni’s hierarchy (1998, p.66) (see methods). The order of these ideas is crucial as it demonstrates whether readers have grasped the passage fully or only partially. Therefore, recall is a crucial technique for evaluating comprehension and retrieval of text content. It seems that the more ideas students recall from a passage, the more cognitive effort they make in deciphering word meaning (Anderson & Freebody, 1981).

As for the second objective of the study, it has been shown that vocabulary knowledge has a close relationship with comprehension and recall. This confirms results from previous studies (Qian, 1998, 2002; Zhang, 2012; Horiba, 2012). Interestingly, vocabulary size correlates higher with reading comprehension in both passages compared to vocabulary depth. The latter, however, correlates highly with the recall task. This may indicate that for basic reading comprehension, vocabulary size is more of a powerful lexical component. Qian’s (1998, 2002) results may refute this claim since depth was found to be a stronger indicator of reading in his studies. However, one should note that Qian’s findings might be due to the effect of depth adjustments. To explain, this researcher substituted 10 words from vocabulary depth test (Read, 1993) with words and their stimuli from the RC test he employed in his investigation. In this case, one cannot disregard the interwoven effect of the two tests ten identical items on students’ answer. If lexical items happen to appear twice in different measures, students are likely to learn them and be able to answer correctly. Above all, this may confirm the idea of “pressure point”, mentioned earlier, in reading comprehension (Perfetti, 1985; Perfetti et al., 2002; Perfetti, 2007). Though different reading tasks (i.e. comprehension or recall) may necessitate different lexical knowledge, the latter remains a pressure point between word recognition and text comprehension. It can also be interpreted as the transactional phase between the meaning of the text and the meaning understood by the reader through associating text words with his/her mental lexicon (Marks et al, 1974; Ryder & Slater, 1988).

Indeed, qualitative assessment of texts is subjective as it may differ from one reader to another. It is based on an impressionistic view mainly. The conceptual shift from word to text meaning in comprehension requires a quantitative evaluation of text lexis. This is because words can be tokenized and analyzed objectively. As research studies reported above have shown, lexicon is a crucial component for understanding and conveying verbal ideas. Though such a numerical analysis seems to be valid in basic comprehension, it may not be sufficient in other comprehension
levels (critical reading especially). The reason is that further factors such as the writer’s intentions and the socio-cultural context of text events have to be taken into consideration in assessing reading materials level of difficulty in congruence with learners’ reading proficiency level. Thus, demanding comprehension levels necessitate complex analyses in order to come up with different assessment techniques for a better evaluation of students’ reading comprehension deficiencies.

**Implications and Conclusion**

As findings of the present study show, text complexity can be estimated from a lexical perspective using a frequency model. This indicates the crucial role of vocabulary, especially semantic frequency, in reading comprehension and recall. It is therefore essential for EFL teachers to allocate some time to systematically teach and test vocabulary, and to teach words in association since they are stored in the mental lexicon as a network. Besides, given the semantic load of lexical items, students should be exposed both to their high and low synonyms. More importantly, estimating text difficulty for different academic levels is crucial for selecting reading materials whose degree of lexical difficulty is in accordance with students’ levels. Similarly, it is also recommended that students applying for English departments sit for a standardized lexical test as an effective assessment tool for their placement. Another suggestion based on this study findings is to provide EFL University students with training in reading and vocabulary learning strategies in order to equip them with helpful tools to overcome anxiety toward reading in general, better benefit from their reading lessons and assignments, and to systematically expose them to a wide range of lexis. Additionally, an EFL corpus of estimated reading material should be assembled and put at the disposal of teachers. Finally, the present investigation was limited to basic comprehension; thus, measuring the frequency effect on higher levels of comprehension is recommended to fully grasp this issue.

**About the Authors:**

**Nadia Nouri** is a Ph.D. candidate in “Applied Linguistics and TEFL” research unit at the Doctoral Center of the Faculty of Education, Mohammed V University-Rabat, Morocco. She holds a master degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from Ibn Tofail University, Kenitra-Morocco, and is currently teaching English at the American Language Center in Rabat and at the INPT (Posts and Telecommunication National Institute).

ORCid ID: 0000-0001-9775-3102

**Pr. Badia Zerhouni** (Ph.D. holder from Ottawa University) is an associate professor of Applied Linguistics at the Faculty of Education, Rabat, Morocco, and former director of the Doctoral Center of the Faculty of Education. She currently teaches and supervises research projects in MA Applied Linguistics /ELT programs and supervises doctoral research in different subjects related to AL/ELT. Her research interests include reading, writing, and vocabulary acquisition in EFL contexts.

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References


Chinese Overseas Students’ Perspectives on Benefits and Limitations of English Language Learning and Teaching between China and Thailand

Singhanat Nomnian
Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia (RILCA)
Mahidol University, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand

Abstract
This research aims to explore Chinese overseas students at a Thai university with regard to their perceived benefits and limitations, which are underpinned by the cultures of English language learning and teaching in China and in Thailand. Drawing upon the notion of “cultures of learning” (Cortazzi & Jin, 2013; Jin & Cortazzi, 1993, 1996), this study investigates the students’ expectations, beliefs, and values in terms of effective teaching styles, approaches and methods, learning strategies and styles, classroom interactions, activities, and the appropriate rapport between students and teacher. Based on the students’ focus-group data, the findings reveal that the Chinese students compared and contrasted the benefits and limitations in terms of educational philosophies, values, policies, and practices, linguistic and cultural diversity, and sociocultural contexts, which impacted on their situated learning styles and strategies. “Cultures of learning” were linguistically specific, culturally sensitive, contextually dependent, dynamic, agentive, and non-generalizable. The pedagogical implications are related to Chinese students’ academic, socio-psychological, socio-economic, cultural and political dimensions. This study addresses the students’ beliefs and practices in a language and culture immersion program at a Thai university, which, in retrospect, promote culturally appropriate and sensitive teaching of English for comparative overseas education between China and Thailand.

Keywords: Chinese overseas students, cultures of learning, English language teaching and learning, Thai university

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Introduction
Chinese students have globally mobilized to study and seek internationally-recognized degrees for overseas higher education (UNESCO, 2013; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014). A steady increase in a number of outbound Chinese students in higher education worldwide has clearly been evident and well-documented nearly the last decade (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1. A number of outbound Chinese students mobility in tertiary education from 2011-2017 (Adapted from: http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?queryid=172#)](image)

In addition, based on World Education News and Reviews, Luo (2017) points out that there is an upward growth of overseas Chinese students in world-class universities in Asia due to the internationalization of Asian higher education and regional promising roadmaps such as One Belt and One Road (OBOR) initiatives, and the Asian Universities Alliance, which serve not only as a resource exchanging platform by facilitating more cross-border research activities, but also establish collaborative efforts by sharing values and common interests among staff and students within the Asian region.

According to Hui (2017), OBOR Initiatives have attracted more than 30,000 Chinese students to enroll in management, marketing and Thai language programs at Thai public and private universities in 2016. Thai higher education, as a result, also enjoys this regional university collaboration as it can benefit cross-border mobility of Chinese staff and students to build academic and research partnerships (Wattana, 2018).

Due to an increasing number of Chinese students in Thai universities, several studies (e.g., Lin & Kingmingkhae, 2014; Songsathaphorn et al., 2014; Yin et al., 2015; Yingxui & Noungbunnak, 2016) focus on Chinese international students’ satisfaction and decision-making factors for Thai higher education. Studies with an emphasis on the concept of “cultures of learning,” particularly between China and Thailand, are rather limited.

According to Cortazzi and Jin (2013), the concept of “cultures of learning” should be fundamentally recognized when it comes to teaching and learning international students because:
There is no expectation that every member of a particular group thinks or must behave in identical or even similar ways, despite group trends. Thus, the notion of applying a cultures of learning framework to classroom interaction with international students, say, should not involve reducing them to an oversimplified view, or one invoking stereotypes; on the contrary, the notion of cultures of learning has been developed precisely to counter stereotypes by focusing on specific aspects of real learning and getting those insider perspectives, preferably through research in which illuminate the activities and thinking of real learners or teachers in authentic contexts through rich data (p.3).

In this study, the “cultures of learning” concept can potentially unveil the views of Chinese overseas students undertaking a 10-month language and culture immersion program at a research-based university in Thailand. Throughout the course of their study, the students have gained experiences and attempted to acculturate themselves in Thai academic and social contexts. They have learned a variety of subjects including Advanced Thai Speaking and Writing, Media, Thai Society, Thai Arts and Culture, Translation, Interpretation, Internship, and Advanced English Speaking and Writing.

English is not only a required subject in Chinese and Thai higher education, but also a globally powerful lingua franca that increases the international mobility for Chinese students (Börjesson, 2017). This cross-cultural case study of a group of Chinese overseas students in a leading research-based university in Thailand potentially provides a stepping stone to explore their comparative viewpoints regarding cultures of English learning and teaching in Chinese and Thai higher education institutions.

**Literature Review**

The notion of “cultures of learning” (Cortazzi & Jin, 2013; Jin & Cortazzi, 1993, 1996) is employed in this study as “cultures” are often considered as complex, dynamic, changing, with shared common values, and yet recognized differences, which can contextually distinguish one group’s behaviors from another. “Cultures of learning” are thus ways of reciprocal exchanges between:

Learning about others’ learning and therefore learning about ourselves: It means learning more about ways of learning. Thus the culture of learners and teachers is not ‘background’; it means sets of fore grounded and explicit cultural processes which actually have a center-stage role, one which we can spotlight in research (Cortazzi & Jin, 2013, p.2).

Chinese overseas students’ academic practices and attitudes toward learning are mainly based on Confucious beliefs concerning a collective orientation, which is different from the individualism in Western academic culture (Yuan & Xie, 2013). Jin and Cortazzi (1993, 1996) identify cultural gaps and attitudes of Chinese international students toward British academic systems in terms of teachers’ expectations, beliefs, and values contributing to effective teaching styles, approaches and methods, learning strategies and styles, classroom interactions, activities, and the appropriate roles and relationships between students and teachers. Chinese students are negatively perceived as passive, silent, non-critical, and teacher-dependent, which are not suitable for Western academic practices and expectations (Cortazzi & Jin, 2013).
Due to the internationalization of higher education, the “cultures of learning” concept has been applied, extended and redefined in a number of Chinese students’ study abroad research. In the UK higher education, Yuan and Xie (2013), for example, view a reciprocally dynamic relationship between Chinese students and their British supervisors as waves and coastlines, which portray a constantly changing and evolving movement of both parties’ cultures of learning. Ryan (2013) suggests the mutual benefits shared by British and Chinese cultures of learning that promote intercultural and intellectual exchanges for enhancing experiences and knowledge for both parties.

In the US higher education, Chao et al. (2017), for instance, state that Chinese middle-class international students in American universities are motivated by non-Chinese cultural aspects in the US in order to understand the demand of the internationalization of business and global economy for achieving their long-term and prospective career path to become highly competitive international workforce. Cebolla-Boado et al. (2018), on the other hand, claim that Chinese overseas students are motivated to study in British universities not only due to non-career purposes, but they also would like to gain self-realization and cultural experience to be considered as active and mobile individuals.

The aforementioned studies conducted in Western academic settings where English is used as a first language and medium of instruction tend to represent and stereotype Chinese overseas students in these English-speaking higher education institutions as problematic, linguistically incapable, and culturally inappropriate that impedes the students’ academic achievement and constrains their social integration on campus (Fraiberg et al., 2017; Su & Harrison, 2016). Studies regarding Chinese students in Thai higher education where English is used as a foreign language, however, address wider sociocultural and economic issues. Lin’s study (2014), based on the surveys of Chinese undergraduates in Thai universities, found that lower-income rural students were more motivated and hard-working in order to find jobs in the Thai employment market. Upper-income students, on the other hand, did not perform well academically compared to their lower-income counterparts and returned home upon graduation or furthered their studies for higher degrees despite their poor academic performance (Lin, 2014).

Songsathaphorn et al. (2014), for instance, identify main factors positively influencing Chinese students’ satisfaction toward Thai higher education, which include education quality, safety, image and prestige of institution, and pre-departure preparation. Thailand’s quality higher education should be addressed and enhanced through quality assurance policies, internationally-recognized degrees, academic and professional capacity development, and effective international education promotions in China (Songsathaphorn et al., 2014).

Another key factor is the approval and acceptance by the Ministry of Education of China because degrees from Thai universities are not valid in mainland China; and thus the Thai Ministry of Education needs to seek approval from the Chinese Ministry of Education before embarking on accepting Chinese students (Yin et al., 2015). Although these previous studies have provided an overall picture of Chinese students in Thai universities in general, few studies address specific issues of language learning.
At an international university in Thailand, Huang (2017), for example, points out that Chinese students’ language learning strategies changed as there were inter-related issues regarding the language learner’s context, agency and strategic behaviors. Drawing upon the recent study by Wattana (2018), government-funded Chinese undergraduate students preferred active and friendly classroom environment and relaxed teaching style at the Thai research-based university although they were worried about their grades. They also employed social strategies the most as they enjoyed having daily communication with the locals in order to improve their Thai as a foreign language (Wattana, 2018).

Previous studies regarding Chinese students in Thai and Western academic contexts suggest underpinning issues related to contextually situated factors influencing the students’ changing behaviors, shifting perspectives, and evolving trajectories over the course of their study abroad. It is thus vital for educators to be aware of the complex international learning contexts and individual factors affecting the students’ adjustment to their new learning context and tasks (Fraiberg et al., 2017). This present study aims to explore government-funded third-year Chinese undergraduate students’ insights into the benefits and limitations of English teaching and learning between China and Thailand.

Research Methodology
Drawing upon a qualitative research paradigm, this present study focused on a group of twenty-four third-year female Chinese undergraduate students studying at a research institute in a Thai university. Funded by the Chinese government, the students, who were majoring in Thai language as a foreign language, took part in a 10-month language and cultural immersion program with an emphasis on translation and interpretation, which was mutually established by and a collaboration between the research institute at a Thai research-based university located in Nakhon Pathom, a province in Central Thailand and a Chinese university in Yunnan Province located in southwestern China. The objectives of the collaboration were to develop Chinese students’ Thai-Chinese translation and interpretation skills through authentic language use and exposure to Thai language and culture in Thailand and enhance international academic and research exchanges between China and Thailand. Based on the requirement of the Chinese students’ home university in Yunnan, the students had to take a number of compulsory courses including Advanced Thai speaking and writing, Thai Culture and Media, Thai-Chinese Translation and Interpretation, and Advanced English Speaking and Writing skills.

The scope of this study was, however, limited to advanced courses in English speaking and writing skills taught by the author in the first and second semesters of the 2017 academic year respectively. The Advanced English Speaking course aimed at promoting the students’ oral fluency in communicative English used in academic and workplace settings. The Advanced English Writing course, on the other hand, taught the students to correspond in various types of academic and business English including letters, and emails, as well as write essays. Employing both Thai and English as instructional languages, these two-credit courses were taught for two hours per week for the total of 15 weeks and assessed with assignments, presentations, quizzes, and essays.
Focus-group data was gathered by randomly separating the students into groups of four to five to discuss and compare the benefits and limitations of teaching and learning English in China and Thailand. They were freely allowed to discuss in Chinese; however, a representative had to present their group’s ideas in English in front of the class via PowerPoint presentation slides. Their ideas were recorded, compiled, compared, contrasted and summarized on an MS Word file. Thematic analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017) was used to explore emerging key themes namely benefits and limitations. The students were given written informed consent forms regarding the research project. Research ethics in humans were approved by Office of the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University (IPSR-IRB) (COA. No. 2018/02-051).

Findings
Drawing upon the focus-group discussions, the findings of this study present and discuss the two main issues regarding the benefits and limitations of English teaching and learning between China and Thailand perceived by a group of Chinese overseas students at a Thai research-based university accordingly.

First of all, there are a number of key benefits that differ between Chinese and Thai “cultures of English teaching and learning.” Chinese students felt that Chinese English language education is exam-based. Chinese teachers of English are keen on teaching grammar, vocabulary, and writing skills; and consequently, students have to take notes and use rote-learning strategies mainly by memorizing grammatical points and academic vocabulary that are relevant for college and national exams. Their objective in learning English is to pass the exams that can yield them opportunities for quality education.

The Chinese students in this study, however, found the teaching and learning of English at the Thai university rather dynamic and interesting due to flexible, active, and interactive teaching styles. Since studying English in Thailand did not require them to take high-stake tests, the students enjoyed using English inside and outside the classrooms more than they did in China due to the relaxing classroom atmosphere and practical teaching methods used (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of English teaching and learning in China and in Thailand</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>China</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Teachers focus on teaching grammar, vocabulary, and writing skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Students take notes to help students remember.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Students have knowledge in grammar and vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Comprehensive exams (e.g. College Entrance Examination, CET4) are required.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Based on the students’ presentations, most of them positively found English language teaching and learning in Thailand enjoyable and interactive, which can be illustrated as follows.
“We like learning English in Thailand because we feel more relaxed than in China. We can talk with the teacher and friends freely”.
“In Thailand, we can speak English more than when we were in China because we are exposed to foreign tourists when we travel.”

Some students, however, preferred to learn more grammar and vocabulary as they felt that they had to take high-stake tests such as CET 4 when returning to China.

“We would like to learn more grammar and vocabulary as they are important for our examination in China”
“Our writing skill needs to be developed as our grammar knowledge and vocabulary are not good.”

The other findings identify the key limitations of teaching and learning English in China compared to Thailand. Chinese English language pedagogy is viewed negatively as rigid, fixed, and exam-oriented. The critical thinking skill is thus neglected while summative assessment is strongly emphasized. The rapport and interaction between teachers and students are less whereas homework is more. The classroom atmosphere is one of the boredom and demotivation with unwelcome use of Chinglish rather than the target English.

In Thai university classrooms, however, Thai is the primary language of instruction. Used as the official and mother tongue language, Thai can often interfere with English. English spoken with a Thai accent is commonly used and heard; and, variations of standard English accents thus constrain English language acquisition. Test-taking strategies are not explicitly taught as university examination is not the main objective of the course (see Table 2).

| **Table 2. Limitations of English teaching and learning in China and in Thailand** |
|---|---|
| **China** | **Thailand** |
| 1. Homework is excessive and difficult. | 1. Most Thai people speak English with a Thai accent. |
| 2. Teaching method is rigid and limited. | 2. Exposure to Thai more than English. |
| 3. Students tend to lose interest in learning. | 3. Thai language interferes with English. |
| 4. Teacher and students are less interactive. | 4. Different accents in English between Chinese and Thai speakers impede learning. |
| 5. Exam pattern is fixed. | 5. Students have poor exam-taking skills. |
| 6. There are few opportunities to speak English. | |
| 7. Students study to pass exams. | |
| 8. Chinglish is prevalent. | |
| 9. Critical thinking is not promoted. | |
| 10. Teaching objectives are based on examination-oriented education. | |

The students viewed that Chinese education is exam-oriented while Thai counterpart focuses on practice-based as their views are presented as the following.
“Our goal in learning English in China is to pass exams. We study very hard and the teachers give us a lot of homework. We are bored.”

“We often take notes and translate from Chinese to English and English to Chinese. We use a lot of Chinese-English dictionary.”

These statements reveal a grammar translation method used by Chinese teachers of English. The students consequently became bored and disengaged from class. There are also issues of the interference of Chinese and Thai on spoken English as some said that.

“We speak and listen to English with a Chinese accent in China. We also experience spoken English with a Thai accent in Thailand. We want to listen to more native English speakers.”

To sum up, Tables 1 and 2 have highlighted emerging benefits and limitations of English teaching and learning in China and in Thailand perceived by the Chinese students in this study. Their voices are sincere and meaningful, which should not be taken lightly as they can provide Thai teachers of English and relevant stakeholders ways to facilitate and improve Chinese students’ English language learning in Thai higher education. The following section will provide discussions and pedagogical implications of this study.

Discussions and pedagogical implications
Based on the results of this study, the “cultures of learning” concept (Cortazzi & Jin, 2013; Jin & Cortazzi, 1993, 1996) perceived by the Chinese students in the Thai university is linguistically specific, culturally sensitive, contextually dependent, dynamic, agentive, and non-generalizable. Some of the emerging key issues are related to academic, socio-psychological, and socio-political and economic dimensions.

First, despite the fact that Thailand and China are geographically located in Asia, their academic systems, particularly English teaching and learning, are not underpinned by similar educational philosophies, policies, and practices (Huang, 2017). It is thus vital to strike an academically-appropriate balance between the students’ beliefs and practices in their Chinese and Thai universities, which requires open-minded and on-going dialogic exchanges between Chinese students and Thai teachers. It is important not to take it for granted that the students can automatically accommodate and acculturate into the Thai academic system simply because it shares the same Asian values. Academic orientation can potentially alleviate misunderstandings and confusion that may emerge from mismatched expectations, education objectives, and learning outcomes. Since the students attended only a short-term immersion program, national high-stake exams were not the key evaluation criteria. Examination skills were therefore not practiced while interpersonal communication was promoted. In fact, enhancing translation and interpretation skills were the target outcomes, abilities that could promote their linguistic capital and cultural values in preparation for their later entry into the workforce.

Second, socio-psychological adaptations are perceived as relevant due to the students’ daily exposure to linguistic and cultural diversity that required them to become more versatile in using Thai and English in academic and public spheres. Social support and acculturation of Chinese
students’ socio-psychological needs should be considered and monitored for better prediction of cross-cultural adaptation results in order to alleviate students’ loneliness while studying in Thailand (Lin & Kingmingkhae, 2014). Although the personal psychological issues such as homesickness, unmet expectations, loneliness, and social disintegration are unavoidable, teachers play essential roles in recognizing individual challenges, providing pastoral support, and monitoring academic progress throughout the course of such immersion programs. Without constant supervision and monitoring system, students may become less active, upset, disengaged, and isolated from classroom participation. Students, on the other hand, need to adjust and adopt suitable learning styles that facilitate acceptance of Thai academic practices.

Last but not least, governmental initiatives regarding socio-economic, political agendas and education policies toward globalization and internationalization in higher education are vital in determining national curriculum and standard criteria that can enhance their citizens’ human capital and skills to meet the increasingly competitive demands of local, national, and global job markets (Songsathaphorn et al., 2014). As English taught, learned, and used in China and in Thailand is considered as a foreign language, it may not be readily available in sociocultural domains. Although English in Thailand may not represent native standard norms that are familiar to or expected by Chinese students, it is advisable for teachers to raise awareness of the variations of English used in Asian contexts by encouraging them to seek exposure to authentic English spoken by foreign tourists at various tourist sites in Thailand. English teaching and learning in Thailand can enable the Chinese students to recognize the changing status of English as a *lingua franca* in today’s globalized society, which can potentially increase their awareness of English variations and promote their confidence as speakers of English.

In summary, practical pedagogical implications should elucidate and clarify fixed viewpoints, stereotypes, and attitudes towards Chinese overseas students in Thai higher education by allowing their agentive voices to appear and demystify academic systems and practices that are deeply embedded in both countries’ academic systems. This study hopes to address and reciprocate our cross-cultural beliefs and practices of Chinese overseas students’ “cultures of learning,” which, in retrospect, promote “culturally appropriate and sensitive” teaching of English in Thai higher education. In addition, Chinese learners’ learning objectives and needs of English should be explored prior to their arrival by asking their home university in terms of their expectation and final outcomes; thus, English courses offered by a Thai university can be better prepared in order to reach mutual goals of all relevant parties.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

This study explores Chinese overseas students’ perceived benefits and limitations of English language teaching and learning in Thailand as compared to China. The benefits concern English language education philosophies, policies, and practices between teachers and students, exposure to English use, and high-stake tests in English teaching and learning. The Chinese education system focuses more on accuracy whereas the Thai counterpart emphasizes communicative fluency. Chinese students are competent in test-taking strategies and writing skills rather than speaking ones. The Chinese students in this study gradually revealed their preference for oral communication and become more aware of the variations of spoken English existing outside the classroom. The limitations, in contrast, are based on different educational outcome and assessment
criteria. Examinations are highly valued by Chinese tertiary institutions as a way to determining the students’ English acquisition. Achieving mutual intelligibility, on the other hand, is the goal of communicative language teaching method in Thailand.

Although this study is based on a group of Chinese students at a particular university in Thailand, it will be of potential benefits to Chinese and Thai English language teachers, educators, course designers, teaching materials developers, researchers, administrators, and policy makers, for gaining practical ideas for English language teaching methods and curricula, and applicable to further such research on comparative overseas education between China and Thailand. Reciprocal exchanges of information shared by Chinese and Thai universities are compulsory as this immersion program is created by internationally collaborative agreement. On-going students’ academic progress and personal trajectories should therefore be shared and monitored consistently by both institutes in order to avoid unexpected events and promote positive learning experiences for Chinese overseas students in Thailand.

About the author:
Singhanat Nomnian, Ed.D. is an Associate Professor and Chair of MA (Language and Intercultural Communication) at RILCA, Mahidol University, Thailand. His research interests include TESOL, Applied Linguistics, intercultural communication, English as a lingua franca, and internationalization in higher education. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6567-8328

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The Use of Humour in EFL Classrooms: Comparative Conversational Analysis Case Study

Sahar Ali Fadel  
English Language Institute  
King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Abdullah Al-Bargi  
English Language Institute  
King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Utilising a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach, the current case study investigates the characteristics and frequency of the usage of verbal humour that positively or negatively affects the Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) tertiary-level students across two different English language proficiency levels. The participants included 42 EFL teachers and 138 male EFL students from the English Language Institute (ELI) in King Abdulaziz University. The students were enrolled in the beginners (E101) and intermediate (E104) English language proficiency levels. The mixed-methods approach was implemented using audio and video recordings and a questionnaire as the data collection instruments. The findings stated the four main characteristics of both positive and negative verbal humours in Saudi EFL classrooms. These findings revealed that humour was more frequently used at the intermediate than at the beginner level, and that the most effective forms of humour at both levels involved language play, irony, jokes, and self-defeating humour. Suggestions, recommendations, pedagogical implications have also been presented.

Keywords: classrooms, coding scheme, conversation analysis, humour, Saudi EFL context

I: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study
Humour is certainly not a recent phenomenon, as it is a biological attribute that all humans possess (Polimeni & Reiss, 2006). Since ancient Greek times, numerous theories have sought to explain humour and its functions, including its sociological, anthropological, psychological, philosophical and linguistic features (Dynel, 2009). Despite such theories and research attention, it was not until the 20th century that humour was conceptualized as a pedagogical tool in educational settings. As time has passed, various studies have documented humour’s positive pedagogical effects at a variety of educational levels; these effects include increased instructional effectiveness (Englert, 2010), lower student anxiety, the creation of a relaxed classroom environment (Neuliep, 1991), higher student motivation (McCroskey, Richmond, & Bennett, 2006), improved student learning (Baringer & McCroskey, 2000), and enhanced clarification of course materials (Downs, Javidi, & Nussbaum, 1988).

In relation to second language (L2) and foreign language (FL) teaching, a growing body of research has acknowledged the significant role which humour has in helping an individual understand a L2/FL (Bell, 2005) and in facilitating language learning (Broner & Tarone, 2001). Nonetheless, in contrast to its positive roles in academia in general and L2/FL classrooms in particular, humour can also be used divisively to disparage others: it can be used to control and mock nonconforming behaviour, exhibit power or status differences, or suppress undesired actions (Martin, 2010).

1.1.1 Benefits of Humour in Education and Language Teaching
In language classroom contexts, scholars have emphasized the positive role of humour in language learning, in as much as it promotes classroom interaction. For instance, Pomerantz and Bell (2011) indicate that humorous interactions not only allow students to present their classroom identities: they also provide opportunities to produce more complex and creative acts of language use than would be typically found in an L2 classroom. Hence, it can be said that the appropriate use of humour positively affects learners' cognitive processing and L2 learning. Moreover, Cornett (1986) claims that: “humour is one of the educator's 'most powerful resources' in achieving a variety of beneficial educational outcomes, including such potential effects as controlling problematic behaviour and facilitating foreign language acquisition” (p. 8). Furthermore, many scholars have shown that teachers' incorporation of humour into English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching has positive effects on learning (Askildson, 2005; Hayati, Shooshtari, & Shakeri, 2011; Stroud, 2013).

1.1.2 Barriers of Using Humour in Education and Language Teaching
In conceptualizing its drawbacks, it is clear that humour should be used cautiously, as it can be a powerful medium for communication impediment in pedagogical settings. In this regard, Garner (2006) asserts that for humour to be most effective in an academic setting, it must be specific, targeted, and appropriate to the subject matter. In the English a second language (ESL) or EFL contexts, it is believed that many factors could be attributed to humour's positive or negative effects on the learning process. Among these factors is the cultural background of the teacher and that of the students, as well as each learner's L2 proficiency level.
1.4 Statement of the Problem

In Saudi Arabia, ur Rahman and Alhaisoni (2013) report that relentless efforts have been undertaken by policy makers to enhance EFL teaching standards and student achievement. Nevertheless, many Saudi EFL learners are low achievers (Alrabai, 2017). Many reasons have been cited for Saudi EFL learners' low achievement levels, including their lack of exposure to second language (L2), having no interest in learning the target language (TL), and their resistance to active participation. Ansari (2012) also adds that the vast majority of Saudi EFL learners lack motivation vis-à-vis studying the language, as they mainly (or exclusively) aim to pass their assessments. Therefore, although Saudi EFL learners may spend many school years learning the English language, they still tend to graduate from high school with minimal command of the English language, and this is problematic when they later enrol in university.

In the context of the English Language Institute (ELI) at King Abdulaziz University, besides the aforementioned reasons for low levels of achievement among Saudi EFL learners, other explicit factors appear to be problematic. Amongst these factors are the prescribed textbook - which adopts the communicative language teaching approach - and the learners' low proficiency levels in the TL, which makes the materials presented in class too difficult for them to absorb or to handle through verbal interactions (Shah, Hussain, & Nasseef, 2013). Such factors juxtapose, and their negative effects manifest in the ELI's EFL classroom.

With due consideration of all the previously noted factors, this study argues that humour can improve the teaching and learning processes in the Saudi EFL setting in general and the ELI context in particular. This assertion stems from the fact that humour has the advantage of being applicable to any approach or teaching method (Schmitz, 2002). Thus, when humour is appropriately employed in a communicative language classroom, it can assist positively in the teaching-learning process by building an environment conducive to learning.

1.5 Study Significance

It is anticipated that this study's outcomes will help teachers, educators, teacher training program designers, and curriculum designers identify the positive and negative effects of using verbal humour in the EFL classroom and provide them with a well-informed basis for understanding the benefits of using humour in Saudi EFL classrooms. The study is also expected to highlight the drawbacks that might be caused by inappropriate employment of humour and to provide understanding about the relationship between humour use and the L2 learners' proficiency in the TL.

1.6 Purpose of the Study

This case study aims at investigating the characteristics and the frequencies of verbal humour that positively or negatively affect the Saudi EFL tertiary-level students across two designated, different English language proficiency levels; beginner (101), equivalent to A0 on the common European framework of reference for languages (CEFR) and the intermediate (104), equivalent to B1 on the CEFR. The comparative prospect aims at indicating whether or not the learners' proficiency level has any correlations with the use of humour during L2 classroom interactions.
1.7 Research Methodology
To achieve the purpose of this study, a mixed-methods approach was employed with quantitative and qualitative data presented. Ten-hour audio and video-recordings of nine EFL classrooms in addition to a questionnaire for thirty-three EFL teachers’ perceptions about the uses of humour in the Saudi EFL classrooms were used to collect data. In addition, a coding scheme has also been used as a checklist to facilitate typifying the instances of humour in the video-recorded lessons.

1.8 Research Questions
The present study was guided by the following three research questions:
RQ1: What are the main characteristics of verbal humour that may contribute positively in the Saudi EFL classroom?
RQ2: What are the main characteristics of verbal humour that may contribute negatively in the Saudi EFL classroom?
RQ3: What are the differences in the frequency and effect of verbal humour used in the two English language proficiency levels during the observed EFL lessons?

1.9 Delimitations of the Study
The present study is delimited to male students enrolled in two levels of proficiencies in the foundation year at the ELI at KAU; the beginners (101) and intermediate (104). The study is delimited to its time; the third module of the academic year 2014/2015. Finally, the study is not considering other extraneous variables such as the teachers' teaching methods or the materials they use.

2. Literature Review
Humour has been a fascinating phenomenon to study as far back in history as the times of great philosophers of Plato and Aristotle to more recent times of Bergson and Freud (Chiaro, 2017). However, humour has only emerged as an appreciated area of academic inquiry in the last half of the century. Today, a great body of research exists on the topic in academia within many disciplines which include mathematics, psychology, anthropology, sociology, literature, medicine, philology, education, semiotics and linguistics (Attardo, 1998).

2.1 Defining Humour
Originally, humour is a Latin term derived from the word ‘umor’ which refers to ‘bodily fluid’ (that controls human's good health and emotions). Later, there has been a drastic change in defining humour to characterize “something that makes a person laugh or smile” (Ross, 2005, p. 2). In relation to the educational context, researchers tend to identify humour from differing points of view based on its specific context of use. Bekelja Wanzer, Bainbridge Frymier, Wojtaszczyk, and Smith (2006) have defined humour as "anything that the teacher and/ or his students find funny or amusing" (p. 182). Tuncay (2007) has defined humour in language classrooms as the ability of "understanding not only the language and words but their use, meaning, subtle nuances, the underlying culture, implications and unwritten messages" (p. 2). Apte (1985) has approached humour from an anthropologic perspective which has offered various definitions of humour where he states two particular elaborations on humour: “1) sources that act as potential stimuli and 2)
behavioural response that are expressed as smiling and laughter” (p. 13-14). Meanwhile, spontaneous humour includes irony, sarcasm, teasing, and word play along other forms of humour which could be represented through giving humorous examples to practice or illustrate a grammatical point. It can also be present while exchanging questions, answers, comments, remarks, or explanations during classroom interactions (Martin, 2010).

2.2 Forms of Humour in Literature

Norrick (1993 as cited by Norrick, 2003), has indicated that forms of humour seem to: “fade into each other in conversation” (p. 1338), which evidently makes it problematic to distinguish between them. The different types of humour include irony, teasing, banter, language play, joke or joking, riddles, as well as other forms.

**Ironic** refers to the use of implicit or ambiguous speeches or utterances that have double meanings such that when irony is involved. A subtype of irony is referred to as sarcasm. According to Haiman (1998), sarcasm is: “overt irony intentionally used by the speaker as a form of verbal aggression” (p. 20). In other words, sarcasm is more likely to be used for aggressive purposes in speech and more, is more likely to hurt the feelings of its target than other simple forms of irony.

**Teasing** is a provocation, which is made intentionally and is always accompanied with playful casual remarks to comment on something relevant to the target (Keltner, Capps, Kring, Young, & Heerey, 2001). Teasing can have positive as well as negative effects. Although teasing carries the risk of being offensive, some researchers have proven that it can have positive effects by creating intimacy as it works in uniting people against absent others or to demonstrate insider knowledge (Boxer & Cortés-Conde, 1997).

**Banter** as a term is used to describe the scenarios where teasing happens back and forth resulting into a verbal match up (Goatly, 2012). The main intention of banter is to create a social bond through acceptance-friendship strategies; however, it becomes unsuccessful when the recipient does not respond. In this case, banter can easily have negative effects and consequently turns into negative teasing.

**Language Play** is perceived as a conscious repetition or modifications of linguistic forms like syntactic, phonologic or lexemes patterns (Belz, 2002). Language play is the most relevant type of humour to the FL classroom context since playing with words and their meanings can be a very typical type of interaction for students in this specific context (Tarone, 2000). Many studies have reported the usefulness of language play in L2/FL classrooms (Sullivan, 2000).

**Joke/ Joking** is defined by Morrison (2012) as: "a short story or short series of words spoken or communicated with the intent of being laughed at or found humorous by the listener or reader” (p. 202). Schmitz (2002) has classified jokes into three categories, these are: universal jokes, culture jokes, and linguistic jokes. Notably, Shade (1996) has referred to some types of jokes that are considered inappropriate within the classroom context such as: “sexual jokes, ethnic /racial jokes, religious jokes, hostile jokes, and demeaning to Men/ Women jokes” (Shade, 1996, p. 87).
**Riddles** is a word game that has a question-answer format involving an enigma; a puzzling fact, which is similar in nature to a joke and usually has a surprising funny answer. In classrooms, riddles should be related to the subject matter with the objective of encouraging students to analyse and discuss ideas by using their higher order thinking skills to solve them (Shade, 1996).

**Other forms of humour** include funny story, visual humour, and physical humour. Researchers have advised using certain forms of humour with L2 learners based on their proficiency levels (Bell, 2005; Schmitz, 2002).

### 2.3 Social Functions of Humour

Wagner and Urios-Aparisi (2008) have mentioned that humour in the classroom context shares a wide range of common characteristics and functions with those found in the ordinary social talk. According to Attardo (2010), *social management, decommitment, and mediation* are among the social functions of humour. Martineau (1972) has also identified three social functions of humour, these are, *consensus, conflict, and control*. More recently, Hay (2000) has identified three social functions of humour among friends. These functions are: solidarity-based humour, humour to serve psychological needs, and power-based humour. As a matter of fact, the social functions of humour are vast and exceed the aforementioned ones but only those which have immediate connection to the scope of this study have been covered.

### 2.4 Positive and Negative Taxonomies of Humour in Classrooms

Researchers have classified classroom humour into several taxonomies according to the manner it is utilized in that specific context (Bryant, Comisky, & Zillmann, 1979; Downs et al., 1988; Frymier, Wanzer, & Wojtaszczyk, 2008; Gorham & Christophel, 1990; Martin, 2010; Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003; Wanzer, Frymier, & Irwin, 2010). Such taxonomies have mushroomed into numerous categories of humour the simplest of which classifies humour into positive or negative types based on their effects. Martin et al. (2003) have suggested a model that categorizes humour types into positive (or affiliative) humour and negative (or aggressive) humour. The affiliative humour aims at entertaining others by joking with friends, narrating humorous stories about oneself, or by telling various odd and funny things. Makewa, Role, and Genga (2011) have revealed that most of the teachers use affiliative humour to add to their teaching efficacy and that students have reported that they appreciate affiliative humour because it builds up positive rapport between the teacher and his/her students. On the contrary, aggressive humour (exhibited through the use of ridicule, sarcasm, mocking, or other disparaging humour) is seen as a negative type of humour as it mainly aims at manipulating or denigrating others. Other scholars have attempted to classify the types of humour in classrooms according to their correlation to the lessons' content. For instance, Bekelja Wanzer et al. (2006) has used the terms ‘appropriate’ and ‘inappropriate’ when referring to the positive or negative types of humour that occur in classroom settings. Therefore, it is seen imperative that, in classrooms, the types of humour employed “should be constructive, understandable by all learners and be relevant to the content and/or compatible to the learning environment” (Chabeli, 2008, p. 58). More recently, Bekelja Wanzer et al. (2006) have revealed that humour related to instructional content would positively correlate with student learning, while inappropriate forms like other-disparaging and offensive humour would not. In
summary, there exists a variety of approaches in classifying the types of humour enacted in classrooms. Thus, for humour to be efficient and productive in any educational context, it is deemed necessary to take into consideration the type of humour employed regarding its appropriateness and offensiveness.

2.5 The Study of Humour in Classrooms

Many researchers and educators such as Harmer (2010) and Cook (2000) have acknowledged the importance of language play or humour in language learning. In an EFL and L2 contexts, many scholars view humour as an integral part of foreign language acquisition. For instance, Deneire (1995) see that humour should be integrated in the EFL/L2 classrooms arguing that “well-developed communicative competence implies humour competence and vice-versa” (p. 294-5). Wagner and Urios-Aparisi (2011) have also suggested that humour should be an integral component of the FL curriculum to promote authentic and communicative uses of language in the classroom and the integration of linguistic and cultural information. Deneire (1995) has highlighted that, within the EFL classroom, humour can both be used “as a technique to introduce linguistic phenomena and cultural knowledge” and “as an illustration and reinforcement of already acquired cultural and linguistic knowledge” (p. 286).

2.5.1 Humour and the Linguistic Competence

From a linguistic point-of-view, humour can elevate the L2 learners' linguistic awareness. Deneire (1995), for instance, has argued that through the use of humour, language learners become “sensitive to the structural and the semantic differences between different languages” (p. 291). Thus, many researchers have been investigating the pedagogical benefits of humour in the context of EFL learning (Cohen, 2017). Additionally, Bell (2005) revealed that interactions occurred during the humorous frame were recalled significantly better that the items of serious interactions. Lucas (2005) indicated that planned tasks designed to facilitate focus on form through humorous materials required the learners to excessively focus on the linguistic form. Moreover, Tocalli-Beller and Swain (2007) indicate that the collaborative negotiation of meaning has helped some of students who did not comprehend the meaning of the given puns or riddles at the first place to understand the items and eventually produce them. Furthermore, inserting humorous instances like jokes in EFL classes can also make students more attentive to structural and semantic differences between two languages and raise students’ intercultural awareness (Deneire, 1995; Schmitz, 2002).

2.5.2 The Relationship between Humour and EFL/L2 Proficiency Level

Most researchers have asserted that in order to understand humour, L2 learners need to comprehend the literal meaning that the lexical and syntactic clues of utterance convey. Besides, they need to be able to detect any mismatch between the literal meaning and the conversational or situational context. Such abilities increase in parallel to the development of the learners' L2 proficiency. Consequently, two main features determine L2 learners' successful or unsuccessful interpretation of humour. First, the learners' L2 proficiency level which proposes that learners have acquired more sociocultural information about the target culture. Second, the audio, visual, and discourse contextual sources available which provide nonverbal, prosodic, and linguistic cues that signal incompatibility with a literal interpretation.
Overall, the few studies that have been conducted so far, concerning the connection between humour and L2 proficiency level, show that L2 learners are able to both understand and produce humorous utterances. There do appear to be some constraints on this ability related to the linguistic proficiency and the degree of cultural background knowledge, but Davies (2003) research on joking suggests that the use of the context can help learners interpret humorous utterances. As such, it is thought that the participants of low and high L2 proficiency level can understand humour but with varying degrees of difficulty that relates their knowledge about the target cultural and linguistic humour.

3. Research Methodology and Procedures

3.1 Research Design and Methodology

This research study is based on the sequential explanatory mixed methods research design. It involves the data collection and analysis utilising qualitative and quantitative approaches throughout this research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). As such, the quantitative data was gathered initially via the distributed questionnaires which have been conducted to obtain insights into the teachers’ perspectives on the uses of verbal humour in the Saudi EFL context. The qualitative data phase on the other hand, was collected via video and audio recordings of nine Saudi EFL classroom interactions, which have been transcribed verbatim to investigate the characteristics of verbal humour in terms of its positivity, negativity and frequency of uses across two different L2 proficiency levels.

3.2 Research Instruments

To achieve its purposes, the present study employed a questionnaire, classroom observations, audio and video recordings as data collection instruments.

a) The Format of the EFL Teachers Questionnaire used in the current study has included both closed (n= 14) and open-ended items (n= 3). Participants were surveyed on their perceptions of verbal humour usage and effect within the Saudi EFL classrooms using an anonymous and voluntary online questionnaire.

b) EFL Classroom Observations were conducted using note-taking through the use of classroom humour coding scheme which observes the production of humour, reaction or interpretation of humour, content delivered through humour, and instructional and social function of a humorous instance (Silverman, 2015). In addition to the colour coding scheme used, the researchers added the following codes to mark the instructional function of humorous instances: a) repairing, b) eliciting, c) modifying, and e) scaffolding the interactions or (f) others (to indicate other functions).

c) Video and Audio Recordings using a high-quality Sony® digital camera and recorder has been used to record approximately ten hours of teacher-students and students-students’ interactions in nine Saudi EFL classrooms of levels 101 and 104.
3.3 Participants
In this study, the conveniently selected samples consisted of (138) Saudi male Arabic speakers EFL students aged between 18-19 years old and (42) EFL teachers enrolled in English language institute ELI at KAU. Thirty students were enrolled in the beginners (101) level (and most of them are repeaters) and the remaining 108 students were enrolled in the intermediate (104) level.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures
The data of this study has been collected during the third week of the third module in the academic year of 2014-2015. For the questionnaires, the data was collected via mailing a URL link to 30 participating teachers in this study. Prior to the actual data collection, piloting the questionnaire has been considered as a preliminary step to anticipate possible problems related to comprehension of the items and analysis of the data. Piloting the questionnaire has been conducted during the month of October 2015. A total number of (10) EFL teachers at the ELI responded to the pilot questionnaire and their responses revealed that all the items were clear and could easily be understood by the rest of the participants. With regards to qualitative data, it comprised a total of 10 hours of 12 recorded lessons from nine classrooms, with some teachers been recorded twice, over the period of two weeks.

3.5 Data Analysis
Following the questionnaire data collection phase, statistical analysis has been performed based on the analytical descriptions which appear in the form of pie charts that Google forms simultaneously create according to the participants' responses on each item. The statistical analysis file was later downloaded in an Excel® sheet format to simplify the analysis of results, and consequently, answering relevant research questions of the current study. Lastly, the data has been analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (IBM SPSS Statistics 22®).

The video and audio recorded lessons which have been fully transcribed using a notation convention system derived from the work of Walsh (2013). The data was further reviewed to detect different instances of humour. After identifying these instances, they were further analysed, compared and divided into different humour types, such as irony and word play. Later, the coding scheme of classroom humour was used to set the types of humour according to their:

1) Production
2) The participants’ reactions or interpretations of these instances
3) The lesson content delivered through humour and
4) The instructional and social function of humour in the observed EFL classrooms.

4. Data Analysis and Results
4.1. Reliability of the Questionnaire Constructs
The Cronbach alpha value of the raw data was 0.813. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this study exceeded 0.8, thus satisfying the internal consistency requirements (See Table 4.1).
Table 4.1 Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

<table>
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<th>%</th>
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<th>No. of Items</th>
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<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</table>

4.2. Questionnaire Responses Analysis (close-ended items)

The questionnaire items were purposefully divided into two constructs. The first construct is related to the general information with regards to the participants’ native language, years of experience, course taught, and students being taught (newly registered or repeaters). The second construct, which formed the bulk of the questionnaire items, related to the actual pedagogical parameters of using humour in the EFL classroom in the Saudi context. During the data collection, more than half of the participant teachers (60%) were teaching the 101-proficiency level and (40%) of them were teaching the 104-proficiency level. The teachers have also indicated that the majority of their students were newly registered students (73%) while (27%) were repeaters.

The analysis of the second part of the questionnaire is presented in several figures and tables which demonstrate the teachers’ responses to the close-ended items (n=13) in percentages format. In the following, the figures and tables are postulated and proceeded with their analysis which highlights the most prominent proportions.

![Figure 1](image-url)

Figure 1 Teachers’ responses to items 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the questionnaire
According to figure 1, the vast majority of teachers’ responses (86%) revealed that they conceive humour to be important or very important to FL learning. As for the second item of the questionnaire, about half of the teachers recommended that only some humour should be employed in a 50 minutes’ class period, whereas (30%) of the teachers believed that it should be used at a sizable bit. Moreover, in their responses to the third questionnaire item, about half of the teachers (49%) reported that the students use humour sometimes in their communications during lessons, meanwhile, about third of the responses indicated that rare students’ humorous communications could be found in classrooms.

With regards to the fourth questionnaire item, the teachers’ responses revealed that the great majority of teachers (85%) believe that the use of humour in the EFL classroom should vary according to the students’ proficiency level and only 15% of teachers believed that it should not.

Figure 2  Teachers’ Responses to Items 6 and 7 of the Questionnaire

The teachers’ responses to items 6 and 7 revealed that more than half (52%) use different kinds of humour (jokes, witticisms, humorous facial expressions, funny stories, etc.) during each teaching session, meanwhile, around quarter of the teachers’ responses (24%) indicated that they often use these kinds of humour in classroom. Moreover, the bar graphs in figure 2 show that nearly half of the teachers’ use humour that is mostly or entirely relevant or related to the lessons taught. Whereas, the other half of the teachers indicated that some or half of the humour which they use during teaching is relevant or related to the lessons taught.
Figure 3 represents the surveyed teachers’ responses to items 12 and 13 of the questionnaire. The responses show that approximately half of the teachers (48%) think that, using humour to illustrate an aspect of the language can considerably or verily help their students in learning the TL while 52% of teachers think that it can provide some or a little help. In the same chart, the teachers indicated the frequency of humorous examples or words which they particularly use in the EFL classroom to illustrate grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, or any other aspect of the target language. According to their responses, the majority of teachers (62%) indicated that they sometimes use humour to illustrate aspects of the TL. Meanwhile, nearly third of the responses (31%) revealed that the teachers often or very often use humour for that particular sake.

When the participating teachers were asked specific questions, which required more detailed responses with regards to the use of humour in the EFL classroom, their responses are indicated in the following four tables:
Table 4.2  *To what extent does humour make you students feel more relaxed (i.e. less anxious) in the EFL classroom?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It makes them lightly more relaxed</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It makes them somewhat more relaxed</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It makes them considerably more relaxed</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 *To what extent does humour in the foreign language classroom increase your students' interest in learning that language?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It has not effect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It lightly increases their interest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It somewhat increases their interest</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It considerably increases their interest</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4  *Do you think that your use of humour makes you more approachable to students in the class?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, it makes me lightly more approachable</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, it makes me more approachable</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, it makes me considerably more approachable</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.5  *Do you think that humour improves your students’ abilities to learn the target language in the classroom by creating a more comfortable and conducive learning environment?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It has no effect</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, it makes the learning environment slightly more comfortable</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, it makes the learning environment slightly more comfortable</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, it makes the learning environment slightly more comfortable</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From tables 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5, it can be clearly seen that the majority of teachers had positive responses to statements relating to the pedagogical aspects of using humour in the EFL classroom.

4.3. Frequency and Effect of Verbal Humour across Two Language Proficiency Levels

Two tables (4.6 and 4.7) are presented to quantitatively indicate the frequency and effect of humour as used in the observed (101) and (104) lessons.

Table 4.6  *Frequency and Effect of Verbal Humour in the Beginners (101) Level Lessons*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of humour</th>
<th>Frequency of positive effects</th>
<th>Frequency of negative effects</th>
<th>Total Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irony</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarcasm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teasing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language play</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defeating style</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(84.6%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(15.4%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(100%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average per 50 minutes’ class session 3 instances
As table 4.1 and 4.2 reveal, the frequency of verbal humour forms used across the beginners (101) and the intermediate (104) levels varied considerably. Thus, in the (101) lessons, language play was the most frequently used form at (50%) followed by irony, sarcasm and teasing at equal proportions (16.7%). However, the remaining forms of humour did not exist in the corpus of the beginners (101) lessons. In the (104) lessons, the proportions of irony and sarcasm were similar at (20.5%) for each followed by banter at (15.4%) and jokes (12.8%). Meanwhile, teasing and language play were equally used in these lessons at (10.2%) per each. Notably, the use of humorous visuals and activities was only 5% of the total responses of the participants. Overall, the frequency of humour deployed in these two levels was at the rate of 3 instances per session in the 101 lessons and 5 instances in the 104 lessons. However, the effects of humour were similar in both of levels as about (85%) of the humorous instances were positive and only (14%) were negative.

4.4 Results

Based on the analyses, it could be inferred that certain aspects characterize the positive and negative uses of verbal humour in the Saudi EFL classroom context. Besides, the analyses postulate differences in frequency and similarities of effects regarding the verbal humour forms employed across the beginners (101) as well as the intermediate (104) recorded lessons. All these aspects are presented in the summary of results illustrated in the following subsections.

a. Frequency and Effect of Verbal Humour across the 101 and the 104 levels

The quantitative data of this study helped in gaining knowledge about the differences in frequency and effect of verbal humour between the beginners and the intermediate lessons that might have occurred due to the proficiency gap between the two designated levels. The gleaned data explicates that the frequency of humour in the intermediate level was more than that found in the beginners' lessons. Thus, the average uses of verbal humour in the intermediate level was at (5) instances per a 50-minute session while in the beginners' lessons they occurred at (3) instances per a 50-minute session. This fact has been asserted by the vast majority of surveyed teachers (85%) who confirmed that the use of humour would greatly vary according to the L2 learners' proficiency. Regarding the
effects of humour in both levels, the findings indicate that most of the humorous instances had positive effects at about (84%) per level while only (16%) had negative effects especially when irony, sarcasm and teasing are used. Lastly, teachers' overall perceived views about the use of humour in the Saudi EFL classroom were positive

b. Positive Characteristics of Verbal Humour

The findings also demonstrate that positive humour is always relevant to the course content, constructive and does not target individual students. It is worthwhile noting what most of the surveyed teachers have indicated that, only some or little use of humour is preferable. Hence, humour should be moderately employed in classrooms for it to be positive. According to the analysis, positively employed humour has various instructional benefits in the EFL/L2 classroom that aligns the overall pedagogical goal of the lessons. Lastly, the data reveals that positive verbal humour has pivotal social benefits in the EFL/L2 classrooms. Thus, the analysis of the qualitative data demonstrates the usefulness of 'consensus' humour in narrowing the social distance between the teacher and his students, which created an overall positive classroom rapport. Humour is also beneficial as it helped the students to build in group solidarity amongst themselves. Besides, the surveyed teachers have clarified that humour made their students depart their comfort zones by using the TL whether in their student-student or teacher-student interactions.

c. Negative Characteristics of Verbal Humour

Despite the fact that negative humour could be relevant to the course content, yet, it would not be constructive due to its malproduction. The analysis of data indicated that negative humour could be teacher or student initiated but each with different prospective. Psychologically, negative humour has unpleasant effects on the students and the teachers alike. Thus, through the observations of the video-recorded lessons and the subsequent qualitative analysis, it is found that negative teacher-initiated humour would put students less at ease during or after the use of humour. Results also revealed that the mal-use of humour would eventually hinder the teaching-learning process. Finally, it is deduced that negative humour does not have a particular instructional goal as much as it is deployed to achieve certain social functions. Finally, the overwhelming majority of teachers asserted that humour which is culturally insensitive or that which breaches certain social, traditional and religious as well as political norms/issues in Saudi Arabia would generally be perceived as inappropriate in such a context, and therefore, should be prohibited in the Saudi EFL classrooms.

5. Discussion

To answer the current study’s research questions, a sum up the results obtained from the qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data, are collated against existing literature. As for the first research question “What are the main characteristics of verbal humour that may contribute positively in the EFL classroom?”, it was deduced that verbal humour positively contributes to the Saudi EFL classroom when it embraces the following four characteristics: being relevant to course content, having purposeful instructional goal, maintaining teacher's credibility, and being comprehensible to L2 learners and suitable to their proficiency level in the TL. Furthermore, verbal humour positively contributes in the Saudi EFL classroom by achieving pedagogical,
psychological, and social benefits. These benefits of humour perceived by the surveyed teachers are consistent with the findings of previous research conducted on the effects of humour on college level students, such as Al-Sudairi (2013), Askildson (2005), Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) and White (2001).

The second research question investigated the main characteristics of verbal humour that may contribute negatively in the EFL classroom, the results indicated that verbal humour negatively contributes to the Saudi EFL classroom when it is characterized by the following: targeting individual students by mocking their behaviours or answers in front of others, targeting teachers to criticize their teaching behaviours, being incomprehensible to L2 learners, and encroaching on the cultural, political or religious norms. Results also revealed that negative humour can put the students as well as the teachers less at ease. However, it is found that students might be more tolerant than teachers in dealing with teacher-initiated humour that targets them individually by mocking or ridiculing. According to the qualitative data of this study, the findings show that humour had specific social functions in the observed lessons. As for students, it is found that humour is used to indirectly address a student’s dissatisfaction regarding his instructor’s teaching behaviour using the 'conflict' function.

The third research question explored the differences in the frequency and effect of verbal humour used in the two English language proficiency levels during the observed EFL lessons. The quantitative data of this study revealed that humour was more frequently used in the intermediate (104) level than in the beginners (101) level. Overall, the frequency of humour deployed in these two levels was at the rate of 3 instances per each 50-minute teaching session in the 101 lessons and 5 instances in the 104 lessons per similar period. As for, the efficacy differences of humour across the beginners and the intermediate levels, results revealed that the most effective form of humour in the beginner’s lessons was language play which stood at the exact rate of (50 %) of the taught (101) lessons followed by irony at (16.7%). Whereas, in the intermediate level classrooms, the most effective form of humour during classroom interactions were jokes at (12.8%) followed by language play at (10.2%).

Other forms of humour were moderately effective in both of the observed levels, these are, sarcasm and teasing. Thus, despite the fact that these forms were pedagogically effective in most of the instances, they have at least once negatively contributed to the Saudi EFL classrooms. Self-defeating humour is one of the most effective styles or types of humour. Pedagogically, this style of humour has been very effective in promoting the student’s participation in both levels.

5.1 Conclusion
As per the findings of this study concluded that the use of humour in the Saudi EFL context may positively contribute in the classrooms. When certain characteristics are fulfilled, humour would have several psychological, social and pedagogical benefits in the designated context. On the contrary, humour may negatively contribute to the EFL Saudi classrooms if it embraces some characteristics. The results have also revealed that the use of humour in the (101) lessons is less than that found in (104) lessons, while the effects of humour in both levels were mostly positive.
5.2. Pedagogical Implications
The implications of this study entail that positive humour affords possible means of overcoming such hindering factors, as it can pave the way for L2 learning to take place by creating a more relaxed, motivating, and safer classroom atmosphere. However, certain precautions should be considered when deploying humour in classrooms, and teachers need to first consider its appropriateness in relation to the specific context of Saudi EFL classrooms. Thus, for humour to provide a positive appeal in the classroom, instructors should avoid humour that makes fun of students by disparaging them for their ignorance (low proficiency in the TL) or inappropriate behaviour.

5.3. Recommendation
Findings arising from the present study suggest that teachers' and students' humour, as perceived and practiced, is indeed a significant classroom phenomenon that has multi-layered characteristics and can be exposed to a variety of interpretations. However, several areas remain, that warrant continued investigation into the phenomenon in order to develop further insightful understanding of the topic. It is recommended that a larger, randomly selected sample is chosen so as to compare it to the results in the current study. Furthermore, the authors recommend that similar studies are conducted in different EFL context as well as other contexts where the utilisation of humour is explored further.

About the Authors:
Sahar Fadel is an EFL Lecturer at the English Language Institute. Fadel, has a Bachelors in Languages & Translation and a Master’s degree in TESOL. Some of the areas she has researched are testing and assessments in ELT, ESP/EAP, curriculum design, and classroom discourse. Sahar has been working at the ELI since 2009, teaching and holding several positions. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6655-7181

Dr. Al-Bargi is Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics and is currently the Dean of the ELI. From 2010 to 2017. Dr. Al-Bargi had served as the ELI Vice-Dean for Development where he worked to develop major academic operations, including academic accreditation, curriculum & assessment, quality assurance and professional development. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9002-3860

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EFL University Teachers’ Professional Development in the Thai Context

Sureepong Phothongsunan
School of Arts, Assumption University, Thailand

Abstract
This study aims to explore the perceptions of 30 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers serving in public universities in Thailand regarding needs, challenges and quality of teacher career development in their universities. A questionnaire and an interview are employed to gather data. According to the teacher development programs offered, all universities served by the participants provide prospects for teachers to have further in-service education. In relation to professional development, nearly all participants point out a strong need for obtaining a higher degree as career advancement in their field and interestingly as a tool for salary increment. Teacher collaboration and student learning also emerge as possible factors motivating teachers to strive for self-improvement. Although undertaking research is referred to as an important and for some a required element for English teaching jobs, time-consuming nature and a sophisticated process discourage its instigation. Regarding views about quality of university teacher development, most report being satisfied with the overall universities’ emphasis on improving English teaching and learning by accentuating teachers as a key. However, teachers’ lacking motivation to progress professionally due to excessive teaching workload and internal politics embedded in some universities can be reasons preventing teachers from securing educational growth. Implications from the study shed light on the significance to support the quality of university teachers through furnishing sufficient opportunities of professional development and what Thai EFL university teachers aspire to accomplish most to develop themselves efficiently.

Key words: challenges, EFL teachers, needs, perceptions, professional development

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol9no2.19
Introduction and Contextual Background

Owing to the fast growing nature of education worldwide, Thai universities are making efforts to upgrade know-how and expertise of their working educators. The obvious gain is to augment the universities’ reputation and acceptance academically. This is also compulsory to satisfy the level and standard set by the OHEC or The Office of the Higher Education Commission under the Ministry of Education of Thailand. Specifically, as one of the determined requirements, officially known as the Key Performance Indicators, the focus lies in the significance of the teaching and learning process (CHE, 2017). Within this indicator, its constituents include the necessity of a systematic education delivery process, which stipulates that teachers must be prepared and expert in the subject matter, being intellectually developed, skilled in teaching, and facilitating and assessing learning. The capability of applying technical knowledge to conduct research on improving teaching and learning with proper systems and mechanisms of encouragement and the ability to produce reports about the learners’ progress are also elements of the standard criteria. In line with this, indicated as the required quality of education at tertiary level, is the proportion of the full-time teachers holding higher degree qualifications as well as academic titles equivalent to the total number of full-time teachers. It is thus deemed crucial to consider the importance of teacher professional development. The need for and the provision and quality of teacher professional growth in universities in Thailand requires investigation if it is qualified and capable instructors being the target at this level of education.

Rationale

In English language teaching and higher education, teachers are a significant key to learners’ success as well as failure (Williams, 2002). Hence, a strong intention prevails to find out to what extent Thai EFL university teachers necessitate professional development and the effectiveness and the quality of the development programs provided by their universities.

Also, as evidenced in a recent report in 2016 (The Nation Newspaper, 2016) stating that English language teachers from schools over 40 provinces in Thailand had scored well below 50 percent in an English test, it is in fact disturbing news for the national educational system. This has raised awareness of university teachers to introspect their teaching and English proficiency and reflected the need for a serious upgrade in the way the language is taught countrywide. Language teachers no matter at which level need to realize that they themselves hold the key to the collective achievement of any plan implemented by the government and to improve the standard of English-teaching in schools and universities.

From these justifications, the issue of teacher professional development in Thai universities should never be overlooked and more emphasis should be placed on how teachers can excel in teaching English and what can facilitate their learning and teaching process.

For this reason, the research questions are shaped: (1) ‘What are the perceptions of Thai university EFL teachers of the need for teacher professional development? and (2) ‘To what extent are they satisfied with its provision and quality?'
Qualitative in nature, this study utilizes an interpretative approach focusing on the researcher’s responsibility to engage in transactions with the participants. Indeed, in this research, the participants and the researcher share a common culture, in the sense that they are all part of the same educational system, serving as Thai teachers of English at university level. Given this common culture, the issue of gaining entry into the particular environment of the research participants and initiating a rapport is essentially unproblematic. The researcher also ensures that the participants are listened to without prejudice. This establishment of a trustworthy basis is important for this study as it would encourage the participants to articulate what they really feel and the researcher would also be able to revisit the participants to develop the research by feeding back findings for discussion and clarification.

**Literature Review**

Teacher development is basically the process of becoming the best kind of teacher that one can personally be. When teachers ask themselves how they can be better and enjoy their teaching more, they are actually thinking about ways of developing. It is sensible to claim that teacher development draws on inner resource for change. It is centered around personal awareness of the possibilities for change and of what predisposes the change process. It builds on the past, as recognizing how past experiences have or have not been developmental helps identify opportunities for change in the present and future. It also draws on the present, in encouraging a fuller awareness of the type of teacher one is now and of other’s people responses. Therefore, it is a self-reflective process, since it is through questioning previous practices that alternatives of being and doing are able to emerge.

**Teacher Development versus Teacher Training**

According to Williams (1989), the pre-service phase of teachers' professional lives comprises training and its main purpose is to prepare the participants for classroom teaching. In fact, the learning needs for teacher training are usually defined by an apparent deficiency in the participants' knowledge and skills (James, 2001). Training programs are characterized by short-term learning aims which lead towards predetermined outcomes. These aims usually involve the "learning" (Williams, 1989, p. 3) of theory and techniques and they are pursued through the demonstration of a limited number of desirable behaviors presented as models to be imitated. Trainees are expected to acquire skills through practice and through a combination of observation, practice and discussion of know-how. The above aims are highly likely to be specified by the institution which is funding the training so training in this sense is sometimes referred to as "top-down" (James, 2001, p. 152).

Unlike teacher training, teacher development involves the continuous professional and personal growth of qualified and experienced teachers (Williams, 1989, White, 1986). Teacher development programs are directed towards the teachers' intellectual, pedagogical and personal improvement. This requires a particular type of methodology which draws on the participants' own experience where teachers consider new ideas, work out how to use them, and theorize from the results. This process is expected to stimulate thought about choices and to enable participant teachers to become autonomous learners and to help them fight a feeling of jadedness and to develop their careers.
Teacher development may also be initiated partly or wholly by the teachers and thus has a more individualized and flexible nature than teacher training, with respect to the particular teachers’ needs. This means that both learning aims and outcomes are not predetermined. Teacher development in this sense is sometimes referred to as "bottom-up" (James, 2001, p. 152). Particularly for teachers whose native language is not English, teacher development is not just to do with language teaching or teaching, it is also about language development (Head & Taylor, 1997). This also includes counseling skills, computing, confidence building and cultural broadening and more.

For this research study, the term teacher development is used as it is understood that teacher education programs can pursue both equipping and enabling aims with emphasis on the latter. Education, as Williams defines it, "is concerned with educating the whole person to enable him/her to meet the demands of a world of continuous and unpredictable change" (Williams, 1999, p.11). Similarly, the aim of teacher education is to enhance the continuous professional as well as personal growth of teachers, since the teaching/learning situation is of a dynamic nature itself. The learners and their needs, the requirements of the community and the society, as well as cultural values and views about teaching and learning, all these aspects of the teaching/learning situation are continuously evolving and developing (White, 1988).

However, as Williams (1999) points out, any theoretical approach to the education of teachers is deep-rooted in the view of learning that the educator espouses. It is the teachers themselves decide what they are going to do. His/her beliefs about the nature and development of learning will ultimately determine the practices used with such teachers. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss at this point the researcher’s view of learning, and especially teacher learning in the area of English Language Teaching (ELT).

Teacher Learning

ELT and Background Issue

Although teacher education programs have been in existence for a long time, second/foreign language teacher education is a relatively recent development. According to Day (1991), in the past language teachers were either been native speakers or had some recognized expertise in the language usually based on their knowledge of the literature and culture of the target language. However, in the last forty years there has been an explosion in the teaching and learning of foreign languages, both in the actual classroom teaching and in the education of second/foreign language teachers and this has been particularly rapid in the field of ELT. There are several significant background issues to be discussed.

Knowledge Base

Second/foreign language teachers have specific needs that are not always addressed by generic teacher education programs; nor are they easily described by generic teacher standards. Sullivan (2001) underlines one fundamental aspect that differentiates second/foreign language teaching has from other subject areas: the fact that second/foreign language teachers attempt to teach the target language while using it as a mode of instruction. Therefore, while many subject area teachers try
to speak less themselves and organise more student-centred activities, second/foreign language teachers try to create activities for students, in which both the content and the language to talk about the content compliment and supplement the lesson.

According to Johnston and Irujo (2001), it was not until the '90's that consideration was to be given to the question of what constituted the knowledge base of language teaching. Until this point, the assumption that what language teachers needed was purely theoretical knowledge about the language which they were teaching went largely unchallenged. This assumption is encapsulated in the term "applied linguistics" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 127), which was used to refer primarily to the training of language teachers, even though its use could be clearly extended to many other domains. The implication was that what teachers need to know is the structure of the language they teach and also some largely mechanistic theory for transferring that knowledge to students.

**Subject Matter Knowledge**

For second/foreign language teachers, subject matter knowledge includes phonetics and phonology, English grammar/syntax, second language acquisition, curriculum and syllabus design, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics (Richards, 1998). Day and Conklin (1992) add two more elements to the above: literary and cultural aspects of the English language.

**Pedagogical Knowledge**

**Methodological Skills**

Methodological skills, defined by Richards as ‘activities, tasks and learning experiences used by the teacher within the [language] teaching and learning process’ (Richards, as cited in Ur, 1996, p. 5), are of obvious importance to “effective educating, teaching and learning” (James, 2001, p. 6). Components of general teaching methodology are, for example, classroom organization and management techniques; provision of input; student evaluation; provision of constructive feedback; and effective interaction with students. Elements specific to second/foreign language teaching include: preparation of communicative interaction activities; organization and facilitation of communicative interaction; balancing between fluency and accuracy work; awareness and treatment of learners’ errors; language presentation; elicitation of dialogues and narratives; use of dialogues; use of texts.

**Communication Skills**

Communication is one of the most significant factors affecting classroom learning. Apart from general communication skills, which are closely related to teachers’ personality and general style, language teachers should be able to perform a variety of communication tasks in the language classroom. Therefore, for teachers who are non-native speakers, language proficiency belongs to the core of generic skills that underlie competence in the teaching of English (Richards, 1998).

**Contextual Knowledge**

A teacher’s context extends beyond classroom boundaries to embrace further levels of the local, regional, national and international communities. Richards (1998) emphasizes that an important component of language teachers’ knowledge is an awareness of the effect on teaching of contextual
factors such as language policies, community factors, sociocultural factors, administrative practices, school culture, curricular requirements level and age of class, teaching resources.

**Foreign Language Teachers’ Personal Theories**

For second/foreign language teachers, their personal theories concern their feelings and beliefs about the target language, language teaching and learning, their learners, the context they work in, their job as well as themselves both as professionals and as persons. Since teachers’ personal theories influence the reasoning behind their decisions, this understanding is considered crucial for the development of in-service programmes for language teachers.

**Previous Studies**

Research studies into teachers’ preferences and needs regarding in-service education, and especially research studies with ELT teachers as participants, are somewhat limited compared to other topics (e.g. teachers’ beliefs).

Latham and Locke (2002) investigate the development needs of six EFL private teachers at two private language institutions in Greece. The results indicate that participants’ needs are related to their beliefs about teaching and learning, to their previous experiences and to their classroom context.

Guefrachi and Troudi (2000) report on the evaluation stage of teacher education for ELT teachers’ supervisors in the United Arab Emirates. Part of the evaluation addresses the future professional development needs of the supervisors, as well as the needs of their teachers. The findings are based on the supervisors’ perceptions and show that as far as their content needs are concerned, they believe that all topics are important. However, they express their preference for more course work in the areas of supervision, computer assisted language learning (CALL), and action research. However, they do not mention topics such as critical thinking and learner autonomy, which were suggested by the university-based educators during the course development stage. In terms of methods, the participants prefer the use of workshops, role-plays, demonstrations, group-work and elicitation techniques. Finally, they recommend more workshops on methodology, testing and self-development for their teachers.

Lavender (2002) also evaluates an in-service education course for EFL teacher educators. She investigates the perceptions of six Thai EFL teacher educators’ perceptions after they attended a course in the United Kingdom; the aim of the course was to support them in their own in-service work. Her investigation reveals that participants’ content needs form a hierarchical structure, with language at the lower level, ideas for teaching on the second level and ideas for educating teachers at the upper level. It is interesting to mention here that participants perceive the lower level as a prerequisite for the higher. Finally, Lavender’s results indicate that participants adopted from the course elements only up to the level for which they felt themselves sufficiently skilled and that was the reason that quite a large number of them remained at the level of language improvement.
Methodology
The aim of this study is to gain an understanding of the perceptions Thai EFL university teachers of the need for and the provision and quality of teacher professional development. Thus, it appears that adopting an interpretive approach using mixed methods of investigation makes a lot of sense as researching an educational context. Educational contexts are part the social world which, as Radnor (2002) describes, is “fundamentally different from the natural world because in the social world people have their own intentions, their feelings and emotions, impacted by each other as well as by the context in which they live” (p.17). Therefore, there is the need for an approach which allows the researcher to approach and explore the complexities of the social world. The interpretative approach also highlights the ability of individuals to construct, reconstruct and give meaning to the world in which they live. From this perspective, social reality is constructed and reconstructed by individuals (Blaikie, 1993). As a consequence, social phenomena do not have a simple, unproblematic, objective existence but they have to be interpreted and given meanings by those who encounter them.

As this study is concerned with subjective meaning in specific contexts, the research questions are contextually developed and the obtained data examined inductively. The findings are derived from an open-ended questionnaire and interviews in which the participants are offered an opportunity to express their ideas, feelings and perspectives about the issues studied. The semi-structured interviews offer the researcher the opportunity to make on-the-spot assessments and follow up on specific responses in the narrative or sequence provided by the participants.

Participants
Thirty Thai EFL teachers teaching at tertiary level in public universities were the primary target of this study. The sampling was purposive due to the fact that EFL university teachers are scattered around the country and the researcher considered that the targeted sampling number was large enough. Twenty three were females and five were males. They had teaching experience ranging from two to twenty years. Their ages varied from 29 to 62. Out of the total, ten had a doctoral degree in Linguistics, Education, or Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) while the rest had a Master’s in Education, Communication, Language and Communication, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Teaching English as a Foreign language (TEFL), Linguistics, English Literature, Curriculum and Instruction and English. Ten participants also reported teaching at Master’s and doctoral levels. More than half had spent time overseas studying for a higher degree or traveling on vacation.

Data Collection Methods and Procedures
The data in this mixed-method study was initially derived from open-ended questionnaires. Cohen et al. (2000:255) indicate that an open-ended response ‘puts the responsibility for and ownership of the data much more firmly into respondents’ hands. Moreover, it is an open-ended questionnaire that ‘can catch the authenticity, richness, depth of response, honesty and candour, which are the hallmarks of qualitative data’ (Cohen et al. 2000). Considering these strengths, the use of an open-ended questionnaire was taken into account. The results from the pilot study confirmed that using all open-ended questions allowed responses to flourish. Therefore, open-
ended items in the questionnaire were used.

Semi-structured interviews were employed afterwards. With the semi-structured format, the participants were able to expound on the topics asked and the researcher could prompt the interviewees to expand their ideas when necessary. During the interview conducted in Thai, the interview questions congruent with the research questions were allowed to flow naturally, based on information provided by the respondents. The researcher, while listening, tried to interpret and seek clarity and a deeper understanding from the respondents throughout the interviews. All responses were recorded, with an audiotape and field notes. Non-verbal behaviors were also observed and recorded on the field notes as they occurred. The researcher also documented his reflections showing his views and feelings immediately after each interview. Questions asked included the participants’ personal data and English teaching history. To analyze the data from both the questionnaires and the interviews, the main constructs were developed. Also, the coding for interview data was discussed with two TESL researchers to provide validity with the responses.

Data Analysis
Data from both methods were analyzed to determine themes, as suggested for qualitative data analysis (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The researcher allowed for double coding, meaning that more than one topic could be recognized as being discussed by one participant. Twenty-five percent of the scripts were coded by two coders (the researcher and his assistant) to approximate inter-rater reliability. Inter-rater agreement was 95%, and Cohen’s Kappa was .80, which is in the acceptable range.

Findings and Discussion
To answer the research questions, this section describes and discusses the results from the mixed methods used.

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of Thai university EFL teachers of the need for teacher professional development?

In attempt to seek answers to this question, the researcher first asked all the participants whether they recognised what teacher development was. Almost all participants provided quite diverse yet parallel responses ranging from: it is how teachers find ways to improve themselves; having academic works published, presenting works at conferences; improving more positive student feedback and evaluation; doing research in their relevant disciplines and furthering their qualifications by attending training workshops, taking short courses and pursuing higher degrees. A few specifically pointed out better interaction with colleagues and students and the importance of having an academic title: assistant professor; associate professor and professor as indications of teacher professional development.

When asked what would be needed for EFL university teachers to improve themselves professionally, the majority of the participants referred to their own universities’ teacher development programs as playing a very important role in teacher professional life. Many of them
(n=18) shared this view: “The university needs to give all necessary support for teacher development in terms of upgrading teacher knowledge in their discipline.” One even added that “though teachers may be inspired to be better, this would be difficult without the assistance of the institution at which teachers serve”. Teacher support as most referred to included scholarships, training sessions, workshops, paper presentation grants, conference or seminar attendance grants, research funds, book and textbook production sponsorship as well as up-to-date teaching and learning resources. However, most participants addressed supplying sufficient financial grants for higher degree education as what appeared to be most demanded, reasoning that having a higher degree showed a clear growth in teacher life and enhancement in social acceptance and status and that their monthly and other additional remuneration would also increase to some extent. About one fourth of all the participants also remarked that conducting research was vital as a way of increasing teachers’ knowledge in their areas of expertise and that some of them were even forced by their universities to do yearly research as part of the work requirement. However, due to its high demand and complex procedure to get it complete, research made a lot of university teachers feel unmotivated and somewhat stressed out. Interestingly, eight participants argued that to develop themselves, teachers just needed to be self-reliant and aimed for what they intended to achieve and that there was no need to ask for support from any party. This suggests that teachers should not subject to their university help for teacher development but rather pursue their own determination to progress.

The participants generally perceived that teacher development focuses on individual needs and it takes on different specific meanings and forms depending on where teachers work and what their desired direction for development is (Head & Taylor, 1997). However, universities and their teacher development schemes are viewed as having a great effect on teachers’ motivation for continuous career growth. According to Charaum (2004), whose study focused on new context of Thailand’s professional teachers in relation to the guidelines of teacher education reform, after her thorough investigation she proposes a new practical model for professional teacher education as the tripartite collaboration between university, school, and teachers themselves. Schools and universities thus become a key factor for teacher progress and professionalism. This is in line with the findings in this study in that from most participants’ viewpoints, teachers and their universities are to be mutually dependent and complementary if teachers need to further develop and universities need quality teachers.

As mentioned by several participants, teacher professional development can also be ascribed to teachers’ own conviction to improvement regardless of external university support. Kwakman (2002) investigates the factors that affect teachers’ participation in professional learning activities in schools in the Netherlands. Her results indicate that the teachers’ main motive in participating in the activities depends largely on personal factors such as professional attitudes and burnout rather than factors relating to tasks and work environment including management and university support. Maley (1990) also suggests that teachers set themselves a development agenda, irrespective of whatever external constraints are operating as an important way of acknowledging teachers’ inner needs and desires.
From the findings in this study, funding adequate financial support grants for teachers to study for higher degree qualifications is found to be in need most in comparison with other forms of support available. According to the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education (1996), a study was conducted to investigate teachers’ main motivating factors for growing as professionals. The results were then based on the participants’ perceptions. It was revealed that the main reason for their professional development was the improvement of student achievement, the improvement of teaching skills as well as an increase in their knowledge. In contrast to what is discovered in this study, factors such as, opportunities for career advancement, the maintenance of professional certification and a rise in salary happen to be considered less important. This shows that in the Thai context there may be positive value given to those regarded as highly educated individuals, justifying the drive behind teachers’ need for obtaining higher educational degrees. In addition, as reported by a number of participants, getting a certified degree is a clear proof of one’s academic success, opening doors for greater opportunities. Also, it is rather explicable that Thai university teachers’ salaries are on average lower that those of other professions related to higher education, thus remuneration increment can be a motive for teachers for their professional development.

Research Question 2: To what extent are they satisfied with its provision and quality?

The vast majority of the respondents (N=26) reported that they were quite satisfied with overall university provision for teacher development. Most agreed that universities put an effort to be better in education. This can be illuminated in the following response: “Generally what the university provides is quite satisfactory to teachers; there is usually at least a unit that is in charge of teacher or faculty development. Most universities want to upgrade their teachers, students, and facilities.

Still, they mostly emphasised the need for more scholarships and support grants in addition to being strenuous and consistent in providing funds. One of them reasoned: “Financial aids to study further, to support research work, and to promote teachers’ academic interests are in need, but universities have to be persistent in allocating resources. This cannot be stopped.”

Some participants additionally advised that universities need to take into account what teachers would need for professional growth. This can be achieved through conducting case studies, surveys, or small-scale research studies.

Almost all respondents realised that the application process and the regulations pertaining teacher development programs differ from university to university as well as the predetermined conditions applied to teachers obtaining university educational support. However, more than half urged the university to be attentive to objectivity and transparency in awarding such educational support grants to qualified and suitable teachers. Many of them justified that they have seen the power relations in the administrative system in their universities resulting in biases and inequality when it comes to the selection process for teacher development program application.
With regards to the quality of the university teacher development, most reported being complacent with the overall universities’ focus on driving English teaching and learning by building up teachers as a learning resource in the long term. More than half also pointed out there is still more to improve in terms of teacher professional development especially on teacher collaboration and more effective student learning.

Another important finding emerging from the study is the argument from a number of participants indicating that teachers’ lacking motivation to improve professionally is probably due to the high demand of teaching workload and obligation as university teachers these days. Judging from the responses provided, most participants are quite content with what their universities have provided in terms of teacher professional development and support. According to the Ministry of Education in Thailand, educational assistance is offered in many forms at Thai universities. Almost all Thai universities maintain an active faculty development program administered by a responsible committee or unit. Most of the faculty development includes attending seminars and conferences, undertaking professional training programs, presenting research papers, attending higher degree programs and other forms of development.

The findings have revealed that most participants view the education system in their settings as the top-down approach considering the teachers’ substantial reliance on and compliance with their university teacher development procedure. According to White (1997), two views of education are perceived. The top-down, goes hand in hand with bureaucratisation and is characterised by “specialisation, a hierarchy of authority, a system of rules and impersonality” (White, 1997, p. 135). The other, the bottom-up, is associated with professionalism, within which teachers are given the maximum space to exercise their skills and judgement. Thus, any education systems which adopt the former approach are reported to favour top-down practices to teacher education, whereas more teacher-centred approaches, the latter, have usually been adopted by smaller, less authoritative organizations.

Many participants also highlighted the importance of teacher teamwork and improved student learning as part of teacher professional development. This is in accordance with Harland and Kinder (1997)’s investigation into British teachers’ learning preferences in in-service education programmes. The results of their study highlight the participants’ need for time to meet with colleagues, to discuss current issues and concerns and to engage in practically orientated workshops relating to curriculum development. Interestingly, these participants reasoned that the greatest influences on their professional development are their own experience and beliefs as well as the beliefs and experience of their colleagues.

Similarly, Harris and Anthony (2001) investigate teachers’ perceptions of the nature of collegiality and its role in teachers’ professional development. The results indicate that it is important for teachers to have opportunities for interaction with colleagues, either in formal or informal situations as this interaction promotes professional and personal growth. Teacher development through collaboration is also demonstrated in Farrell (1999)’s study on promotion of reflective thinking through teacher regular group discussion. He focuses on a group of experienced
Korean EFL teachers who get together in weekly meetings to reflect on their own work. His results show that the teachers’ favourite topics are their personal theories and the problems they face in their everyday classroom life. Moreover, although remaining very much at a descriptive rather than a critical level, reflection seems to form a good basis for further development.

**Implications**

The findings of this study lead to some implications. Firstly, Thai university EFL teachers appear to rely heavily on their university for teacher professional development. In this regard, universities do play an important role in EFL teachers’ career growth. Thus universities need to be aware of what kind of programs would most benefit teachers and consider allocating adequate funds to support those interested or have career-driven potential. This also includes the promotion of teacher collaboration and curriculum development. Universities also have to find ways to make research bearable and realistic for teachers and especially in facing with their demanding teaching load. Secondly, when it comes to the specific needs most teachers require, most Thai EFL university teachers attribute the focus onto furthering higher degrees, reflecting on the vitality of having high education in the Thai context and on making universities realize what Thai EFL teachers need most in terms of professional growth. Finally, there is a message sent to decision makers of teacher professional development programs in the university setting to be fair and provable in their decision making.

In line with the results of this study, most literature has shown that on-the-job professional development programs are most beneficial when they are long-term, focused on students’ learning, and linked to the curricula (Bates, 2008; Tran, 2008). According to Nir and Bogler (2008), in their findings, they noticed that in fact the higher the control teachers have over job professional development processes, and the greater the resemblance of these processes to the typical teaching culture in classrooms, the greater the teachers’ satisfaction with job professional development processes. This might not be the case in the Thai context though, as previously discussed, due to the participants’ perceived education system as top-down.

The issue of EFL teacher professional development and its movements should be raised in a university conference or seminar recognised as a medium for academic exchanges. In this way, various new outlooks on this issue would be given greater consideration.

**Conclusion**

Development can mean many different things and take may different forms, as teachers find ways of responding to the inner desire that motivates them to learn. The researcher concurs with Head and Taylor (1997) that teacher development is a continuous process of transforming human potential into human performance, a process that is never finished. All participants realize that teacher development is about dealing with the needs and wants of the individual teacher in ways that fit that individual. Indeed, almost all participants in this study did perceive the need for teacher professional development in practice by largely depending on their university development programs, justifying that what is most needed is support grants for further education. This can be implied that there may have already been instances indicating a paucity of available financial
resources and that teacher development in their settings does not appear to be bottom-up. As found in the investigation, the existing teacher development programs are perceived to be generally satisfactory while some remarks are made regarding the integrity of the selection procedure.

Although realizing the vitality of carrying out research, most participants express much less need for support on attending teacher short training programs and specialized workshops and professional seminars. This could be attributed to greater perceived worthiness of higher degree qualifications possessed by university teachers in the Thai context, leading to numerous gains.

The finding also suggests that teachers who have the capacity to go on seeing and conducting things in new ways are a powerful example to their students as many participants pointed out the significance of improved student learning in conjunction with teacher improvement. Undoubtedly, it is also beneficial for developing more effective course design and planning. This is in line with Underhill (1988)’s remark that teacher development is keeping on the same side as students, keeping alive a sense of challenge and adventure in a teaching career, otherwise learning is slow, tedious and uninspiring. In sum, as long as the world moves on, it is essential for university teachers to find ways of managing and responding positively to change. Not only is this for teachers themselves to keep on progressing, but also they have a responsibility to prepare their students to cope with a world in which change is the norm.

About the Author:
Sureepong Phothongsunan works at the School of Arts, Assumption University. Having a doctorate in TEFL from the University of Exeter, UK., he completed an M.A. in TESL from the University of Central Missouri, U.S.A. He has published books, articles, and research in the fields of Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching.
Orchid ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8115-4375

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Classroom Discourse Failure among Algerian Secondary School Learners

Houria CHOHRA
Department of English, Faculty of Foreign Languages
Abdelhamid Ibn Badis, University, Mostaganem, Algeria

Souâd HAMERLAIN
Department of English, Faculty of Foreign Languages
Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University, Mostaganem, Algeria

Abstract
Teaching English to non-native speakers today necessitates conducting conversations where learners interpret and decipher linguistic and nonverbal aspects of interaction, in other words, preparing learners to use English to participate in conversations inside and outside the classroom. However, this is not the case in Algerian Secondary school English classes. Regular observation indicated almost no continuous teacher-learner conversation while lessons. This paper intends to observe language use between the teachers and students; what instruction is used and how is it dealt with by learners. The results would aim at revealing the shortage learners show in the speaking skill and confirm the effectiveness of observation for classroom evaluation. Adopting a systematic observation, six classes at secondary school level in two different cities in Algeria were observed and audio-taped through a quantitave and qualitative method. Data is analysed from the amount of teacher’s talk, types of classroom discourse structure and questioning. Based on data analysis, the findings showed that most of the talk is approximately initiated by the teacher; learners act only when asked display questions and keep silent when are challenged by influential questions. It also showed display questions dominate the classroom for they maximize learners’ participation. Yet, this learner’ short output would limit the learners’ critical reflection and lessen the classroom interaction among participants. Therefore, this paper urges teachers to adopt a student-centred approach to FL learning that enables students’ to talk more and participate in conversations negotiating meaning with their teacher and peers. For further research, the author puts forward some guidelines to build on new research.

Keywords: classroom discourse analysis, discourse structure, input and output, interaction, observation, questioning

1- Introduction

Nunan (1993) defines classroom discourse as one among different types of discourse. It is language used between the teacher and learners or learners and learners. Researchers in second language acquisition (SLA) agree that successful language learning depends on classroom interaction in which learners are engaged with their teacher and other learners in an exchange where they negotiate meaning for the sake of achieving both comprehension and communication. The discourse carried out among the classroom participants during the whole session is different from other types of discourse that occurs in other situations for it consists of explanations, instructions, arguments, etc. It is central for foreign language learning in that it gets learners involved in a social environment that they experience outside the classroom and accordingly, they contextualize their own experiences using the target language.

Having been exposed to five or six years of learning English as a foreign language, high school Algerian learners in their last year should have developed, at least a considerable average in communicating their input using English, especially that communication is the central objective to learning English in the Algerian curriculum. However, it is still observed that a great number of them cannot communicate or produce acceptable English. Teachers claim that there is a gap between student’s levels and the previous six years of language instruction. Natural and spontaneous use of the foreign language is absent in addition to a low level in fluency and accuracy acquired at this level. The problem is that learners do not even communicate what they learn in the classroom, while language learning should be associated with classroom practice so that it is remedied and evaluated for production. Instead, learners are observed using English of movies, songs, social networking, and texting in speaking and writing.

Now, linguists (Allwright, D. and Bailey, K.M. 1991) as well as foreign language teachers agree on the fact that learners learn to speak in the target language by interacting. Communicative language teaching (CLT) and collaborative learning work well for this aim. CLT is based on real-life situation that requires communication that enables learners to interact with each other in the target language. That is why teachers should create a classroom environment to get learners involved in real-life communication, genuine activities and meaningful task that support the oral skill through pair and team work. Activities whose objective is to communicate feelings, exchange personal ideas, and negotiate meanings orally in the target language do not only make learners more active but also make their learning meaningful and exciting to them.

As language outside is examined, analysed, and interpreted by stenographers, ethnographers and speakers as well, classroom language is a pedagogical discourse that should be observed, analysed, then ‘repaired’ for learners by practitioners in the field of education. This paper aims at observing what is happening in the classroom in terms of input and output among Algerian English secondary school teachers and learners in order to identify the causes of the poor performance in the oral skill of learners in their last year. This will be explored and investigated from the amount of teacher’s talk, types of classroom discourse structure and questioning.
2- Why Classroom Discourse Analysis?

Methods and approaches related to the traditional classroom could not last long for some of their principles that did not cope with learners needs to learn an FL. In a traditional classroom, the teacher plays a central role in the classroom by controlling the classroom activities, topics, questions and talk too while the learner is a passive participant who only receives and learns to read and write (Skidmore, 2000 as cited in Rezaie, 2015). However, today’s FL classroom calls for learner oral use of language and the central role of the teacher is to guide students and give them more opportunities to take part in the classroom participation. It focuses more on content (discourse delivered in interaction) than on form (language structures).

The term classroom discourse, in this study, refers to the language that teachers and students use to communicate classroom topics with each other. The teacher’s role is crucial in shaping learners’ understanding of L2, however, it should not be dominant where s/he transmits knowledge, corrects students' mistakes and expects students to learn alone. Rather, an EFL teacher has a central role in arranging the oral and written discourse in ways that contribute to students' understanding of the foreign language. The teacher asks questions and gives tasks that evoke, engage and more, challenge the students’ thought. In other words, a teacher is a discourse analyst who feeds his learners with comprehensible input and looks after their output to feed them again. Learners, on the other hand, assisted by their teacher, are also concerned with analyzing their own learning, so that the learning/teaching process is effectively accomplished. How such events can be determined and developed towards a successful classroom communication but is through regular classroom observation that comprehends both linguistic and social behaviour within the different classrooms.

According to Arthur (2008), the earliest systemic study of classroom discourse was reported in 1910 and stenographers were used to make a continuous record of teachers’ and student’s talk in high school classrooms. The first use of audiotape recorders in classrooms was reported in the 1930s and during the 1960s, where there was a rapid growth in the number of studies based on analysis of classroom discourse transcripts. Consequently, it was observed that the verbal interaction between teachers and students had an underlying structure that was much the same in all classrooms, at all grade levels. Classroom discourse, which includes the interactions between language learners and their teacher or other learners, is a raw material that, if well considered, may uncover many issues in language learning as it may well strengthen the teaching process. Language classroom is different in form and function from language used in other situations because of particular social roles which learners and teachers have in the classroom and the kind of activities they usually carry out there, that is why it requires a special assistance by educators in order to deal with it.

The concept of classroom discourse has undergone various interpretations by different scholars in the field of language study. Each of them interprets the concept according to her/his perspective and the requirements of their subject matter. However, most of them agree on the importance of language used by classroom members in interaction. Kramsch (1985) for instance, valuing the role of learners’ backgrounds as a factor in language acquisition, considers classroom discourse as
composed of a continuous bridge that links pedagogic discourse to natural discourse poles. Pedagogic discourse is accomplished when learners achieve their institutional roles; everything has to do with teacher’s instructions, information, and knowledge while natural discourse occurs when interaction is conducted, in other words, when interpretation, negotiation of meaning and discussion are enhanced by classroom participants. Therefore, the contact that occurs among classroom participants is an exchange between the two different poles of this continuum in which instructional roles take place.

Interestingly, Nunan (1993) views classroom discourse as the distinctive type of discourse that occurs in classroom. In his opinion, special features of discourse include unequal relationships, which are marked by unequal opportunities for teachers and pupils to suggest topics, turn sequencing, etc. This can possibly enable the teacher to observe the probable lacunas that need to be fixed. In this respect, Edmondson (1985) differentiates between two learning objectives that classroom interaction is supposed to focus on. He believes that classroom discourse provides “co-existing discourse words” depending on whether the participants are engaged in the act of trying to learn or trying to communicate. In other words, explaining the structure of an activity is also a type of classroom discourse. Yet, it does not necessarily require learners’ interaction as when classroom members interact at the same time. Instead, it requires learners’ comprehension of the instruction to be analysed by the teacher.

Although the interpretations above show a difference in opinions, most scholars agree on the fact that classroom discourse is a matter of two parties with different roles. In this respect, it is the role of the teacher to manage the classroom talk who, when and how much. The learning of a foreign language in or outside the classroom itself depends on particular characteristics of the L2 learning settings. The awareness of the role of input and output in FL acquisition by teachers enables teachers and educators to observe their teaching in the first place then their learners’ input in order to determine the objectives of a successful EFL classroom. The teacher, when analysing all that, creates techniques and procedures to conduct an effective classroom interaction through the negotiation of meaning, types of questions and the efficient distribution of classroom participants’ roles.

3- Aspects of Classroom Discourse
3.1. Teacher’s Talk

Scholars in the field of language learning have considered different functions for the influencing role of the teacher’s talk. It is usually viewed as one of the influential factors of success or failure in classroom teaching (Xu, 2010). It can determine whether teaching in a specific classroom has been successful or not. The teacher can realize his objectives concerning his method through learners’ achievements and feedback. It has also been proven beneficial for learners in that it provides them with a specific opportunity to have more learning, questions and answers, and other activities that learners are not aware of. Through teacher talk, teachers use different types of questions based on different factors some of which are the level of students, the type of materials they teach and their purpose of asking questions (Huang & Zheng, 2009). However, much time given to teacher’s talk may result in decreasing
learners’ outcomes of language use in and outside the classroom for it is not the only role in a classroom interaction; it is the exchange of ideas, opinions and turn talking that shape a successful classroom interaction. Thus, the amount of teacher’s talk should be appropriate, so that students could get a chance to produce their output. The classroom is composed of several daily pedagogical aspects such as teachers’ and students’ talk, question-answer exchange, teacher and students’ feedbacks, etc. that contribute to classroom achievements since they give opportunity to both the teacher and learners the chance to interact, therefore, the role of teacher’s talk should be turned up accordingly.

Harmer (1998) found out that teacher’s talk occupied much more time than students’ talk. That is why the balance of teacher’s talk and students’ talk is important in the EFL classroom, so that students can get more opportunities not only to internalize English knowledge and improve their language competence but also to using it. Classroom interaction is an important aspect of the learning process. It is built through both the teacher and learners’ contributions to the classroom improvement as it should not focus only on the teacher’s language. A good teacher maximises students’ talking time (STT) and minimises teachers’ talking time (TTT) (Harmer, 2008).

Talk exchange between the teacher and learners, then, gives opportunity for teachers and learners to negotiate ideas, correct errors, and talk more. As turn-taking is a mechanical transfer, a process that happens unintentionally for the sake of building social relationship among members of communities, it is a social process that creates active learners aiming at building an effective teacher-students’ interaction to improve an EFL classroom discourse.

3.2. Types of Classroom Discourse Structure

Generally speaking, teachers use questions to fulfil various classroom tasks among them warming up students about the previous lesson. The teacher may also ask questions to elicit students’ knowledge about the new (current) topic, all that to manage and conduct a classroom interaction. In some classrooms, over half of the class time is taken up by question-and-answer exchanges. Teachers’ questions have been the focus of research attention for many years. Considerable research exists indicating that questions can assist learners in improving their linguistic ability. (Mehan 1979, as cited in Behnam & Pouriran 2009) offered three structural components of a pedagogic discourse:

▪ An opening phase where the participants inform each other that they are in fact going to conduct a lesson as opposed to some other activity.
▪ An instructional phase where information is exchanged between the teacher and students.
▪ A closing phase where participants are reminded of what went on in the core of a lesson.

When the teacher asks a question, the student answers and the teacher evaluates. The teacher continues to ask another question and so the sequence continues. This structure of classroom discourse encourages teacher-learners interaction and insures the balance of talk among them. This was also
Classroom Discourse Failure among Algerian

CHOHRA & HAMERLAIN

Classroom interaction between classroom participants is composed of different language patterns depending on the nature of the topic being studied. Among such patterns Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) model of classroom discourse Initiation, Response, and Feedback, known as (IRF). It is a structure, where the teacher initiates a question, in order to check students’ knowledge and responses. This one is evaluated with feedback from the teacher (Richards et al., 1992). This paves the way for more participation in the classroom topic on the part of students, as it enables the teacher to analyse, evaluate, and then plan an appropriate lesson.

T: What’s the capital of France? (Initiation)
S: Paris. (Response)
T: Yes, Paris. That’s right. (Feedback)

As a matter of fact, the IRF structure initiates a give-and-take conversation between the teacher and students (Chang 2002). It introduces the idea that in the teacher-students interaction, the answer part is always followed by the teacher’s evaluation and comments addressing the student. This feedback is what permits the teacher to control language comprehension and use merely because it is the part that decides on what is relevant in certain discourse and what is not.

Behavioral psychologists were the first to recognize the power of feedback as a motivating influence. Feedback refers to the informative responses to what learners say or do, for example, a nod, smile, puzzled frown, or clarifying question are all useful feedback to learners. (XU 2010 p: 46)

For long, the IRF has been broadly used by researchers as a practical type of classroom sequencing to examine educational discourse. Following Ellis (1994), teachers control the classroom discourse and occupy the first part of the three-phase IRF exchange by asking many questions. However, the third part of the three phases is also taken by the teacher and even if it is for students’ feedback, it may occupy the whole classroom time as the teacher has other different talks. Also, such kinds of discourse structures seem ideal in the Algerian secondary school context, at least from the part of the student. When the teacher receives no complete answer, he finds himself completing the answer and appending to it a feedback to students who do not participate in delivering it. Such structures do not prove beneficial unless, in purpose, the teacher prepares particular types of questions, where he either tests students’ memory or challenges it.

3.3. Teacher’s questioning

Among the many aspects that help create classroom interactions is the types of the questions which are asked by teachers. In this respect, Ellis (1994) mentioned two types of questions Display questions and Referential Questions. The former require the respondents to provide knowledge or information already known by the questioner, for example “What’s the synonym of ‘right’ in English?” The latter, on the other hand, request information not known by the questioner, hence requiring more details. To some extent, Referential questions are authentically thought of being challenging, while Display questions ‘test’ the learners by eliciting already known information. These types of questions may address students’ memory not their comprehension. This is what would drive students to compete over who would answer first in the
case of extrovert learners (type of students who show more interest in verbal communication and take risks (Dawaele & Furnham 2005 p: 6). However, Referential questions are concerned with eliciting longer, more authentic responses than displaying questions by stressing more learners’ comprehension than memory; this type of questioning works well with introverts (who are reflective but reserved); they are more concerned with the inner world of ideas than extroverts but are more likely to be involved with solitary activities (Zafar & Meenakshi 2012 p: 243) The primary objective of Referential questions is to encourage various and long responses from students, that is, to present a better chance for them to talk by engaging them in higher-level thinking. Consequently, they would provide their own information and ideas instead of recollecting the previously presented information. This manoeuvre will further push them to forget about their personal problems and consider themselves as part of a group.

Also, Ellis typology of questions can be used in the three phases of a session depending on the learners’ output; as a warm up, as an oral activity, and as an assessment to examine students’ understanding to pass to the activities phase (Mehan 1979 as cited in Behnam & Pouriran 2009). Based on many studies, Referential questions call for more interaction and meaningful negotiation and investment of language.

Indeed, real language interaction does not consist only of questions from one party and answers from another. It also swivels around world knowledge and meaning negotiation in order to communicate not only ideas but also understandings, intentions, and a successful pedagogical relationship between the teacher and learners. Accordingly, questions in the language classroom should be Referential or meaning-based, not focusing on form solely. By doing so, the teacher addresses the learners’ capacity to talk, answer questions but again to speak out his ideas and mindset using the target language in and outside the classroom.

4. Classroom Observation

Talking about observation, one should differentiate between observation as a daily routine, and observation as a research tool. In this paper, observation is the purposeful examination of both processes teaching and learning in their pedagogical context. Observation in this respect is one of the methods through which we can explore the classroom needs taking into consideration its different aspects. Through observation, a teacher assesses the quality of teaching and learns what input is appropriate, when and how much time it should be given with regard to learners’ output. Observation is an instrument that enables the improvement of language classroom in terms of pedagogy and communication.

According to Johnson and Johnson (1998), Classroom Observation has been used as a technique in the study of many aspects of language teaching activities. Although there are several types of observational procedures or techniques that have been used to examine effective teaching (for example, charts, rating scales, checklists, and narrative descriptions), the most widely used procedure or research method has been systematic classroom observation based on interactive coding systems. These interactive coding systems allow the observer to record nearly everything that students and teachers do during a given time period. These interaction systems
are very objective and typically do not require the observer to make any high inferences or judgments about the behaviours they observe in the classroom except some embarrassments that some teacher and even students feel whenever they view the observer enters the classroom.

In this study, the author represents both a researcher who examines problems related to the field of FL teaching then suggests solutions for either teachers or other researchers in this domain, and a teacher who investigates her way of seeing pedagogy through her classes in order to improve the current teaching methods. Through the classroom observation, the study tries to find out the features of secondary schools classroom discourse through the following objectives:

- To observe, record and analyze the strategies and techniques secondary school teachers use to teach teenagers English as a foreign language
- To help raise teachers’ awareness of language teaching/learning weakness and remedy.
- To create a resource bank of language teaching strategies, ideas and techniques for teachers to use when facing pedagogical obstacles within classroom communication.
- To serve such research as a support for other researchers attempting to investigate in such field.

Participants
In this research, six classes were chosen (two FL classes, two Literary classes, and two Scientific classes) from third year level (BAC classes) taught by three teachers (each of them with two classes) from two different high schools with the same different streams and different regions (town: Oued Fodda, and the city: Chlef) served as suitable samples for the study. The EFL learners are of different ages, namely between 16 and 20, females and males having studied English for six years. The number of learners in each class is between 30 and 48. The three teachers are from both sexes as they had almost the same education and teaching background with 3 to 5 years’ of English studies and from five to 29 years of teaching experience with sufficient preparation for their work. The teachers and students share the same L1 background, that is, they are all Algerians.

Data Collection and Procedure
The data collection followed both a qualitative and a quantitative method of data collection. The quantitative data will be shown below in tables, analysed and then interpreted in the Research Result and Discussion section whereas the qualitative data will be revealed through a variety of points directly after the Summary of the Findings. To obtain authentic data collection for all the observed classes, the researcher did not inform the teachers about recording of their classes. They were only informed that their classes will be observed. There was no instruction to the teachers on using particular method or even particular types of questions in order to obtain authentic data record. Then, the audio-recorded data was listened to by the researcher several times. After the regular observation, all the discourses of the teachers and their students were transcribed and calculated from the three aspects: the amount of teacher talk, the types of discourse structure, and the uses of teachers’ questions. Next, all the items (of audio-recording of each class) concerning
the above three aspects were counted to get the means and average percentages of the items for each class. The means and average percentages of the items of the six classes were finally calculated and analyzed. The final stage was analyzing the data of both research tools in order to find a reasonable answer to the research question.

Research Results and Discussion

Data Analysis of Classroom Observation

The teacher and learner talk is the first element to be tackled in the following section, for the researcher found that in all the classrooms observed, talk is an important element that draws on the other classroom aspects. Besides, teacher talk is dominant in all classroom aspects if not maintained. In this section, after teacher and learner talk, results of types of classroom discourse structure (IRF) will be cited. Then, the types of questions will be revealed. In these six classes, the average time measured is 30 minutes for the other portion of the class time is always distributed between administrative procedures such as calling students’ names, writing on copybooks/board, etc.

Result of the Amount of Teacher’s Talk

Table 1. Amount of Teacher’s Talk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>T/ Talk Time/min</th>
<th>T/ Talk Time Percentage (%)</th>
<th>S/ Talk Time/min</th>
<th>S/ Talk Time Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chlef</td>
<td>E.S class</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FL class</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L. class</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O. Fodda</td>
<td>E.S class</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FL class</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L. class</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result</td>
<td>Classes</td>
<td>21.33</td>
<td>65.83</td>
<td>8.66</td>
<td>34.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that the amount of teacher’s talk time exceeds that of students in all the classes. The amount of teacher and students’ talk is identified in terms of streams and regions. In Chlef city for instance, students’ talk exceeds that of students in Oued Fodda town in E.S. (Experimental Sciences) and L. (Literary) streams except in the (Foreign Language) FL classes (which is not always the case). Similarly, the teacher’s amount of talk in the six classes is different across streams and regions and this is all clearly mentioned in the table above. Although these results differ across streams depending on the students’ amount of talk, the dominance of the teacher’s talk is apparent.
As stated by Sinclair and Coulthard’s (1975), the teacher applies the maximum amount of control over classroom discourse. Table 2 shows similar characteristics with Sinclair and Coulthard’s findings. In this research, IRF structure is observed to take a large section in the six classes with regards to the different streams and regions. The following is a typical example of IRF structure found in one of the six classrooms.

T: From which period? (Initiation)
S: “The Ottoman”. (Response)
T: Yes, it is the Ottoman period”, thank you. (Feedback)

In this exchange, the teacher initiated a question, the student responded to it, and the teacher provided a feedback with confirmation. Table 2 reflects that IRF structure is dominant in High school EFL classrooms in Chlef city and Oued Fodda town. In IRF structure, the teacher has two turns, while the student has only one. It demonstrates the insufficiency of students’ opportunities to practise English.

### Results of Teachers’ Questioning

To answer the research question, the researcher implemented the (R-V-T-A) method in order to observe the frequency use of two types of questions (Display and Referential) which were used by the teachers. After collecting the data, a transcribing technique was employed. After that, the observed patterns were analyzed with reference to earlier studies. This is done first, to find and reveal noticeable generalizations and patterns in teachers’ questioning behaviour and EFL classroom interaction. Second, to mainly check the validity of our hypothesis. The frequencies of the two types of teachers’ questions (Display question and Referential question) are listed in Table 3.
Table 3: Frequency of Display Questions and Referential Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Frequency of Display Questions</th>
<th>Frequency of Referential Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number/30mn</td>
<td>Percentage (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlef</td>
<td>E.S Classes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FL Classes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L. Classes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oued Fodda</td>
<td>E.S Classes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FL Classes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L. Classes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.66</td>
<td>56.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 3 indicates that the use of Display questions and Referential questions is different in the six classes. They differ in term of streams and learners motivation with regards to their subject matter. Display questions exceed Referential ones in streams like FL and Literary classes where as they reduce in E.S classes.

Sample of Referential/Display Questions from the study data

a) Display Questions
   T: “Have a look at the pictures, what do you call this?
   S: “Touristic guide”
   T: How do you call this?
   S: “Ruins”
   S “buildings”
   T: “Has any one of you already visited these places?”
   S: No!

b) Referential Questions
   T: What are the different heritage places in Algeria?
   S: They are 7; Djamila, Timgad..
   T: Can you classify them?
   S: Sumerian, Egyptian, Chinese...
   T: What is the meaning of inherit?
   S: Someone takes money of his father for example.
for information gaps”. Therefore, motivation and interest cause the interaction to be more lifelike. However, some Referential questions can reduce learners’ participation and speech for the lack of vocabulary for example or grammatical errors. In this case learners may get enough of providing short answers rather, hence reduces participation. In contrast, Display questions can increase learners’ speech and participation since they are direct and require, generally, comprehension checks, confirmation checks or clarification requests which don’t require learners more efforts in formulating correct sentences. Instead they just check their copybooks or each others’ information. In short, in either Referential or Display questions the teacher uses to incite learners’ interaction, there are a number of elements that should be considered by teachers such as the learners’ socio-cultural background, academic streams they belong to, and more importantly the world current changes and its impact on teenagers. Furthermore, it is the classroom daily context that decides which type of questioning to use at what particular time and for what objectives each of them fits the EFL classroom discourse.

Summary of the Findings

In this study, through observation, it was found that teachers talk much in the classroom in order to explain language points, translate passages, give direction, explain activities, and check students’ understanding while students are always in a passive position; either listening. Analysis of the patterns of interaction characteristic of most classrooms has shown that teachers talk for more than half of the time, a few students contribute most to the answers. For example, in one of the two FL classes (of the city), boys talk more than girls whereas the little amount of talk which contributes to the discussion is from those sitting at the front and centre of the class than those sitting at the back and sides. In Scientific classes (in both high schools), both boys and girls contribute to the interaction, although with grammar and spelling mistakes. Interaction cannot be analyzed for the reason that it almost doesn’t exist in both literary-stream classes; learners in these classes do only write, talk to each other, or adopt nonsensical behaviours.

Interaction between input and output gives rise to second language development (Lev Vygotsky 1962) and referential questions in this case, enrich more classroom interaction. Conversely, in this study, the classroom observation showed that teachers’ questions tend to favour the display questions; the number of display questions exceeds the number of referential ones. It was observed that learners, especially in literary streams react more to display questions for they are information-oriented. Teachers, in such classes, in order to maximize participation to enrich the lesson, s/he focuses on display question over referential. Generally, learners in all the classes, find it easy to deal with such questions; they do not create information, rather, they re-formulate or re-use the text’s or the teacher’s ones.

With regard to interaction, observation revealed that in almost all classes, it is the teacher who always takes the initiative while learners only listen. As such, a teacher-learner interaction is supposed to show certain continuity between display and referential questions while the role of teacher’s questions is crucial. Question asking must be done purposefully, so teachers should smoothly through a negotiation of meaning change from closed discourse to more open discourse in order to create an autonomous learner discourse in the classrooms. Moreover,
teachers can increase the amount of interaction in their classes by applying a variety of techniques and methods like using humour and addressing learners’ everyday life. When the teacher uses a piece of humour into the classroom, learners feel motivated to participate more than when the teacher is the centre. Also, a learner will feel important when the teacher is interested in his/her everyday matters and cares about his/her answers. However, it seems that the use of Display questions can encourage more language learners, especially beginners, than high-level learners to get interested. It may also be helpful for teachers to provide comprehensible input for learners.

To claim that Referential questions are more useful for language learning than Display questions is debatable. In this study, it is found that the classroom is an unrelated series of daily social and pedagogical events that cannot be framed within a particular teaching methodology or a discourse structure in each lesson. Moreover, different classroom contexts require different methodology of dealing with the classroom subject matter. Each context requires an appropriate strategy by itself.

As the classroom is a complex variety of activities that happen differently every session, the researcher could not prevent the observation of a number of patterns of classroom interaction and questioning that occurred during the designed observation. The following related points are accounted for the qualitative data.

- It is said that Display questions require very short answers (Brock, 1986, cited in Nunan, 1989). However, it was observed that some display questions required learners to speak for one or two minutes. Sometimes there was even an interaction among learners, and although they use a mixture of L1 and L2, learners tended to speak more, especially when the topic was interesting.
- In some classes, especially the scientific ones, questions were not always undertaken by the teacher, learners tried a lot to initiate a rich interaction among them and sometimes with the teacher discussing interesting topics though they code switch using L1.
- In many exercises, almost all the questions asked by the teacher were display. This was possibly due to the grammatical/syntactical nature of certain activities which require understanding confirmation through short answers and already-existing information.
- Not all answers given by the learners for referential questions were long and complex. In contrast, it was observed that lots of grammatical mistakes were made by the learners who provided simple answers.
- Interaction was not always created by the teacher and motivated learners. Less motivated/slow learners also participate in the interaction whenever asked or encouraged by the teacher.
- It was observed that learners were much influenced by the subject matter they are concerned with in terms of streams; FL learners, for instance, were more interested in English as a subject where they came with lesson preparation, participated and even asked questions to enrich their knowledge of the current topic. Scientific ones gave importance to English for they equally consider all subjects they have at school in order to have very good averages; they took most of the class time in answering the two types of the questions.
• Learners do not hesitate to use vocabulary from their L1 and French language to fill the gap in their discussion.
• Last year learners see that talk or participation is not important and their interest in revising for their BAC exam.

Classroom discourse is a very spontaneously evolving, dynamic, and complicated phenomenon. Pedagogic discourse is characterized by transmission, reception and practice of teaching/learning points where the focus is on knowledge as a product and on accuracy. Evidently, the variation in using methods and techniques to enrich the classroom interaction together with considering factors related to learners’ social and pedagogical background would improve English learning.

Based on the data collected through teacher talk, types of questions, and the type of discourse structure used by the teachers from six classes using an audio-taping system in addition to the teachers’ questionnaire, during the observation, it was assured that it was the teacher’s decision to select which discourse structure and which questions are suitable for the current session. On the other hand, even through different classroom aspects, discourse competence cannot fully be reached; learners prefer providing short answers or keeping silent. This happens even with brilliant learners who use their knowledge in official exams only. Being a secondary school teacher, the researcher suggests possible reasons behind this limited EFL classroom language production:

- Learners prefer keeping silent to avoid committing mistakes
- The English lesson in Algerian secondary schools is limited to 60mn including all the pedagogical procedures (call for students names, classroom organization and student behaviour, preparing pedagogical documents, etc.)
- Large classes
- English subject is seen as secondary for the scientific streams. However, the literary and foreign language streams prefer not to talk for them revision for the BAC exam is the most important.
- Different socio-cultural backgrounds among learners.

Actually, the reasons may vary according to different learning contexts and teachers’ academic and social specificities, too. It is perhaps safe to claim that learning a FL for the current generation requires a whole methodology reformation taking into consideration learners as social members who interact more outside (within their social environment; the family, relatives and the social network) than inside the classroom. The learner’s social background also may have a great impact on their success or failure in learning a foreign language; learners living in the town do not have the same attitude towards learning a foreign language as those of the city. The former seem more motivated and open to learning a foreign language than the latter. Thus, it is the teachers’ task to create the right learning environment and engage talk and performance using the target language by selecting particular activities that requires their output delivery.
Suggested Recommendations on How to Improve the EFL Classroom Communication

In light of the findings achieved from the classroom observation, some guidelines on how to encourage learners to take part in classroom conversations using English are suggested here so as to overcome secondary school students’ weaknesses and, thus, improve communication.

▪ The teacher has to be aware of the learners’ learning styles so as to be able to plan and prepare appropriate teaching materials according to the learners’ level.
▪ The use of the teaching materials should be up-to-date by varying methods and strategies in using them; the use of ICTs in delivering a lesson is very beneficial in that it changes the learning atmosphere.
▪ In order to motivate learners to get involved in the new lesson, teachers should warm up students with interesting and clear topics that suits them and copes with their level of English proficiency.
▪ Teachers should develop knowledge regularly by building on the previously pre-taught lesson and its related vocabulary, grammar points, and other topics in order to push the students to a double comprehension. It maximizes their participation too.
▪ Students should be involved to use their previous experiences and structures (even from their L1) to learn new knowledge.
▪ As students do not hesitate to use their L1 (Arabic) and French language in the classroom, the teacher can get benefit from this situation; including translation tasks from and into English using Arabic and English would increase participation as it decreases anxiety and hesitation among learners.
▪ Teachers do not hesitate to help learners in need of their promotion but do not exaggerate when unnecessary for that teaches dependency.
▪ Secondary school textbooks include a variety of topics (social, linguistic, commercial, and educational, etc.) that enables the teacher to conduct a conversation with students where they negotiate, exchange and learn ideas and new vocabulary.
▪ In order to balance participation among learners, the teacher should consider several factors chiefly students’ level of proficiency, the class size and the time programmed for these activities.
▪ Group work is very welcome by students for they give them opportunity to talk to each other. It is the right moment to set them tasks to encourage exchanging ideas then comparing them using the target language.
▪ Teachers should attend and participate in pedagogical and study days concerning new methods and reforms in the field of teaching.

Conclusion

Failure in communication using a foreign language can be associated to a lack of practice of this language. That is why language teachers need to observe not only learners but also their own teaching methodology. Through observing teaching methodologies as well as learners’ linguistic behaviour; we are basically analyzing classroom discourse. By doing so, we as teachers, are able to interpret our assumptions and beliefs about teaching from the activities chosen, the amount of talk of teachers and learners, and the types of discourse structures in each session. In this respect, it is
 advisible for teachers to strengthen not the quantity but the quality of input they deliver in each session, as they should not ignore learners’ output as the building block of a whole pedagogical methodology. This paper is a case study that addresses a particular learning context in particular region in Algeria that cannot be generalized for all other learning contexts. However, the related interpretations would, to a large extent, provide teachers and researchers as well with necessary tools as well as a variety of learning/teaching situations to face possible teaching obstacles.

About the Authors:
**Houria CHOHRA** is a PhD student and a secondary school English teacher. She earned her BA in English Language, Literature and Anglo-Saxon Civilization and MA in Didactics of English and Applied Linguistics from Abdelhamid Ibn Badis University of Mostaganem, Algeria. Currently, she is conducting a doctoral research in areas such as Didactics, discourse, and language teaching.

**Souâd HAMERLAIN** completed her PhD on the pragmatics of translating Algerian Arabic drama and popular poetry (*al-mellûn*) into English at Sidi Bel Abbes University in 2012. She obtained her accreditation at the same university in 2014. She has been teaching at the University of Mostaganem for more than a decade. She is the author of several articles and chapters of books. Her fields of interest include, but are not limited to, literary translation, linguistics, and didactics.

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Reading Comprehension Strategies among EFL Learners in Higher Learning Institutions

Hamza Al-Jarrah
Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, 21300 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia

Nur Salina binti Ismail
Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, 21300 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia

Abstract
A variety of reading strategies are required to comprehend reading materials. Without effective reading strategies, students mostly face reading comprehension difficulties. This study aims to investigate reading comprehension strategies among English foreign language (EFL) learners in higher learning institutions. The study employed qualitative method and 10 Arab students of Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) were interviewed. Inductive thematic approach was used to analyze data. The findings indicates that the most commonly used reading strategies among the EFL learners are logical knowledge (under linguistic schema), formal construction (under formal schema), cultural knowledge (under cultural schema), and prior knowledge and conceptual knowledge (under content schema). This study concludes that reading strategies help the EFL learners in understanding English reading materials. To improve reading strategies for EFL learners, there is a need for collective effort of English language teachers, curriculum designers, educationists, education policy makers, and the EFL learners themselves.

Keywords: Arab EFL learners, comprehension, higher institutions, reading strategies

1.1 Introduction

English language as any language consists of four skills; listening, reading, speaking and writing. These skills are divided into two groups; receptive and productive. While receptive consists of reading and listening skills, productive refers to writing and speaking. When the learners learn receptive skills, they receive the language from spoken or written text and decode the meaning to understand the text. The reading skill is increasingly seen as one of the most important skills. Reading can be considered one of the basic ways of acquiring information in our society and for academic purpose in particular. It plays a vital role because it is one of the most frequently used language skills in everyday life. It is assumed that the person who is not able to read well will face serious trouble, especially in what is regarded to be educational and, subsequently, job opportunities (Ganesh, 2015).

Lack of effective reading strategy is identified as one of the significant factors affecting reading comprehension efficiency among EFL learners in higher institutions (Koda, 2007). This area has attracted a lot of research into Language 1 and Language 2 language acquisition and reading fluency in the Arab world (Elbeheri, Everatt, Mahfoudhi, Abu Al-Diyar, & Taibah, 2011). Oral language plays a significant role in learning to read as it has been observed that development of reading is directly proportionate to the development of oral language (Perfetti & Dunlap, 2008). Proper strategies need to be followed to achieve the desired goal rather than focusing on assessment as a tool to enhance comprehension skills (AlJamal, Hawamleh, & AlJamal, 2013). Lack of reading exercises among students and training among teachers might be responsible for the poor outcome in terms of reading skills among students, which could result in poor academic performance (Abdelrahman & Bsharah, 2014; Alroud, 2015).

English language learners are expected develop good reading skills. Foreign language researchers have focused on searching for effective methods to increase students’ reading ability. They advocate the use of extensive reading to motivate readers. Learners who do not understand reading material cannot enjoy reading. The most significant problem faced by the instructors today is reading deficiency among the university level students, which may reflect poor performance in their educational activities (Nezami, 2012). This might be due to the fact that students need a variety of strategies in order to comprehend reading materials. Therefore, this study aims to investigate reading comprehension strategies among Arab EFL learners in higher learning institutions.

2.1 Reading Comprehension Strategies

Strategies for reading comprehension could be discussed across the four types of schema: formal schema, content schema, cultural schema, and linguistic schema. Formal schemata consist of background knowledge of rhetorical, organizational, and formal constructions of various types of texts (Li, Wu & Wang, 2007). Thus, formal schema is viewed as the knowledge of the manner in which various genres are accessed. According to Richards et al. (2000), schema refers to the underlying structure responsible for the construction of a text. Different types of text and discourse such as description, letters, stories, poems, and reports are differentiated by the manner in which the subject, propositions, and other information are merged together to produce a component. This fundamental structure is recognized as formal schemata. For instance, a schema comprising
various stories might consist of components such as setting, episodes, events, and finally reaction. In fact, stories comprise a setting in which characters, place, and time are recognized, followed by episodes leading towards a reaction. Different structures are found in various genres. Inadequate knowledge of these structures results in considerable difficulties in reading comprehension (An, 2013).

Content schema refers to prior knowledge of the text content area. It encompasses conceptual information on what typically occurs in a particular topic. It also contains information on the manner in which these activities relate to each other to create coherence. It is an unrestricted set of typical events and units for a particular occasion (Li et al., 2007). The presence or absence of the content schema affects the reader’s comprehension of the text in terms of topic area (Ke, 2004). Li and Zang (2016) posit that content schema refers to the background knowledge about the content. It includes information such as cultural background knowledge, previous experience, and related information of the text. Several studies of second-language and reading comprehension indicated that the first strategy include the prior cultural experiences that are extremely important in comprehension. Schema form is a high order structure containing knowledge of rhetorical organization structures. It also refers to the discourse structure of various genres of articles. Each kind of article has its specific framework. Cui (2016) contends that content schema-theoretic view of reading is more commonly used in global reading strategies compared to the two other factors (problem solving reading strategies and support reading strategies).

Regarding cultural schema, the strategic cultural schema determines the extent of the human knowledge of textual structures and rhetorical conventions, which can affect reading comprehension, and how this knowledge can be effectively taught. In an ideal situation, the sociocultural approach to schemata in reading comprehension can solve the following two problems (Lin, 2004). First, it enhances students’ sensitivity to cultural differences in addition to their cultural knowledge in content. Second, it increases their skills in reading comprehension. Therefore, content schema is mainly culture-specific while cultural schema is typically considered as part of content schema (Li et al., 2007).

Linguistic schema is related to the vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. It contributes significantly to the comprehension of reading material. According to Zhao and Zhu (2012), linguistic schema refers to readers' prior linguistic knowledge, including the knowledge about phonetics, grammar and vocabulary as traditionally recognized. Readers are both text interpreters and decoders, and their interpretation abilities become more automatic and vital as their reading skill develops. Educated people predict meaning for accurate decoding. Therefore, effective comprehension of any reading material is impossible without adequate decoding skills (Nakamoto, Lindsey, & Manis, 2007).

Every word and well-formed sentences are believed to have a general idea in regards to their meaning. In this strategy, failure to understand non-defective terminologies is consistently attributed to specific accent which conceivably deficits a communication. As a rule of grammar is misapplied, grammatical coherent is broken (Zainal, 2017). Lesaux and Harris (2017) note that schema strategies have shown the importance of background knowledge within a psycholinguistic
model of reading. It is suggested that a variety of techniques and classroom activities should be fully observed (Beattie & Ellis, 2017; Martínez, Ruiz Molina, & Valle, 2016).

2.2 Theoretical Approach

This study adopts schema theory, which refers to how learners use prior knowledge to understand and learn from text. The term ‘schema’ was initially used by Barlett in psychology as ‘an active organization of past reactions or experiences. Subsequently, Rumelhalt (1980) introduced the term in reading. The author defined schema as “a data structure for representing the genetic concepts stored in memory” (P.34). Schema can simply refer to connection of mental structures signifying readers’ knowledge of everyday activities (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2001; Nassaji, 2002). Gilakjani & Ahmadi (2011) note that schema does not only influence how learners become familiar with information, but also how they store the information in their memory.

The basic assumption of schema theory is that written text does not convey meaning by itself; it only offers directions for readers on how meaning can be constructed or retrieved from previously acquired knowledge. This prior knowledge is also called readers' ‘background knowledge’ while the previously acquired knowledge structures are called ‘schemata’ (Barrlett, 1932; Nassaji, 2002; Rumelhart, 1980). The theory interprets that when people comprehend, they need to combine their own background knowledge with the information in a text. In this process, the prior knowledge and knowledge structure work effectively in people’s cognitive activities (Zhao & Zhu, 2012). Readers’ schemata are ordered in a hierarchical manner, in which the most universal remains at the upper and the most specific at the lowest level. Schema theory postulates that understanding the meaning of writing is an interactive process between the text and the readers’ prior knowledge.

Schema plays a significant role in the process of reading. It has been established that schema theory is valuable in helping learners to improve their reading ability (Li et al., 2007). Schema theory is widely applied in many disciplines and had a wide influence on first and second language teaching, especially in relation to reading (Malcolm & Sharifian, 2002). For this reason, schemata are hypothesized as helping readers to predict future occurrences based on past frames of knowledge through interaction between the reader and the text (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2016). Schema theory has been applied to guide the process of this study.

3.1 Method

This study employs qualitative method, in which interview techniques is used to collect data from 10 EFL learners of Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT). Semi-structured interview is used to collect data related to strategies adopted by the EFL learners in understanding the text. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research refers to the use of different philosophical assumptions, strategies of inquiry, and methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. It is “a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning” (p.5). A qualitative method is needed to explore and understand a particular phenomenon in depth from the perspective of participants. This study utilizes qualitative method because it is helpful in detailed exploration of a particular phenomenon. Interview technique is used in order to explore the reading strategies in detail.
The research questions in qualitative study usually emphasize on how social experience is formed and assigned meaning. The presupposition nature of an inquiry emphasizes the correlation between the researcher and topic(s), as well as the situational limitations that form the investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This suggests that in the present study, qualitative research can provide in-depth understanding of reading comprehension difficulties faced by EFL learners.

Semi-structured interview was used as data collection technique which consists of several important open ended pre-determined questions which are useful in identifying the areas to be investigated Gill et al., (2008). Questions can be asked to interviewees to obtain answers related to the strategy used by learners in understanding reading materials. Open-ended questions are asked so that the participants can best explain their experiences unconstrained by any point of view of the researchers or past research results. An open ended response to a question allows the participant to create the options for their own responses (Creswell, 2012). A face-to-face interview was performed, in which questions were asked and answers were recorded from only one participant at a time. In a qualitative analysis, researchers may use several face-to-face interviews to obtain valid data for analysis (Creswell, 2012).

Purposive non-probability sampling was used to select the interview participants. It is typical in qualitative research to study a few individuals or a few cases. This is because the overall aim of a researcher is to provide an in-depth analysis of the chosen phenomenon or area (Creswell, 2012). In this type of sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and location to study and understand the phenomenon to help him to achieve the objectives of the research. The information richness of the participants is considered in this regard (Patton, 1990). Ten Arab EFL learners were considered for the interview in this study. The main purpose is to develop an in-depth examination of reading comprehension strategies under investigation. Inductive thematic approach was used to analyze the data. The use of themes is a way of analyzing qualitative data because themes are similar codes grouped together to form the main idea in the database. The emerging themes were grouped based on the responses on the strategies adopted by EFL learners provided by the participants.

4.1 Findings

Issues related to reading comprehension strategies are taken into consideration. These issues are: method adopted by the readers in reading the text, readers’ strategies in addressing their reading difficulties, and their satisfaction with the adopted strategies. The four types of schema mentioned earlier are considered in analyzing these issues.

4.1.1 Linguistic Schema

The participants were asked to express their views regarding how they read English text, which is the first predetermined question for the interview. Responses related to linguistic schema were identified. The responses indicate that the participants use three different reading strategies from linguistic schema. These strategies are: Phonetic knowledge, decoding knowledge, and logical knowledge. The following table shows the reading strategies related to linguistic schema adopted by EFL learners in reading from the chosen institutions.

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Table 1: *Linguistic Schema*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Applied</th>
<th>Participant Code</th>
<th>IPK</th>
<th>IDK</th>
<th>ILK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PC10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Interviewee Code (IC), Phonetics Knowledge (IPK) Decoding Knowledge (IDK) Logical Knowledge (ILK)

Table 1 shows that the most commonly used reading strategy among the respondents in relation to linguistic schema is logical knowledge, where the participants study the title, read the main topic, understand the title, or read the context. The reading strategy used by the majority of the participants (n=7) can be categorized under Logical Knowledge, which is part of linguistic schema. Under this category, Participant 1 claims to use the strategy of “studying the title”, Participant 2 opts for “reading the title”, Participant 3 chooses the strategy of “reading the main topic”, Participant 4 claims to use the method of “understanding the title”, Participant 6 understands English text by “reading the context”, Participant 9 tries to “start with the content”, and Participant 10 begins by “studying the title”.

It can be seen from the table that three of the participants use Decoding Knowledge as reading strategy. Participant 5 understands English text by “scanning the topic”. Participant 7 “gets the general idea” while Participant 8 reads “the sentences or paragraphs carefully” to be able to understand the main idea. Therefore, it can be said that Decoding Knowledge is the second most commonly used strategy among the Arab EFL learners in the chosen institutions. However, none of the participants uses phonetic knowledge as reading strategy based on the interview data. They
mostly use logical knowledge, followed by decoding knowledge. Linguistics schema plays a vital role in helping EFL learners to understand written material (Zhao & Zhu, 2012). Though no strategy related to phonetic knowledge was identified, for EFL learners to study the title they must be familiar with the phonetics knowledge of the L1 from the syllabic connections to form a word structure then logically connect the title wordings.

### 4.1.2 Formal Schema

Regarding formal schema, the responses are categorized under rhetorical knowledge, structural knowledge, and formal construction. The responses indicate that the dominant reading strategy used by the participants is formal construction. The following table represents the reading strategies used by the selected EFL learners from the chosen institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code</th>
<th>2RK</th>
<th>2SK</th>
<th>2FC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PC1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Interviewee Code (IC), Rhetorical Knowledge (3RK), Structural Knowledge (3SK), Formal Construction (3FC)

Table 2 indicates that majority of the participants (n=5) use formal construction as reading strategy. Most of them grasp the contextual or extrinsic idea from the text. For example, Participant 2 understands “the general idea” to have “a focus and quick reading of a given comprehension”. Participant 3 grasps “the topic and content background”, Participant 4 just “reads what is relevant” to grasp the idea, Participant 7 uses to grasp the ‘contextual idea’ from the text and apply it in
reading strategy, while Participant 10 identifies “full idea about the text content”. The second most commonly used strategies among the participants are Rhetorical Knowledge (n=2) and Structural Knowledge (n=2) respectively.

Under Rhetorical Knowledge strategy, the participants either set their target or objectives to be achieved through reading, and use them as reading strategy. For example, Participant 5 sets “some target goals and sets questions in regard to the topic” while Participant 6 puts “some objectives that should be reached”. Under Structural Knowledge, the participants become selective or look for the intrinsic idea from the text. For example, Participant 1 highlights “the main sentences, wordings that compose the thematic related idea”. Participant 8 chooses “some books and articles” to read while Participant 9 highlights “the sentences” while reading English text.

4.1.3 Cultural Schema

Themes related to cultural schema were identified from the responses of the participants. The responses indicated that the participants use three different reading strategies from cultural schema. These strategies are: Cultural content, textual knowledge, and psychological knowledge. The following table shows the reading strategies related to cultural schema adopted by EFL learners in reading from the chosen institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code</th>
<th>Cultural Content Knowledge (CCK)</th>
<th>Textual Knowledge (TK)</th>
<th>Psychological Knowledge (PK)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PC1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note Interviewee Code (IC) Cultural Content Knowledge (CCK), Textual Knowledge (TK), & Psychological Knowledge (PK)
Table 3 indicates that majority of the participants (n=7) use Cultural Knowledge as reading strategy. This indicates that the dominant reading strategy used by the participants is cultural knowledge. Most of them search for area of interest or area relevant to their field. For example, Participant 1 keeps on reading “if the subject fits in” the study area, Participant 2 uses to “continue reading” if the material is interesting, Participant 3 uses to “continue reading the story” which is good to him, Participant 4 just reads what “is relevant” to his study. Also, participant 5 reads English material “if it is related to” the field of his study, Participant 6 continues reading English text “if it is related to” his area”, while Participant 7 stated that “if I need it in my study, I continue reading it”.

The second most commonly used strategies among the participants is Textual Knowledge (n=2). Under this strategy, the participants try to understand the full meaning or search for general idea from the text. For example, Participant 8 chooses “some articles and books related to” his field, while Participant 9 directly reads what is needed in the study. Only one participant 10 uses Psychological Knowledge as reading strategy, where she searches for “what is on” her mind” depending on the topic.

4.1.4 Content Schema

Themes related to content schema were identified from the responses of the participants. The responses indicate that the participants use three different reading strategies related to content schema. These strategies are: prior knowledge, conceptual knowledge, and situational knowledge. The following table shows the reading strategies related to content schema adopted by EFL learners in reading from the chosen institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code</th>
<th>1PK</th>
<th>4CK</th>
<th>4SK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PC1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 indicates that Prior Knowledge (n=4) and Conceptual Knowledge (n=4) are the most commonly used reading strategies related to content schema adopted by the participants. Under Prior Knowledge strategy, the participants focus on either quick reading or smooth reading, where they try to develop their reading ability by trying to read quickly or smoothly. For example, Participant 2 reads English material that helps him “to have a focus and quick reading, Participant 3 focuses on “vocabulary and smooth reading of a given comprehension”. Participant 5 starts reading material that helps him “to have smooth reading, while Participant 7 focuses finds the idea by “reading quickly”.

Under Conceptual Knowledge, the participants use note-taking, complete reading or compose idea. For example, Participant 1 reads “content body of the text”, Participant 4 reads “the abstract, then first paragraph”, Participant 9 looks for “idea by taking note” while Participant 10 reads “the text completely to understand the idea”. Only two of the participants use Situational Knowledge as reading strategy. For instance, Participant 6 stated that “after I finish, I evaluate myself”, while Participant 8 tries to “answer some questions” to understand the full meaning of the text after reading through the text.

4.1.5 Strategies adopted by EFL learners in Understanding English Text

The responses indicate that the participants use several strategies to address their reading difficulties. There are many strategies adopted by the EFL learners in understanding English text. Based on the aforementioned strategies, most of the participants (n=6) use Google translate to solve their reading difficulties, where they use it to translate the text into their mother tongue in order to understand the main idea. For example, Participant 1 has “some ways to solve the mentioned difficulties using Google translate”. Also, most of them (n=6) use dictionary to find the meaning of strange words in order to understand the text. One of the participants adopts reading practice to understand the English text, where they read it several times to familiarize themselves with the text. For instance, Participant 3 usually “checks word’s meaning in the dictionary”. Some of the participants (n=4) adopt the strategy of repeating the sentences until they understand the full meaning. For example, Participant 6 repeats “the sentences to understand the meaning”.

In addition, some of the participants (n=3) consult of grammar books to solve their reading problems. For example, when they find any grammatical expression not familiar to them, they try to find any grammar book, read the relevant content and understand how the sentences have been constructed in such way. In this regard, Participant 1 usually “read grammar books to reshape” his usage of grammar. About half (n=5) of the participants ask their colleagues or lecturers about the
meaning of words or sentences they do not understand. Most of the participants (n=6) guess the meaning of words or sentences from the text. For example, Participant 9 solves “reading difficulties by consulting friends”. Almost half (n=4) of the participants watch videos to solve their reading difficulties. They focus on language while watching English videos on Television or social media such as YouTube or LinkedIn. For instance, Participant 6 watches videos on “social media like YouTube and Twitter”. Only one participant ignores the strange words, summarizes the paragraphs, or simplifies the sentences in order to fully understand the meaning. This participant (IC7) states that he “ignore words” that are not familiar to him.

The third question for the interview asks “how satisfied are you with the ways you follow in understanding English reading materials. Regarding this question, majority of the participants (n=8) stated that they are always satisfied with the method they follow while only two participants mentioned that they are not satisfied with the strategy they adopt in solving their reading problems. This indicates that majority of the participant are successful in achieving their reading objectives through the strategies they adopt.

5.1 Discussion
This study uses interview techniques to investigate the reading strategies adopted by Arab EFL learners in the selected institutions in the process of understanding written material. Specifically, the study analyzed the issues related to reading strategies adopted by the EFL learners, how they solve their reading difficulties, and their satisfaction with the adopted strategies.

It was found that the EFL learners use several reading strategies across the four types of schema. In linguistic schema, the EFL learners use phonetic knowledge, decoding knowledge, and logical knowledge. The dominant strategy used by the participants under linguistic schema is logical knowledge. According to Zhao and Zhu (2012), linguistics schema plays a vital role in helping EFL learners to understand written material. Regarding formal schema, the EFL learners use rhetorical knowledge, structural knowledge, and formal construction. The responses indicated that the dominant reading strategy used by the participants is formal construction. In relation to cultural schema, the EFL learners use cultural content, textual knowledge, and psychological knowledge. The themes suggested that the dominant strategy under cultural schema is cultural knowledge.

Also, the EFL learners use prior knowledge, conceptual knowledge, and situational knowledge under content schema. The emerging themes suggested that the dominant strategies used by the EFL learners under content schema are prior knowledge and conceptual knowledge. It was also found that the Arab EFL learners face difficulties related to word meaning, synonyms and strange words, grammar, prior knowledge, lengthy sentences, and lack of attention and interest. The qualitative phase of this study also revealed that the EFL learners use strategies such as the use of Google translate and dictionary, grammar books, and social media. The EFL learners utilize the above mentioned reading strategies to resolve their reading difficulties. It was found that the EFL learners initially need a written text related to their field of study. It was also found that majority of the participants are always satisfied with the method they adopt in solving their reading
problems. This indicates that majority of the participant are successful in achieving their reading objectives through the strategies they adopt.

It is interesting that the findings of this study confirmed that the tenet of Balart’s (1982) Schemata theory clearly indicates schema plays a significant role in the process of reading. Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) noted that schema does not only influence how learners become familiar with information, but also how they store the information in their memory. It has been established that schema theory is valuable in helping learners to improve their reading ability. All acts of comprehension encompass learner’s knowledge about words. The concept of schema has been a major theoretical construct in reading comprehension.

6.1. Conclusion
This study used interview to specifically investigate the strategies used by the Arab EFL learners in reading comprehension. It is evident that the EFL learners use several reading strategies across the types of schema. The dominant strategy used by the participants under linguistic schema is logical knowledge. In formal schema, the dominant reading strategy used by the participants is formal construction. The dominant strategy under cultural schema is cultural knowledge. Also, the dominant strategies used by the EFL learners under content schema are prior knowledge and conceptual knowledge. This study also revealed that the EFL learners use strategies such as the use of Google translate and dictionary, grammar books, and social media. The EFL learners utilize the above mentioned reading strategies to resolve their reading difficulties. It was found that readers initially need written texts related to their field of specialization. It was also found that majority of the participants are always satisfied with the method they adopt in solving their reading problems. The interviewees gave their maximum cooperation despite their tied schedule. They also responded willingly to the entire questions. To improve reading strategies for EFL learners, there is a need for collective effort of English language teachers, curriculum designers, educationists, education policy makers, and the EFL learners themselves.

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Reading Comprehension Strategies among EFL Learners


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Enhancing Usage of Scientific Formulae for Students less Proficient in English language in an Undergraduate Class: a case study in Saudi Arabia

Anjum Afrooze
General science Department, Prince Sultan University
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Abstract:
The curriculum at General Sciences department in a Saudi Arabian University includes “Physical science” for Computer Science, Information Technology and Business courses. Students are apathetic towards Physical Science and question, as to, “How this course is related to their majors?” More than sixty percent of the students come from institutions where English is not the medium of instruction, which makes student learning and academic achievement challenging as they are less proficient in English language. After observing the usage of incorrect scientific formulas in assessment test and the number of failures, for two consecutive semesters, the instructor was keen to find an effective strategy to enable students understand concepts and to transformed surface learning to deep learning through developing advanced techniques in writing assignment. The main purpose of this research is to roll the situation and let the students partake in the process of transformation from diffident failures to confident achievers. This study is participatory action research, in which instructor designs effective written task to engage students in their learning. The study is conducted through two semesters with a total of 32 students. The effectiveness of this approach is studied using questionnaire at the end of each semester, students evaluation and teacher observation. Major outcomes of this study were overall improvement in students usage of scientific formulas in tests, problem solving, language proficiency, performance in summative assessment and also fortifying confidence. This process transformed instructor into engaging and reflecting practitioner. Also, these strategy was implemented by other instructors teaching the course and proved effective in opening a path to changes in related areas of the course curriculum. However, refinement in the strategies could be done based on student evaluation and instructors observation.

Keywords: language proficiency, physical science education, scientific formulae, writing assignments

Introduction

In conceptual physical science course students with diverse educational backgrounds are taught physical sciences. It focuses on the basics of physics and chemistry. Through this course students acquire a systematic body of scientific information to apply to new and challenging situations in a wide range of domestic, industrial and environmental contexts. Almost every topic is based on formulae in physics part which constitutes 60 percent of this course and in chemistry, majority of the topics are based on periodic table. The tests questions can be answered by understanding and application of formulae and periodic table. Nevertheless, physical science instruction at undergraduate level in Saudi Arabia is challenging as all subjects are taught in Arabic language in secondary school level.

University students coming from diverse academic institutions where English is not the medium of instruction, find challenges in understanding the terminology and grasping the concepts, when the course is taught in English. Large number of students are in this Physical Science course which does not include lab sessions. This course is a prerequisite, General Course and the students always question as to why they need to do this course, when their major is computer science, information technology and so on? The student cohort is apathetic towards this course except a small percentage.

It is a problematic issue as the course includes basic concepts of physical sciences and provides a good opportunity for students to score well. But the final grades of majority of the students show their underperformance. The students who are proficient in English language are at an advantage in understanding the concepts and answering the tests questions. English language proficiency and other aspects effect the students academic achievements.

The main purpose of this research is to roll the situation and let the students partake in the process of transformation from diffident failures to confident achievers. In the process of finding a solution to the students learning disability and identifying the areas in assessment methods, in order to develop proactive strategies to improve performance in summative assessment, an advanced written assignment about scientific formulas taught was generated, in order to train students to transform surface learning to deep learning. The other objectives engendered during the journey were: to review and modify grading policy, to promote student learning not just memorizing, to help laconic students communicate, understand scientific concepts, answer questions by enhancing the usage of formulas and improve summative grades, to make the language barrier a glass barrier, to create active and more effective office hours, encourage interaction between instructor and students to develop language proficiency and to promote timely and constructive feedback and to improve course learning outcomes.

This research is the deft approach of a teacher to prepare to teach the given learners effectively, to improve students performance and confidence in summative assessment and find effective strategies to summarize the enormous syllabus taught in a semester in a nutshell inorder to overcome language barrier.
Literature review:

Physical science course

In science, a formula is a concise way of expressing information symbolically, as in a mathematical formula or a chemical formula. A physical science course has many scientific formulae. To help improve students' performance in assessment and fortify confidence, enhancement in understanding the formulae and applying them appropriately is very much needed. The main findings which guided this study about a teacher's role in designing material to transform students from different failures to confident achievers is from (Colleae & Peoria, 1970) work which emphasized that, Students who enroll in this course usually take it only because they must, in order to fulfill a science requirement, and their attitudes toward science generally lie somewhere between indifference and repugnance. The majority of our Physical Science students are very weak in mathematics. They could not help but fare badly in an ordinary chemistry or physics course. Interest lagged and class attention was poor. For this reason general principles are emphasized.

(Brent & Felder, 1992) one of the suggestions for using a variety of writing assignments is to write articles about assignments that work particularly well so that other teachers can get the benefit of your experience.

This fourteen teaching week course everything cannot be taught. As stated by (Freud & Cheronis, 1938), Students do not themselves perform experiments, their knowledge, gained from viewing demonstrations, hearing lectures, and studying books, cannot be sufficiently vivid to be permanent. This leads to the unexpected conclusion that further training in physical science is effective in preventing a student from changing. The authors also highlight the time constraint as reflected from “Also, an attempt, usually unconscious, to teach the four sciences individually often results in the inclusion of much detail which cannot be adequately tied together by theory and practice in the limited time allotted. The subject matter which is best retained consists of principles, theories, their applications, and related facts. That which shows the poorest retention is that which is memorized without the exercise of reason. Frequently, also, the only criterion of a student’s success or failure in the survey course is a comprehensive examination, a condition which, in the eyes of many people, must encourage 'cramming' at the expense of systematic day-by-day study, and 'cramming' is believed to be almost valueless as a means of acquiring permanent knowledge.”

“The teaching of a beginning course in science should be the development of understanding through the knitting together of principles, theories, and facts into one coherent whole, indicating threads leading away into the unknown but not following them.”

Additionally, as details of derivation of scientific formulae are not taught in this course, Gangemi highlights this as “Our emphasis, however, is on the qualitative features of the basic laws rather than the quantitative. Class presentations, home work, and term paper assignments were chosen with the stated objectives specifically in mind”. (Gangemi, n.d.)

On the other hand, the suggestion of a heuristic not related to the goal very often resulted in superfluous syntheses, that is, a combination of facts into new wholes that did not further the
desired solution. Shulman (1970) suggests that a carefully planned program of research is necessary if answers to questions about problem solving are to be found. Very little research has been undertaken in the analysis of processes involved in problem solving and virtually none in the development of these processes, though the need for such research has been recognized. Further the work of (Kantowski, 1977) states that “It was observed that in many cases regular patterns of analysis and synthesis followed the introduction of a goal-oriented heuristic. Further the author highlights that experimental studies should be done to support this observation across ability levels and content areas.

Posner, Kenneth, Hewson, & Gertzog, (1982) have focused on the importance of accommodation as a radical change in a person’s conceptual system. Students are unlikely to have at the outset a clear or well-developed grasp of any given theory and what it entails about the world. For them, accommodation may be a process of taking an initial step toward a new conception by accepting some of its claims and then gradually modifying other ideas, as they more fully realize the meaning and implication of these new commitments. According to them the student must make judgments on the basis of available evidence. Further their research also asserts that the basic question concerns how students’ conceptions change under the impact of new ideas and new evidence.

Writing

According to (Brent & Felder, 1992) students adopt deep approach to learning through writing. Writing assignments that call for creativity will elicit it from many students; repeated assignments of this type coupled with constructive feedback will improve the creative skills of all students. Further they cite Donald Graves (in Fulwiler 1987a) who asserts, “Writing is the basic stuff of education. It has been sorely neglected in our schools. We need to let them write.” (p. 1)

(Chi, Bassok, Lewis, Reimann, & Glaser, 1989) work focused on the importance of students converting the words from text into usable skills as, We find that “Good” students learn with understanding: They generate many explanations which refine and expand the conditions for the action parts of the example solutions, and relate these actions to principles in the text. These self-explanations are guided by accurate monitoring of their own understanding and misunderstanding. Such learning results in example-independent knowledge and in a better understanding of the principles presented in the text.

The investigation of (Tynjälä, 1998) about writing as a central tool of learning states, that their findings support earlier studies of writing-to-learn, suggesting that activating textbook reading by means of writing tasks and group discussions may enhance learning of the kind that higher education is aiming at: understanding, conceptional change and the development of critical thinking.

Action Research

Educational research owes much to Lewis (1946) and collier (1945) (Newton & Burgess, 2008). The purpose of an “action research” is to identify the problem, collect data, reflect on, analyse it and
apply the new knowledge to enhance student learning. (Tripp, 2005) Researchers usually repeat the process as additional problems are raised and planning is done for additional improvements, revision and next steps. In our classes we have a variety of writing tasks that vary considerably in scope, objectives, and required level of instructor involvement but have in common a grounding in (Brent & Felder, 1992)

**Significance of the study**

**The problem**

After teaching the physical science course for two semesters, the instructor noticed that many students are scoring well in the quizzes and majors but the grades of most of the students on the final exam, which includes whole syllabus, are not as expected. The enigma of low scores and failure was solved by scrutinizing the quiz, major and final exam papers and comparing the students performance. The papers of students who failed, showed how students vacillate in answering, due to lack of understanding and usage of formulae in physics and low proficiency in English language. The author realized that an immediate action has to be taken to enhance usage of Scientific formulae by students less proficient in English language, so that they participate better and the author was then fervid to design an ‘Action Research’ to address and seek a solution for laudable students performance and mollify them.

**The aspects of the practice investigated**

Thus, research and exploration to review and find student centered strategies, to improve scientific reasoning skills and cognitive academic language skills leading to improvement in the summative assessment was necessary and thus an ‘Action Research’ was meticulously planned and executed (Shirani Bidabadi, Nasr Isfahani, Rouhollahi, & Khalili, 2016).

The aims were: 1) developing advanced techniques in Writing assignments to improve usage of scientific formulae and English language proficiency. 2) transform surface learning to deep learning. 3) provide greater opportunities to students for more participation and encourage interaction and communication with the instructor (Weaver & Qi, 2005). 4) to create active and more effective office hours. 5.) to measure student learning progress. 6.) to promote timely and constructive feedback 7.) review and modify grading policy and 8.) to achieve course learning outcomes.

The making of writing assignments as part of summative assessments transforms surface learning to deep learning process (Marton & Säljö, 1976). It helps students to develop cross connections between the topics and solve critical thinking questions. It also helps instructor/students to identify and fill learning gaps present due to diverse backgrounds and English language challenges. Data collected through Summative assessments of this kind can help instructors to collaborate and redesign parts of the course and also improve from traditional teaching methods to creative methods from year to year.
Context and institutional setting

Brief details of the course

The course is taught in English to students who are in the process of learning English and focuses on the basics of physics (sixty percent) and chemistry (forty percent). Students take this General Sciences course only for one semester. Sixty percent of their assessment is comprised of three quizzes, two majors, group activities, homework and class participation, while the final exam is forty percent. Around 200 students take the course with the instructor every semester. The class time consists of three hours per week. This conceptual course covers many topics, requires prerequisite math and is not supported by lab sessions. Time constrains and the nature of this course leads to a less enthusiastic student cohort and the final grades of many students are not as expected as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Contribution of the final exam marks in the overall grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.NO</th>
<th>/60 (formative)</th>
<th>/40 (summative)</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>60.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>48.3</td>
<td>31.7</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>46.9</td>
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<td>80.95</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Contributio of the final exam marks in the overall grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.NO</th>
<th>/60 (formative)</th>
<th>/40 (summative)</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>54.5</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>88.8</td>
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<td>56.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>55.8</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>89.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the author

Brief details of the students’ cohort

The concerned classes consisted of four sections with twenty five to twenty eight female students in each section. When the course started and within a couple of weeks, the author was able to see rough hierarchy in the students and a division of labor emerged and students could be classified into three groups based on their performances. About twenty seven percent of the students were the arduous students who were participating in class and had learning skills and were proficient in English. The other fifty percent represented the average students less proficient in English and remaining students were irregular to class, apathetic and English proficiency needed a lot of improvement. The main cause of students under performance in final exam discovered was lack of understanding and reasoning behind the scientific formulae and their application due to lack of cognitive academic language skills. (Johnstone & Selepeng, 2001)

Reflections on the practice

A careful scrutiny of the students performance for two semesters showed that many of them do not understand and analyse the test questions, the root cause is that the medium of instruction
is English and the students have low English language proficiency. This is vividly reflected by usage of 1.) wrong formula in answers. 2.) not being able to translate the formula into a statement. 3.) doing wrong mathematical operations to solve the set equations and 4.) not being able to divide solution into steps and 5.) writing wrong units in the answer. The marks are scored for correct usage of formula and substitution, solving and value of answer with appropriate units. Some questions are answered by translating the formulas based on their English language skills apart from reasoning skills. Hence they lose marks from the above mistakes. Final exam constitutes all the chapters covered throughout the semester. The quizzes and majors performance is good for many of them as they do not have many chapters. Even though formulae are included but not as many as in the finals. The mode of learning of many students is adopted to memorization, as English language is a challenge. Each semester the formative assessment marks of students out of 60 are good but for 50-60% of them when they take the final exam their grades drop and their results are not as expected from what is reflected out of 60 formative assessment marks. Performance was maintained by fifteen to twenty percent of them their but rest of the students performance is far from what is expected and seven to ten percent of them get F. Some times twelve to fifteen percent fail.

The question paper has questions which are mainly based on formulae and even theoretical questions can be answered by understanding with in the frame work of formulae and translating them. It is a problematic issue as the course includes basic concepts of physical sciences and there is good chance for the students to score well and increase GPA. Therefore, the above issue needed to be resolved and addressed to empower the maladroit students, which the author did. The author empirically addressed this issue and was to design a research model for this purpose.

**Plan for intervention**

The instructor was vehement in seeking a solution to the above issue. Therefore planning for an action research was done in one of the semesters. The instructor designed “A Practical Mode Action Research” to develop advanced techniques in Writing assignments and hence facilitate student learning and fortify academic achievement in an ‘Action Research’ (Newton & Burgess, 2008). This mode was used as it always has place for improvement and offers opportunity for continual reflection. An assignment which was designed and introduced as part of formative assessment was announced in the beginning of the semester. Instructor’s action research was ardent modification in assignments to suit students learning style and empower learning of low English language proficiency students coming from diverse backgrounds and creating familiarity with the course contents especially understanding and usage of scientific formulas and building their cognitive academic language skills. And also engage the instructor in conscious participation during this learning process.

The assignment was that after a chapter was taught students would write

1. All the formulae of that chapter clearly in word form and also in the form of designations with correct spellings.
2. The standard units of each quantity involved in an equation near that quantity.
3. Key words which help them to use a particular formula for a particular question.
All formulas which are taught in the course are on completion in this assignment and submission in the 10th teaching week. This ensemble of formulae is to be hand written and not typed. The mode of submission is to come in person during office hours, and not to send through friends or leave on the door and no soft copies accepted. The assignment sheet is marked in front of the students and mistakes are highlighted and brought to their notice. As Torres and Zeidler highlight, viva is conducted to create an opportunity to communicate in English language and also to develop scientific reasoning skills. (Torres & Zeidler, 2002)

Improving the understanding and usage of scientific formulas for students who were less proficient in English language, was the primary focus of the instructor in the ‘Action Research’. The process was meant to

a.) Improve students acquiring of concepts, scientific reasoning skills and language proficiency in order to select correct formulae to solve numerical problems and answer the questions.

b.) Closely supervise all students progress in the subject learned.

c.) Improve volatile Summative assessment grades.

It was also authors journey from experienced teacher to expert teacher.

Figure 1. The framework of research
Methods

The author adapted mixed method approach in this research. Research participants were undergraduate students and the instructor from a private university in Riyadh. The adopted approach combines observation, description, quantitative, and qualitative research methods in assessing the case study. When used along with qualitative methods, qualitative research can help us to interpret and better understand the complex reality of a given situation and the implications of quantitative data (Collector & Module, 2011). Writing assignments can train students to seek connections between new material and previous and can transform surface learning to deep learning (Marton & Säljö, 1976).

After analyzing previous semesters students results, where the students summative assessment performance was not as expected as from their formative assessment, and having discovered that the disadvantage in achieving better grades is the English language challenge, one of the semesters the instructor designed and introduced an assignment which was announced in the beginning of the semester. This assignment would enhance the usage and application of scientific formulas and help understand scientific concepts. This was mentioned in the ‘Course Syllabus’ (that complements the ‘Course Specification Document’), which the instructor has handed and explained to all students at the beginning of the semester.

The assignment was that, after a chapter is taught to the students, students will write all the formulae of that chapter clearly in the form of words and also in the form of designations, as stated by (Brent & Felder, 1992) clearly relate the assignments to the course content, and be sure students understand the connections. And the other guidelines were stated following, (Brooks & Brooks, 1999) examples of teaching and learning interactions from the point of view of the teacher and the setting for the purpose of illustrating how the ‘people in charge’ might begin to restructure the learning opportunities they make available in their settings.

(Lemke, 1990) focuses on reconstruction of relation between items using language as, We know that scientific concepts are interlinked in their meanings, and that it is the use of systems of linked concepts that gives scientific reasoning its power.

The author designed the research method to answer the following question: What can the instructor do in order to enhance usage of scientific formulas and improve language skills and hence improve summative assessment performance?

a) To engage students in a task to improve understanding of scientific formulae and concepts through improvement in proficiency in English language.

b) To enhance learning methods of the students to help them acquire skills to solve the problems correctly and reach at the correct answers.

c) To engage in and closely supervise students progress in learning the topics taught and improve summative grades.
**Data collection**

Analyzing and data collection of previous students’ results of quizzes, majors and final exam, where the students’ summative assessment performance was not as expected as from their formative assessment and also the number of failures in the final exam, was a part of research. Action research was then planned and executed in the following semester. The quiz, major and final exam marks of the students who were given the assignment was analyzed as next part of data. At the end of the semester after students submitted the assignment, the instructor designed and conducted a students’ questionnaire, which was filled by students. The questionnaire which was also part of data had the title—“writing the given assignment is facilitating learning”, the choices included were-if the students strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree and not decided. Also students’ end of semester evaluation of the instructor and teachers’ observation was incorporated in the data.

**Implementing the action plan**

Many of the students took this assignment earnestly and did chapter one formulas and got it checked in the office hour, to ensure they are on the right track for the rest of the chapters. For some of them it was extra work. Seriousness was not shown by 50-60 percent of the students in the beginning of the semester but they became serious just before the deadline. So the instructor started to grade it out of five. That really motivated most of them to submit completed assignment within the deadline.

When they brought the assignment, 20-30 percent of them knew what they were doing, in fact their performance was very impressive and clear information about each formula was given in the form of tables, with correct spellings of terminology and so on indicating few pedant students too as shown in figure 3 a,b.

For the rest, insouciance of them many gaps in their understanding of scientific formulae and reasoning and language efficiency were discovered. Like they didn’t write proper standard units and proper spellings of terms for example acceleration was “axelracion”. This further indicated very low cognitive academic language efficiency. Some of them copied from others so had the same sequence and mistakes in spelling words and in form. They wrote only short forms, so they vacillate about what each designation stands for? Some formulas written could not be used to solve numerical problems and in quizzes they used it and couldn’t solve questions using them, as in Figure 4. They wrote few formulas of a chapter and left the rest. Some wrote the formulae which were not taught to them and so on.

The instructor accentuated the areas of assignment which weakened or tempered the assignment and commented on what was missing, asked them to delete the stuff not taken during the course and took students’ viva and graded overall assignment out of 5. According to the study of (Grove & Wasserman, 2006) students of different academic aptitudes benefited differently from graded assignments, and also that their estimates indicate that first-year students in the experimental group performed 4.58 points higher on exams.
(Brent & Felder, 1992) made an important suggestion to ask students to evaluate particular assignments and the writing experience as a whole. The questionnaire to corroborate the usefulness of the assignment was distributed to 32 female students (one section) both national and international and 28 of them answered and returned it. The teacher also closely monitored and compared the grades, motivation and confidence of the students.

Data analysis and findings
The author analyzed and interpreted the collected data using Codes and Themes to organize style of interpretation. After conducting the students’ questionnaire as part of qualitative research. One of the important aspect of (Zucker, 2009) was that case study method can be a creative alternative to tradition approaches to description (quantitative descriptive and descriptive correlational descriptive designs) emphasizing the participant’s perspective as central to the process. Rigour is built into this process by focusing the strategies used to generate meaning from the qualitative data.

Later, the final exam results and the students evaluation of the instructor as part of quantitative research were analysed and interpreted. The teacher observation is also included.

Students questionnaire:
The author used manual coding and analysis, and for this purpose, she designed simple table to identify and organize themes. In the questionnaire, the author focused on point that: Was the written assignment helping students to learn the concepts and is it helpful in training them to solve the questions correctly in exams? The details students responses are in table 2.

Table 2. Data analysis of students’ questionnaire of few students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant number</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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Enhancing Usage of Scientific Formulae for Students

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<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>√</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: the author

Figure 2. A chart shows the results of the data analysis

Discussion

Data interpretation:

According to the author, the above participatory mode action research is giving opportunities to students including taciturn ones to learn, understand, and apply the scientific formulae they have learnt throughout the course, despite language challenges. Usage of proper formulas and improvement in vocabulary and correct usage of scientific terms in the final exam papers increased, added with this, decrease in number of failures was observed, indicating improvement in proficiency in English language. Viva at the time of submission of formula and the engagement during office hours was in English language. Many students not only learnt correct spellings but also showed a better understanding of terms like “directly proportional” and
‘inversely proportional’, ‘microscopic world’ ‘macroscopic’ ‘terminal velocity’ ‘mass and weight’ and so on and all this eventually helped them understand and write definitions of the acquired terms. As (Laplane, 1997) highlighted that considering the large number of technical terms used in science, it is unrealistic to expect students to acquire them without any formal teaching in a purely communicative context.

This observation was antithetical to first two years experience when it seemed extremely difficult to raise summative assessment grades. A benefit from this assignment also changed surface learning to deep learning and metamorphosed the students whose learning was mainly memorization based to knowledgeable students, overcoming English language disability in the pursuit of education.

Figure 3. Samples a,b show correct understanding of formulas.
Brent & Felder (1992) emphasize that the approach to deep learning is through Written assignments. Reflection from results showed that writing assignment is facilitating learning, really having an impact. Students learning, understanding, and implementation has improved by this project. The instructor is able to make the malleable students think in the framework of laws and formulas in order to apply them and solve and answer questions with better English proficiency. Interactivity between reader and text occurs as the reader makes connections and students are able to have all formulas and key terms in front of them any time or a night before the final exams to review and see the relationship between physical quantities they learnt. Many students were able to overcome the hindrance from barrier of the English language. As Brent and Felder further emphasize that the written assignments help students, where at times they find it difficult to understand and comprehend the words on their own.

The response and participation of students in the given assignment was that

1) Thirty to fifty percent of them knew what they were doing and in fact, very impressive and clear information about each formula was given and they said assignment was very beneficial and few were used to doing it from before as a learning practice showing natural endowment as shown in figure 3.

2) Few of them wrote the terms in Arabic near the scientific terms apart from English.

3) For pliable rest of them the following was noted:

- They wrote few formulas of a chapter and left the rest, as they were not sure if those were included in the course?
Some wrote the formulae not in the course, which were not taught to them and assignment seemed oblique with wrong equations in more than one form and many terms were missing.

Some formulas they wrote, were with proportionality sign, which they were using unsuccessfully to solve problems as shown in figure 1.

Use of proper standard units was missing.

Few had written as it should be, but in viva they were not able to communicate in English.

Fifteen percent copied from their friends, so had the same mistakes in formulae and in terms.

Many of them wrote only short forms. So they were not sure, what each alphabet stands for?

Spelling of terminology was not correct like “weight” was spelled as “weit”.

Some sent assignment through friends and did not collect it back, which partly did not serve the purpose of student learning.

Insouciance four percent were not bothered to submit.

Two percent said they were not aware of an assignment as such.

After the viva, the assignment was graded out of five marks. Weightage of this was out of two percent. On late submission marks were deducted and no marks were given when the assignment was not submitted.

Reflection from fact that the instructor had to submit report on grade inflation in this course at the end of the semester, adjudicates that writing assignment is facilitating learning and most students are resurgent even when the course is taught in English.

Summary of peer observation, discussion and suggestions

In the department meeting, discussion included review of grading policy and including the written assignment in it. The author/instructor expressed her concern about the less than expected and turbulent performance of students in the final exam before the assignment was introduced.

The main focus for review was “How can the instructor make the learning of student deeper?” and “How can the instructor make them understand the relationship in the physical quantities in a formulae and their proper use?” even for a student who is less proficient in English language in order to enhance students performance.

The set criteria to be used were to ‘look at the incorrect answers in the quizzes, majors and exam, the reason why students are choosing incorrect answers’, ‘also to look at the way they are solving numericals, and theory based questions’, and to review the grading policy of summative assessment and to answer the above mentioned questions. In the discussion, the instructor suggested to include the written assignment based on all the formulas covered in the course, in the grading policy. Furthermore, the instructor would welcome more information associated with a formula by the students in the assignment which would further enhance their English language writing skills and science education. Finally input from the colleagues was considered as to
whether the assignment should be graded and if so, for how much weightage? And also should it be part of grading policy or each instructor can modified according to student cohort they teach?

**Implementing the action plan**

The instructor modified and upgraded the guidelines regarding the ensemble of formula assignment after its implementation. Most of the students were not clear as to the format of the assignment. So the instructor wrote one formula as an example in one of the classes. The announcement time and method and reminder policy also was modified. This was done as some students do not start attending the classes from first day of the semester and some forget even after knowing about it in the beginning. Later assignment was promulgated on moodle as a reminder.

**Students’ evaluation after the action plan**

The standard students’ evaluation usually includes 24 questions. However, for the purpose of this research, the instructor has included questions that are directly related to implementation of the ‘Action Research’. At the end of each semester after the final exams, its mandatory that students fill the online evaluation to view their results.

The online students’ evaluation shown in Table 3 includes questions which reflect feedback from students. The percentage students who strongly agree and agree for each question is as follows 1) 88.6% 2) 86.6% 3) 88.2% 4) 87.4% 5) 86% 6) 88% 7) 86.6% 8) 85% 9) 85.4% 10) 84.8% 11) 85.8% and finally for question 12) 85%.

**Table 3. Students’ evaluation after implementing my action plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The instructor was enthusiastic about the course.</td>
<td>58.82</td>
<td>29.41</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The instructor cared about my progress in the course.</td>
<td>58.82</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The instructor had thorough knowledge of content of the course.</td>
<td>60.78</td>
<td>29.41</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The instructor cared about my progress.</td>
<td>58.82</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The instructor was available during office hours.</td>
<td>58.82</td>
<td>29.41</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The instructor encouraged me to ask questions and develop my ideas.</td>
<td>58.82</td>
<td>27.45</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The instructor inspired me to do my best work.</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Class activities, assignments, laboratories etc. helped me acquire the knowledge and skills intended by the course.</td>
<td>52.94</td>
<td>29.41</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. This course helped me to improve my ability to think and solve problems rather than just memorize information.</td>
<td>52.59</td>
<td>31.37</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enhancing Usage of Scientific Formulae for Students

Afrooze

10. Grading of my tests and assignment was fair and reasonable. | 60.78 | 27.45 | 5.88 | 1.96 | 3.92

11. This course improved my ability to communicate effectively. | 52.94 | 29.41 | 11.76 | 3.92 | 1.96

12. Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this course. | 56.86 | 23.53 | 13.73 | 0 | 5.88

Source: Prince Sultan university

Students comments in open ended questions of evaluation for: What did you like most about this course? One of the students responded that she learnt a lot in the instructors class as she is very knowledgeable in her field and makes material interesting. The above was no less than an accolade for the instructor.

Review and redesign the course grading policy

In order to improve the quality of teaching and learning of the concerned class, and to implement the recommendations of the ‘Action Research’, the instructor has reviewed and amended the Course grading policy of the conceptual physical science course. This demonstrates a formative use of a summative test. (Garrison & Ehrlnghaus, 2010).

The instructor findings reflected what was highlighted by (Sadler, 2005), it does include adequate reference to criteria-based grading and curriculum development that supports self-referenced assessment and grading, in which the reference point for judging the achievement of a given student is that student’s previous performance level or levels. What counts then is the amount of improvement each student makes.

For example, the instructor has amended areas of section (C) course description of course specification like-Development of Learning Outcomes, in Domains of Learning, focusing on specific areas like knowledge to be acquired, Skills to be developed, Numerical and Communication Skills and methods of assessment including Scheduling of Assessment Tasks for Students and section (G) of the course specifications, concerning course evaluation and improvement processes, taking into consideration action planning arrangements for periodically reviewing course effectiveness and planning for improvement. Moreover, the instructor has updated the specified objectives to embrace student centered assessment and reinforce the ideas learnt so that the instructor can improve specific area related to Processes for Verifying Standards of Student Achievement mentioned in section (G) of course specification.

These written assignments were underpinned by cognitive theory. Students earn points for engagement in the process of learning and for progress toward mastery of standards as demonstrated by the student’s written and spoken performance (Jones Miller, 2013). The examples do exhibit part of the variety of ways in which enhanced formative work can be embedded in new modes of pedagogy. In particular, it can be a salient and explicit feature of an innovation, or an adjunct to some different and larger scale movement-mastery of learning. (Black & Wiliam, 2006)

When amending the concerned course specification document, the instructor has tried to engage adequate articles and journals related to grading policies and collaborated with associated...
colleagues towards cooperation and integration in an effort to allow faculty members implementing and supporting the amended grading policy. Transformation through structured education discussed in vertical and horizontal integration of education with focus on the suggestion of a hierarchy of six levels, achieved by well organized learning process. (“Chapter 2 Vertical and Horizontal Integration of Education,” 2000) These six categories are the cognitive domain levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom 1984) Knowledge (repeating verbatim), Comprehension (demonstrating understanding of terms and concepts), Application (solving problems), Analysis (breaking things down into their elements, formulating theoretical explanations or mathematical or logical models for observed phenomena), Synthesis (creating something, combining elements in novel ways), Evaluation (choosing from among alternatives) were achieved through this assignment.

The redesigning of grading policy by the author also considered students evaluation and questionare. As student opinions are important and should be including in any assessment plan, meaningful evaluation of teaching must rely primarily on assessment of learning outcomes. (Brent & Carolina, 1999)

**Considering outcomes based approach within the amended course curriculum**

In reviewing and amending the concerned Curriculum Specifications, the instructor has employed an adequate Outcomes Based Approach. In the Course Objectives section, the instructor has included assessment methods which help superficial learning transform into deep learning and aiming to enhance performance in summative assessment by overcoming learning disabilities. This is also supported by the introduction of graded assignments, implemented and expressed in the course learning objectives section of the Course Specification Document. Facts are not simply facts to be remembered in isolation. (Duffy & Jonassen, 1992) There is alignment all the way through, from objectives through teaching method, to assessment: all involve focusing on students doing what they should be doing, solving professional problems. The central issue is putting knowledge to work. (Biggs, 2003)

**Amending assessment to link the subject to local multicultural students and resources**

The instructor has amended the assessment method in multicultural classes in order to develop strategies to improve quality of summative assessment by enhancing the usage of scientific formulas and reasoning and improved language skills, in an attempt to link the diversification and the nature of such course concerned with Physical Sciences.

The instructor has also introduced advanced writing assignment to develop cognitive skills of students which is an important domain in learning outcome in the course specification document, as well as the “course objectives”. The instructor has improved students’ engagements and participation leading to overcoming English language challenge (Rogier, 2012). Moreover, the instructor increased the opportunities for improving interaction between instructor and students leading to discussions in English outside the class and promoted face to face feedback and improve course learning outcomes. Nevertheless, the formative assessment still can be improved and the feedback from them can be used to plan strategies to improve summative assessment and engage students to develop multiple skills in this learning process with increase in English
proficiency. Since every learner will have a unique perspective entering the learning experience and leaving the experience. (Duffy & Jonassen, 1992).

**Updating the course assessments criteria, modes and creating opportunities for formative and summative assessments.**

When amending the methods of assessment as described in this course specifications (Action planning arrangements for periodically reviewing course effectiveness and planning for improvement strategies for obtaining student feedback on effectiveness of teaching), the author found them in line with the university requirements, and followed the suggested assessment methods demonstrated on this private university template. This is delivered through assessment tasks during the semester which forms 60%, while the final assessment forms 40%.

The instructor notably amended the outside classwork and interactions throughout the semester to include more students engaging assignments such as writing tasks. The wide range of topics covered in assignments created good opportunities for enhancement of formative assessments such as quizzes and simultaneously provided ample and advance practice for summative assessment and enabling students to, not only overcome learning disabilities but also foster academic language proficiency and confidence.

**Quality assurance guidance and procedures in supporting the course curriculum.**

The instructor revised and amended the course specifications document to enhance summative assessment performance. Adequate amendments were also included in the sections concerning grading policy. According to Hounsell in a surface approach, what was to be learned was interpreted as the text itself. In a deep approach, the text was seen as a means through which to grapple with the meaning which underlay it. (Hounsell, 1984)

For example, the instructor/researcher introduced the assessment tasks such as writing assignment throughout the semester, to ensure students’ engagement and enabling learning. Furthermore, she graded the assignment to motivate the students and included it in grading policy. This practice also helped develop the student-instructor interaction, as well as opportunities were triggered for clearing doubts and students going through the course hand out and being aware of what is not included in the course and getting effective and quick feedback. The communication was in English language and the teacher used every opportunity to improve language proficiency needed for the course and scientific literacy through writing, talking and enhancing the usage of scientific formulas. Eventually, results showed a variable increase in students scores and students’ failure rate dropped and the assignment espouse students pursuit of academic achievement and fortified their confidence. However, there are still many opportunities for improvement such as including similar graded assignments including research in the course syllabus. Research and development is one of the most influential factors that increases the quality of education. (Alshayea, 2012) Bringing students to the forefront of research forums and conducting more supervised research in the related areas could be a successful tool in order to improve higher education. The knowledge of facts acquired in the form of scientific formulae through out the course can be made innovative through research.
Conclusion
The ‘action plan’ associated with this research paper proved nascent and has helped to identify, investigate and analyze the learning disabilities of students less proficient in English language and what weakened or tempered their summative performance was tracked. In order to do so, the instructor reviewed and assessed the areas in the answer sheet of majors and quizzes, as well as the course teaching strategies and assignments. This improved instructors practices and made the author more aware and professional. For example the author followed with the students who scored grades below B from first quiz and keenly observed their usage of scientific formulae. This action plan also lead to improving the course structure instead of maintaining as it is.

Research objectives were accomplished by the author by implementing the research ‘action plan’. The first objective was to help students achieve better grades in the final exam by overcoming learning disabilities due to lack of English language proficiency and modify assignments to suit students learning style and communicate to even taciturn students outside the class. This was achieved by introducing new writing assignment as recommended by the three tools of the ‘action research’; personal observation, students’ dairy writing and facilitating.

This action research has really mitigated even the defedant students to learn, understand, and apply the formulae they have learnt throughout the course improving their formal reasoning skills with regard to scientific formulae and English language acquisition. There was decrease in number of failures, appropriate formulas were used and correct usage of English language in answers showed improvement. Added to this, mistakes in solving formula based questions and scientific terms and other words decreased significantly. A benefit from this assignment also changed surface learning to deep learning and students vocabulary in English was promoted. This objective was achieved by asking students to solve applications based and descriptive questions from the course materials based on the formulae they were taught and they were writing assignment on.

Furthermore, the other objective achieved was students were aware of the topics which are the part of their syllabus. In earlier semesters it was noticed that students were practicing even those formulas which were not taught to them. This assignment was a practice for them to get to know the excluded part of each chapter. The overall performance and the grades improved drastically. The post Action Plan students evaluation showed that students became more interested in the course and this promoted the endowment of effective skills in doing the assignment. Finally, this proved propitious design and implementation of the ‘action research’ and opened a path of improving teaching directed by problematic areas. After the success of this research, other physical science instructors have used this assignment and reported improvement in their students performance too by practicing this assignment.

Future implications
Planning and executing the ‘action research’ gave the instructor beneficial experience and prodigious confidence to continue using the propitious assignment in the future by refining it and including steps in the assignment to find cross connections between the formulae and ask students to write a report on these connections in order to do advanced level questions. This would further
solve students paradox in comprehension of formulae and enhance their English writing skills and
improve their cognitive academic proficiency. Moreover promulgating this assignment through
moodle and starting a forum on moodle to help greater interaction between students and also with
the instructor would be interesting. Research on the basis of facts gathered during the assignment
used for innovation could be interesting and bolster multidisciplinary interest. The
instructor/author will plan to have above strategies applied in the next following semesters as
university is a place where creative minds construct visions in order to enhance and enrich teaching
and learning experiences.

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About the author:
Ms Anjum Afrooze HEA-UK Fellow, is associated with chemistry research and works as
instructor at Prince Sultan University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She is presently working on
computational drug discovery and on teaching and learning in Higher education. She was awarded
best teacher award many times for her teaching, and the results her students achieved. The
complexities of teaching and learning to multicultural students and microscopic world of
chemistry and its relevance to life sciences intrigues her the most. https://orcid.org/ 0000-0003-
0208-7771

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How students study and use examples in learning to solve problems. Cognitive Science,
Enhancing Usage of Scientific Formulae for Students


An Evaluation Model of Teaching Practicum of Pre-Service EFL Teachers at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training in Higher Education

Syamsudarni
Education, FTIK, IAIN Palopo, Palopo, Indonesia

Sahraini
Education, FTIK, IAIN Palopo, Palopo, Indonesia

Abstract
This research generates a product, namely the guiding book for the evaluation of micro teaching of student teachers at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of IAIN Palopo (State Islamic Institute) Indonesia, and the instruments used to evaluate the practice of micro teaching at the faculty. The following research questions were addressed: 1. How was the evaluation model of micro teaching practice at the Faculty of Education and Teaching Training of IAIN Palopo? 2. How were the constructed instruments used to evaluate the practice of micro teaching at the Faculty of Education and Teaching Training of IAIN Palopo? The aim of the study is to produce a guiding book for the evaluation of micro teaching of pre-service teachers at IAIN PALopo. The book comprises of procedures and guidelines for performing the evaluation of the practice of micro teaching, as well as ways to analyze the results of the evaluation. On the other hand, the instruments generated were employed to evaluate the basic competence of the student teachers’ teaching performance. This book is beneficial for the lecturers teaching micro teaching skills and other related subjects. It can be an ideal handbook for both the lecturers and preservice teachers in that the instruments created have been validated and tested; hence, it is valid and reliable. Also, teaching practice is one of the core topics that the students are supposed to undertake before they jump into the placement, or teaching practicum placed in some schools. Therefore, the provision of this book will significantly help lecturers, students, not to mention the education institution because it can be used either in the classroom or micro teaching lab at the Islamic institute.

Keywords: EFL, evaluation model, pre-service teachers, teaching practicum

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Introduction

Teaching practice course at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training State Islamic Institute (IAIN Palopo), Indonesia has a central position in the academia. Thus, to achieve the objectives of the course, micro teaching practice is needed that enables the student teachers to perform teaching practice in accordance with the learning principles to be professional teachers. Teaching is a complex activity, which requires numerous preparations and skills. The mastery of teaching concepts and of the materials are not adequate to perform good instructions, which calls on the acquisition of instructional skills that can not be gained through oral instruction; hence, it requires continuous practices through micro teaching.

The evaluation model of teaching practice through micro teaching classes at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training has not been well preformed and yet achieved the expected learning outcomes. The micro teaching classes at the faculty do not have valid and reliable instruments and guidelines for evaluation to unveil the weaknesses and strengths of the students in performing the teaching practice.

Drawing on the problems above, an evaluation model of the practice of micro teaching of the preservice teachers at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training IAIN Palopo is needed to discover and measure the achievement of the basic competence of the student teachers’ performance in teaching practice as professional teachers in their domain, and as the source of the information for the lecturers and materials for self-reflection of preservice teachers regarding their competence.

Research Questions

The overarching research questions guiding the whole part of this study are as the followings:
1. How was the evaluation model of micro teaching practice at the Faculty of Education and Teaching Training of IAIN Palopo?
2. How were the constructed instruments used to evaluate the practice of micro teaching at the Faculty of Education and Teaching Training of IAIN Palopo?

Theoretical Framework

Evaluation

Evaluation is a series of activities aimed to improve the quality, performance, and productivity of certain institution in implementing its programs. In addition, it is said that the focus of the evaluation is the excellent learning outcomes attained by groups of students or classes; hence, it is through the evaluation that the information of what has and has yet been achieved can be collected, which is then used for the sake of program improvement in the future.

Linn, R. L., & Gronlund, N. E. (1995) define evaluation as the systematic process of collecting and interpreting information regarding the learning achievement to determine values. Worthen, B. R., & Sanders, J. R. (1991) opine that basically a good evaluation always capitalizes on the measurement, accurate observation, reliability and validity, to garner empirical and systematic evidence, and which is subsequently used to analyze the findings objectively. Anchored in both perspectives, it is understood that observations, measurements, validity of data are
initially performed in evaluation before making judgements in order to generate objective information.

Gardner (as cited in stark & Thomas, 1994:8) identifies five definitions of evaluation, namely (1) evaluation is measurement; (2) evaluation is taking decision professionally; (3) evaluation is marking to compare between the work performance and its standard set earlier; (4) evaluation is oriented towards decision; and (5) evaluation is geared towards objectives. Teacher evaluation is used to measure the achievement of teacher competency. Sahraini and Madya (2015) state that the success of an evaluation system is not only based on the quality of a design, but it is supported how well the system is implemented. Therefore, evaluation is an activity or action to determine whether certain programs are attained or not whereby its criteria of accomplishment are determined earlier for the purposes of betterment and perfection of the programs or activities.

Based on the definitions proposed by some of the experts above, it can be understood that evaluation is a systematic activity aimed to garner information regarding prestigious achievement or work performance of certain groups or classes, which aims to determine whether the programs appear to be continued, revised, or even ceased.

**Objectives and Uses of Teacher Evaluation**

Teachers have central roles in education sector, so the success of education ought to be accompanied by the quality of the teachers. On the other hand, if highly qualified teachers are not well supported, it may downgrade their performance. It is because the teachers play most important role that determine the quality and services of education, and they are demanded to possess adequate competence in order to be able to achieve the success of education. To discover the teachers’ competence, teacher evaluation is needed to be performed. With this regard, Light, Cox, and Calkins (2009, p. 240) advocate that the foci of the research on evaluation are the students, teachers, institutions, and staffs. Thus, teachers are the ones eligible to be evaluated.

Ward, J. R., & McCotter, S. S. (2004) describe the importance of teacher evaluation, that is to encourage teachers to perpetually reflect on the learning outcomes in order to develop the learning quality in the classroom. Similarly, Bell (Marsh, 1996, pp.364-365) states that the aims of the teachers’ evaluation include (1) identifying the incompetent teachers; (2) improving the salary and promotion; (3) improving the external accountability; (4) encouraging the teacher performance; (5) promoting the effectiveness of the teacher management; and (6) promoting the teacher professional development. Teacher effectiveness is the ability of a teacher to help students achieve the intended learning outcomes. Consequently, the more competent the teachers in teaching, the more effective they are in attaining the objectives of learning.

**Micro Teaching**

National Education Standard Body (2007) has stipulated that the learning process should be planned, applied, evaluated, and observed to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency. In relation to the teacher competence evaluation, Light, Cox, and Calkins (2009, p. 240) state that the aspects
being the foci of the evaluation include the students, teachers, institutions, and staffs. Therefore, the students of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training as the teacher candidates belong to the aforementioned aspects eligible to be evaluated to gain the basic competence of their teaching before jumping into the real teaching practice. Laughlin and Moulton (1975) define micro teaching as a method of performance training which is designed to isolate teaching process components, so the the trainee can master how to teach in various teaching environment. Additionally, McAleese, W. R., & Unwin, D. (1971) define the learning of micro teaching as a situation of learning applied within certain limited number of students and hours, namely between five to 20 minutes with three to ten students. Similarly, Loewenberg Ball, D., & Forzani, F. M. (2009) delineate that micro teaching is one of the teaching practices in micro format to form and develop the teaching skills. Likewise, Waskito (1977) defines micro teaching as a method of learning to teach based on performance whose technique is to isolate the components of pedagogical processes, so that the teacher candidates are able to master every component one by one within the simple and micro situated learning context. Based on the definitions, it is implied that the characteristics of micro teaching include (1) being implemented in certain limited space, time, material, students and objectives, (2) being thorough as it is performed together with supervisors and marked and revised by the participants and evaluation team, so that the results of the learning can be directly witnessed, and (3) having recording media for reflection and self-development in the future.

Micro teaching functions as a testing center for student teacher. All the pedagogical theories learnt are applied and tested in the micro teaching lab, so that the results, including the weaknesses and strengths, can be evaluated and revised accordingly (Tarmedi, 2005: 2-3). Microteaching has been regarded as an applicable method that offers the opportunity to plan and implement new teaching strategies to pre-service language teachers who can link between theory and practice (Gorgen, 2003; Gurses et al., 2005; Saban & Coklar, 2013). A study conducted in six universities and twelve trainee teachers in Ho Chi Minh City founded that the teaching practicum gives positive impact on pre-service EFL teaching skill (Nguyen, H. P. C, 2015).

In micro teaching, the teacher candidates are trained to show off their basic competence in teaching, such as the objectives, materials, students, and relatively limited time (micro). Micro teaching is also a means of training for the student teachers to bravely and confidently face their students with multitude of characters, to control their emotion and rhythm of speaking, to manage the class to remain conducive, and etc. The practice of micro teaching is done until after the student teachers possess the adequate skills necessary to be placed in real instructional contexts at some schools.

There are eight basic competences of teaching trained in micro teaching based on the research findings by Tumey (1973) that play pivotal roles in the pedagogical practices, such as the followings:

1. The basic competence of opening and closing the lesson (Set Induction and Closure)
2. Basic competence of explaining (Explaining Skills)
3. Basic competence of variation provision \((Variation\ Skills)\)
4. Basic competence of giving reinforcement \((Reinforcement\ Skills)\)
5. Basic competence of questioning
6. Basic competence of classroom management \((classroom\ management\ skills)\)
7. Basic competence of teaching individuals or small groups \((individual\ and\ small\ group\ teaching\ skills)\)
8. Basic competence of small group discussion supervision.

**Research Method**

The research method in this study is Research and Development (R&D). Gay (1991) states that R&D produces an effective product of instruction that can be capitalized on the school. This research is based on the procedure development adopted from Borg and Gall (1983, pp 771-787).

**Development Procedure**

The development procedures of this study comprised of five phases, namely (1) Initial study, it was the initial investigation and theoretical review. The initial investigation aimed to investigate and collect the information regarding the evaluation model and instruments employed by the lecturers to evaluate the teaching practicum of the student teachers at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of IAIN Palopo, while the theoretical review aimed at uncover the the basic competence expected from the student teachers at the faculty to have. The results of the analysis become the guidelines for the instrument development to evaluate the practice of micro teaching performed by the preservice teachers within the faculty; (2) development phase, based on the results of the initial investigation and theoretical analysis during the initial study, the development of the initial products. The initial produces being developed included the evaluation model and intruments used to guide the lecturers, students, or other evaluators that will evaluate the preservice teachers’ ability in the practice of micro teaching; (3) validation phase, the validation was done through Focus Group Discussion(FGD). Validation panel of experts involved six experts, namely two experts in Arabic, two experts in English, two experts in Mathematics, two experts in Islamic education, and one expert in education and evaluation; (4) Testing phase, it comprised of readability and empirical tests; (5) Testing phase, this phase was only until the preliminary field testing; and (6) Finalizing product phase, this included the process of revision and perfection.

**Findings**

The results of instruments validity through *Expert Judgment*

1. Analysis of data resulted from validation and readability testing
   a. Analysis of Validation Results

The development of Model Evaluasi Praktek Micro Teaching (EPMT) along with its instruments was preceded by the pre-survey regarding the practice of evaluating micro teaching at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of IAIN Palopo. It was then followed by the theoretical review regarding the competences required by the preservice teachers at the faculty. Through the mixture of empirical and theoretical analyses was the creation of draft of the
evaluation model for evaluating the practice of micro teaching named "Model Evaluasi Praktik Micro Teaching (EPMT)" of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training at IAIN Palopo.

The data of validation results in the form of suggestions regarding the model, instrument and guidelines of the Model_EPMT were used as the basis for the betterment of the developed products. Basically, the Model_EPMT and the components included did not experience any changes from the initial draft resulted from the theoretical analyses. However, there were some advices related to the implementation of the evaluation, that was the evaluators did not agree with the inclusion of their names written in the instruments. What is more, validators both from the experts and practitioners did not take much into account the evaluation instruments for the competences of the preservice teachers. There were some suggestions in terms of layout and appropriate choices of words.

**b. Data of Readability Testing**

This section presents the results of the evaluation and coefficient analysis of Aiken’s V performed by the experts and practitioners pertinent to the clarity of the Model_EPMT, clarity of the used guidelines of the Model_EPMT, and intelligibility of the instrument evaluation. The three aspects of the results of analysis by the experts and practitioners were presented in table 2, 3, and 4. On the other hand, the data resulted from the analysis of the coefficient validity through the Aiken’s V formula were presented respectively in the following table:

1) Results of assessing clarity of the Model_EPMT by the experts and practitioners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>The Clarity of procedures of the Model_EPMT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Aspects of Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The clarity of the procedures/steps of the evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The clarity on the phase of the preparing evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The clarity on the implementation of the evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a.</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b.</td>
<td>Observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>Forum of Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d.</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Efficiency in terms of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Efficiency in terms of expenses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Efficiency in terms of energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The use of standard language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sum of the Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total of the Mean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2) Results of assessing the clarity of the guidelines of the use of Model_EIKGBI by the experts and practitioners

Tabel 2
The clarity of guidelines of the use of Model_EPMT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Aspects of Assessment</th>
<th>Assessor and Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The clarity of the guidelines of the use of Model_EPMT</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The accuracy of determining the criteria of teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The accuracy of steps of evaluation</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Observation implementation:</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Observation procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Steps of observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The clarity of the requirements for the evaluators</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The systematic guidelines of Model_EPMT</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The guidelines of the Model_EPMT are easily understood</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The use of standard language</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sum of the Mean 41.8 41.6
Total of the Mean 4.18 4.16

3) Results of assessing the clarity of the instruments of Model_EIKGBI by the Experts and Practitioners

Table 3
The Clarity of the Instruments Model_EPMT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Aspects of Assessment</th>
<th>Assessor and Mean Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The clarity of the instrument guidelines</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Clarity/completeness of the indicators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Aspects of Assessment</th>
<th>Assessor and Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Instruments of lesson planning</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Instruments of the application of learning process</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Instruments of assessing the learning outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The formulation of the instrument statements</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The use of standard language</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sum of the Mean 24.8 24.5
Total of the Mean 4.13 4.08
4) **Results of the** Aiken’s V coefficient analysis by the experts and practitioners on the clarity of the procedures of Model_EPMT

Table 4
Aiken’s V coefficient on the clarity of the procedures of Model_EPMT

5) Results of the Aiken’s V coefficient analysis by the experts and practitioners on the clarity of the procedures of Model_EPMT

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Aspects of Assessment</th>
<th>Aiken’s V coefficient</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experts (A)</td>
<td>Practitioners (B)</td>
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<td>0.65</td>
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<td>The clarity during the implementation of the evaluation</td>
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<tr>
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<td>a. Preparation</td>
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<td>0.69</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Observation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Forum of Discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d. Reflection</td>
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<td>0.75</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Efficiency in terms of time</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Efficiency in terms of expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Efficiency in terms of energy</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The use of standard language</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.66</td>
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Aiken’s V coefficient on the clarity of the guidelines of the Model_EPMT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Aspects of Assessment</th>
<th>Aiken’s V Coefficient</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experts (A)</td>
<td>Practitioners (B)</td>
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<td>0.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The accuracy of the steps of evaluation</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.80</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Steps of the observation</td>
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<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The accuracy of the time of the implementation</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6) Results of Aiken’s V coefficient analysis by the experts and practitioners on the clarity of the instruments of Model_EPMT

Table 6
Aiken’s V coefficient on the clarity of the instruments of Model_EPMT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Aspects of Assessment</th>
<th>Aiken’s V Coefficient</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Experts (A)</td>
<td>Practitioners (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0.80</td>
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</tr>
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<td>The clarity and completeness of the indicator coverage :</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Instruments of lesson planning for English language learning</td>
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<td>0.77</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Instruments of the application of learning process</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Instruments of assessing the learning outcomes of English language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The formulation of the instrument statements</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The use of standard language</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative data in the form of responses, suggestions, and input during the discussion were not analyzed quantitatively, but directly followed up with improvements in accordance with the suggestions from the experts (expert judgment) or practitioners. Meanwhile, the questionnaire data filled out by experts and practitioners regarding the clarity of Model_EPMT, clarity of the guidance of the use of Model_EPMT, and clarity of evaluation instruments were done by grouping into five categories, which included excellent, good, enough, fairly bad and bad. These criteria were based on the ideal standard set by Heri Retnawati & Endang Mulyatiningsih (2012). Based on MI and SDI values, the assessment category on the average score of the results of the assessment on the clarity of the procedure of Model_EPMT, the clarity of usage guidance of Model_EIKGBI, and the clarity of the Model_EPMT instrument can be determined.
From the analysis of the assessment of draft procedures, guidelines and instruments Model_EPMT, all were in very good category. This means that according to the validator's assessment, either from the experts or from the practitioners, the third draft was declared very good with the score tend to be same and consistent. Therefore, the procedures, guidelines, and instruments of Model_EPMT were feasible to use.

2. The Research Product

The products generated from this study comprised of (a) Model-EPMT as in the following chart.

(b) The textbook of Model_EPMT of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of IAIN Palopo, which comprised of the basic concepts of micro teaching, assessment instruments of the practice of micro teaching, and the techniques for assessing micro teaching practice as well as interpreting the results of the assessment.

Conclusion

Based on the development and review of the final product that have been described in the previous chapter with reference to to the formulation of research problems, the findings are concluded as the followings:

1. This research generates the evaluation model for the practice of micro teaching, abbreviated to Model_EPMT, that can be applied to evaluate the student teachers’ competences and to identify the skills mastery of the preservice teachers at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of IAIN Palopo.
2. The instruments of the Model_EPMT entail three components, namely the ability of the teachers to design lesson plans of the English language subject, their ability to implement...
the instructional process of the subject in the class, and their ability to assess the lesson, each of which comprised of 7, 10, and 2 indicators respectively.

3. Model_EPMT is found to be effective due to the provision of its comprehensive, practical, and economical components, as well as good values of the validity and reliability of the instruments based on the testing of the model.

About the Authors:
Syamsudarni is an English teacher at State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Palopo, Indonesia. He graduated from Flinders University with a master degree in education. His research interest is about English teaching as Foreign Language and ICT used in the class. In his free time, he loves to watch TED program. ORCid ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0880-6813

Sahraini is interested in research, assessment, evaluation in Education. She graduated with honors from Doctoral Degree in State University of Djogjakarta. She also one of the founders of English study program in IAIN Palopo. ORCid ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3757-0934

References


The Effects of a Creativity Training Program on Students’ Initial Perceptions of Creativity: The Case Study of Mohamed First University, Morocco

Mohamed DIHI
Department of English Studies, Mohamed First University
Oujda, Morocco

Abderrahmane BOUAMRI
Department of Development Engineering, National School of Agriculture
Meknes, Morocco

Abstract
Incorporating creativity in education is widely accepted to be a necessity in today's rapidly changing world. However, in the case of Moroccan educational settings, it is noticed that schools continue to be characterized by traditional and conventional instruction. It is true that some students excel in traditional teaching delivery; however, creative learners are neglected and at risk of being rejected. Understanding the nature of creativity and putting it into action are of paramount importance for students to pursue creative opportunities in their own life. This study aims at (1) assessing 22 Moroccan Master’s students’ general perceptions and attitudes towards creativity; (2) improving students’ creativity by introducing them to a list of creativity techniques; (3) evaluating how effectively the proposed creativity training workshops have influenced students’ initial views of creativity. The study used questionnaire inquiry data analysis to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The findings reveal that students hold positive attitudes towards creativity in education. More importantly, the study shows how the proposed creativity training workshops have positively affected students’ initial perceptions and attitudes towards creativity.

Keywords: Creativity techniques, effects, higher education, perceptions, teaching for creativity

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1. Introduction
Creativity is a central source of meaning in our lives. Almost everything that is valuable, important, and human is the result of creativity. When we are creative, we feel we are living more fully than during the rest of our life and we come close to the perfect fulfilment we all aspire to achieve in life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Until recently, creativity has been synonymously associated with artists and gifted individuals who have changed the world with their inventions and discoveries. Recent changes in perceptions have led us to think of creativity as something we all possess to varying degrees and which can be encouraged, nurtured and developed. (Adam, 1999; Sternberg, 2003; Misztal, 2007; Sawyer, 2012; Lehrer, 2012). Education is viewed as the most influential place to inculcate students with creative thinking to prepare them for the challenges we are facing. However, it needs to be acknowledged that in modern classrooms, teaching methods have become increasingly monotonous and objective in the transfer of knowledge. Teachers seem to share their knowledge objectively and do not necessarily let students experience the process through which discoveries are made. Understanding the nature of creativity and putting it into action have significant outcomes for both teachers and students. Teachers are likely to adopt different creative approaches and model them to have the most impact on their students. As for students, introducing them to creative approaches and techniques helps to shape their creative thinking processes to pursue creative opportunities in their own life.

The participants in this study consisted of 22 Moroccan Master’s students studying at the Faculty of Letters and Humanities, Oujda, Morocco. The study intended to (1) assess students’ general perceptions and attitudes towards creativity; (2) introduce students to a list of creativity techniques to help them break away from conventional ways of teaching and learning. A post-training evaluation questionnaire was addressed to the participants to evaluate the extent to which the creativity training workshops have positively influenced their initial attitudes and perceptions of creativity. The aim of this research was to find answers to the questions below:

- What are the students’ general perceptions of creativity?
- To what extent does the proposed training in creativity positively affect students’ general perceptions and attitudes towards creativity?

2. Literature Review
2.1. Defining creativity
For a long time creativity has been considered as something mysterious and creativity itself has been related to artists, gifted and intelligent individuals who have changed the world with their inventions and discoveries. As a matter of fact, the word ‘genius’ was used more often to refer to a creative person. Some 60 years ago, a psychologist, J.P. Guilford insisted that creativity could not be understood solely in the context of intelligence and genius. Thus, taking creativity out of the circle of giftedness and intelligence, and giving it a scientific dimension helped researchers to provide new insights to the concept. When defining creativity, researchers put an emphasis on two elements, namely: novelty and utility. The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (1999) describes creativity as an “imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce
outcomes that are both original and of value” (p. 29). Robinson (2011) insists on actively producing new things as a sign of being creative. Creativity involves taking actions in a given field. In Robinson’s words, “people are not creative in the abstract, they are creative in something: in mathematics, in engineering, in writing, in music, in business, in whatever” (p. 115). In tendem, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) states that “creativity is any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain or that transforms an existing domain into a new one” (p. 28). By domain he means the body of expertise in a field.

The action and the concrete products are what make the difference between imagination, creativity, and innovation. Koestler (1964) maintains that the creative act takes place when a person “uncovers, selects, re-shuffles, combines, synthesizes already existing facts, ideas, faculties, skills. The more familiar the parts, the more striking the new whole” (p. 120). Hence, creative people are capable of “combining previously unrelated domains of knowledge in such a way that you get more out of the emergent whole than you put in…each new synthesis leads to the emergence of new patterns of relations” (Koestler, 1980, p. 344).

For our purposes, it is vital to establish a definition of creativity that makes sense within the context of this study. By fusing Koestler’s definition and definitions identified in the literature, it may be argued that creativity is the imaginative process of rearranging (combining, synthesising, selecting wisely) already existing elements (ideas, domains, facts, faculties, skills…etc.) to produce something new (novel, original, unique) and useful (adapted to the needs for new approaches and new products) by which a symbolic domain in the culture is changed.

2.2. Teaching for creativity
Schools should act as platforms where students learn to combine and rearrange existing knowledge, things and ideas to produce something new and valuable (Sternberg, 2003). It is highly important to mention here that teaching for creativity is not a teaching method, but rather a teaching philosophy through which multiple teaching techniques, styles, and models can be modified or generated to help students develop their creative skills. Practically speaking, teachers can teach for creativity by simply providing a positive, safe and motivating school environment where students are encouraged to believe in themselves, take responsibility for their issues, focus on solutions, and find opportunities and new perspectives for further development (Rogers, 1954; Amabile, 1996; Sternberg, 2003; Nickerson, 2010; Metcalf, 2003; Snyder, Lopes, & Pedrotti, 2011). With this in mind, teachers act as facilitators of students’ success, by helping them internalize positive beliefs about their personalities, abilities, and responsibility for learning. Additionally, students are at their most creative when they are doing what they love to do. Teachers, therefore, need to encourage students to find their own niche (Treffinger, Schoonover, & Selby, 2013). Dozens of experts in the field of creativity argue that teaching for creativity takes various forms (Bandura, 1982; Amabile, 1996; Gruber & Wallace, 1999; Sternberg, 2003). First, students should have the guts to surmount their obstacles and take risks. That is to say, teachers should encourage their students to analyse, critique their own ideas, and redefine problems to see them in another way
The Effects of a Creativity Training Program on Students’ DIVERGENT THINKING. Second, students should take into consideration that learning is a lifelong process that takes time. Thus, students need to learn to allow time for the process of creative thinking to take place. If they always rush, they will have difficulty generating creative solutions.

Third, knowledge is a double-edged sword. Despite of the fact that creativity favors the prepared mind, knowledge can impede creative thinking. Teachers have to be careful to dismiss students’ views simply because the views happen not to fit into their own knowledge. Finally, students’ mistakes are their sources of learning and creativity. Making mistakes help students generate further ideas and solutions to the problem they are facing. However, if mistakes are stigmatised, students will have trouble being creative.

On another scale, telling students ‘to be creative’ does not usually yield results. Some special techniques are required to help students use their brains in a different way - to change their usual thinking process. Therefore, providing students with a number of creativity techniques is of paramount importance to reawaken their creative spirit to start combining in beautiful and useful ways. Using visual thinking is one of the best methods to help students represent, deconstruct and reconstruct new information, problems and insights (Michalko, 2001, 2006). In this respect, various creativity techniques may be used to enhance creative thinking like brainstorming, brainwriting, braindrawing, mind mapping, SCAMPER, the six thinking hats and analogies (Bisociation, Synectics).

3. Methods

3.1. Participants

The 22 participants who responded to the questionnaires were all students studying for a Master’s degree in Educational Technology at the Faculty of Letters and Humanities in Oujda, Morocco. The majority of the participants (16) are aged between 20 and 30 years old. The gender distribution indicates that 9 of the participants are male while 13 are female. 18 of the respondents are students, three are teachers and one respondent is a teacher inspector.

3.2. Procedures

This research study used a mixed methods procedure for collecting, analysing, and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study to better understand the research problem (Creswell, 2012). Mixed methods research was a good design to use in order to build on the strengths of both quantitative (scores) and qualitative data (open-ended questions) to develop “a complex” picture of the research questions. Dealing with one type of research was not enough to address the research problem or answer the research questions.

First, the researcher administered a survey to 22 Master’s students to assess their general attitudes towards creativity in education. Second, students underwent the creativity training where they were introduced and taught about how to use a list of techniques to develop their creative thinking. Finally, a post-training evaluation questionnaire was addressed to the participants to evaluate the extent to which the creativity training course has positively influenced their initial attitudes and perceptions of creativity.
4. Results and discussion
   4.1. Students’ general attitudes towards creativity (questionnaire 1)
      4.1.1. How important is creativity in education?

As can be seen in figure 1, all the participants agree that creativity is important in education.

   4.1.2. Why is creativity important in education?
According to the respondents, creativity helps society to maintain its continuity and improvement. Societies become more productive and innovative. This goes hand in hand with previous findings in the literature (Cropley, 1990; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Conner, DeYoung, & Silvia, 2018). One respondent pointed out that “thanks to creativity, learners feed their minds with new and original ideas and perspectives; they become better problem solvers and actively involved in the process of their own learning”. A good number of the respondents pointed the importance of creativity in developing imagination, self-confidence, self-esteem, problem solving, perseverance, self-motivation, flexibility and adaptability. One participant shared the view that “a successful education system is a system where the use of creative ways and techniques of delivering information is encouraged”. Another respondent added that “learners’ positive perceptions of their feelings have a strong influence on their learning and academic achievement. Creativity helps create positive school environments which allow each student to feel worthy and to build autonomy” A significant number of the respondents stated that through the use of creative approaches and techniques teachers are likely to develop new methods, new tools and new content for the benefit of students to improve their performance. One of the respondents believed that “creative techniques and approaches simplify and facilitate learning since students are encouraged to take risks and make mistakes”. Another participant noted that “creativity helps to improve students’ academic performance”
4.1.3. Students’ general perceptions of the nature of creativity

Figure 2. Students’ general perceptions of the nature of creativity

It is important that the majority of the respondents reported that each person can learn to be creative (20) and that creativity is not innate (19). Most participants (20) agree that creativity is not about intelligence. The majority of the respondents (18) said that to be creative is not to be a great artist or a genius. All the students agree that kids are more creative than adults and that creativity is imagination put into practice.

It can be concluded that the responses provided above support the assumption that everyone can learn to be creative; creativity is a potential inscribed in every human being (Davis, 2004; Lehrer, 2012; Adam, 1999).
4.1.4. Characteristics of highly creative people

What are the most important characteristics of highly creative people? (Choose only three characteristics)

Creative individuals share many characteristics. They are curious, perseverant, open-minded, dreamy, wandering, imaginative, innovative, original, quiet, sensitive, energetic, ambitious, flexible, experienced, courageous, proactive, intelligent, connectors, and risk-takers. When asked about the most important characteristics of highly creative people, participants responded that creative individuals are mainly curious (100%), imaginative (63.6%), reflective (45.5%) and honest (27.3%). These findings were consistent with those suggested in the literature on the characteristics of highly creative people in education (Wallas, 1926; Eysenck, 1997; Ryhammer & Brolin, 1999; Dacey & Lennon, 2000; Michalko, 2001, 2006; Cheung, 2014). Cheung (2014) examined preschool teachers’ perceptions of creative personality important for fostering creativity. The results showed that the characteristics of being imaginative, curious, reflective and flexible were considered the most representative of a creative teacher.

Figure 3. The most important characteristics of highly creative people.

4.1.5. Barriers to teaching for creativity

Does the current education promote students’ creativity?

![Figure 4](chart.png)

When participants were asked if the kind of education they engage in promotes their creativity, 81.8% of students answered ‘No’. Students identified many barriers that hamper the creative process. These barriers can be summarised as follows:

- Fear of failure
- Overcrowded classroom
- Fear of change
- Fear of ridicule and mistakes
- Lack of freedom
- Lack of self-confidence
- Lack of commitment
- Lack of equipment and materials
- Lack of support and suitable learning environments
- Negative assumptions
- Over Control
- Negative judgment
- Routine
- Social problems

Our experiments are in line with previous findings in the literature (Adam, 1999; Puccio & Cabra, 2010). Additionally, teachers have the potential to stifle opportunities for creativity by being overly didactic or prescriptive, discouraging fantasy or by having low expectations about what students are able to achieve. Other barriers arise from political and economic structures—lack of funding, poor pay for teachers, functionalist summative testing, teacher or school target regimes,

4.1.6. Undergoing creativity training

The participants were asked if they have ever attended any creativity training. Only two students had the chance to undergo creativity training. When students were asked if they are motivated to undergo creativity training, they were all prompted to take part in this kind of training.

4.1.7. Reasons that make students interested in undergoing creativity training

The respondents highlighted many reasons that motivate them to undergo the creativity training. Such reasons may be summarised as follows:

- Creativity is a path to flourishing. Students have the opportunity to explore a new field of study.
- Develop their creative skills and learn new techniques to be creative.
- Students learn to think differently, look for new, original and appropriate solutions for daily problems.
- Personal development.
- Develop the know-how.
- Bring up new ideas and adapt them to different situations.
- Develop other thinking skills like problem solving and critical thinking.
- Use new and useful methods of thinking.
- Be prepared to deal with unknown future challenges.

4.1.8. The creativity training workshops contents

It is important to note that the majority of students (77.3%) were motivated to get acquainted with a list of creativity techniques. Furthermore, the respondents preferred to understand how creativity functions (72.7%) and were also eager to learn about the characteristics of highly creative people (59.1%) and their creative strategies (see figure 5).

![Figure 5. What content do you prefer to learn about in a creativity training workshop?](image-url)
4.2. The creativity training course
The creativity training course lasted five weeks and looked at creativity from different angles: history, types and uses of creativity, techniques and playful activities. More emphasis was put on the creativity techniques since students preferred to learn about them (see figure 5). The course used the flipped classroom pedagogy to help students gain first exposure to new materials outside of class, usually via reading or lecture videos, and then class time was used to do the hard work of assimilating that knowledge through strategies such as problem-solving techniques, discussions or debates. To boost students’ creativity, the course was impregnated with playful activities, namely brain teasers, critical thinking exercises, figural and verbal tests of creativity (TTCT). To reach the highest level of Bloom’s revised taxonomy, learners were asked to use the creativity techniques they learnt about in the course to design their future research projects.

4.3. Post-training evaluation (questionnaire 2)
A post-training evaluation questionnaire was addressed to the students to evaluate the extent to which the creativity training course has positively influenced their initial attitudes and perceptions of creativity.

4.3.1. What impressed or interested the participants during the creativity training
The students were satisfied with the course content as it is part of their professional and personal life. According to some respondents, the creativity techniques were effective and helpful to unlock their creative potential to generate original ideas. Other students were contented with the different teaching styles and approaches that were used, namely flipped classroom pedagogy. Some students appreciated problem solving techniques since it stimulated their minds and motivated them to work on solving brainteasers. Other participants found the playful activities very interesting as it helped them to think outside the box (divergent thinking). The concatenation of the course contents and richness of information were motivating factors for some students.

4.3.2. The Most important creative thinking skills developed during the training
The students who have undergone the creativity training course reported that they have developed a number of creative thinking skills which we can summarise as follows:

- **Divergent thinking**
A good number of students reported that they became aware of the necessity to generate creative ideas by exploring many possible solutions (in what ways can I …?). One student stated, “The techniques of creativity such as brainstorming, brainwriting, braindrawing, and SCAMPER are gainful to let us think in different ways about a problem”.

- **Critical thinking skills**
The respondents believed that creative thinking helps also develop critical thinking skills which enable them to analyse and evaluate factual evidence in a rational, sceptical, and an unbiased way. The respondents felt the importance of asking good questions to find solutions to a problem
(Einstein’s method of passing 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions).

- **Idea generation**
  The participants had the chance to use the idea generation techniques while asked to design their future research projects. Students worked individually and in groups to come up with a large number of new ideas, and then came the next step to select the best idea which they developed later by using SCAMPER technique. One student revealed that “brainwriting is a good technique to generate ideas individually”. Another respondent noted, ‘Braindrawing stimulates our imagination and we felt more comfortable when dealing with images rather than texts’.

- **Time management**
  Time management is the process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency or productivity. Once done with idea generation, students were asked to plan for their research projects by using mind mapping technique. Students structured their projects to include outputs, process, and timing. One student maintained, “Mind mapping is an excellent technique to structure our research projects”.

4.3.3. The attitudes that have been changed after the training:
A reasonable number of students reported that the creativity training workshops were beneficial as it made them change their vision to the world, namely the way they see things and the way they think about their daily problems. One student reported, “The ‘In what ways can I solve the problem’ method helped us to look for different perspectives and alternatives for the same problem, and that is the essence of creativity”. One student said that the most important attitude which students reinforced in this training was the fact that everyone has a potential to create. Other students pointed out that they changed attitudes towards the way research is conducted. One student noted, “Brainstorming, brainwriting, SCAMPER, and the six thinking hats applied to research process made us generate a great number of ideas which we modified and developed later within team work”.

4.3.4. The situations / settings in which students used their newly acquired skills, attitudes and knowledge
Many students reported that they used the new acquired skills in their daily life. The majority of students felt the necessity to use creativity every day. One student noted that he “used the creativity techniques with his family”. This was good sign of transferability. As for students who work as teachers, they said that they started using creativity techniques to nurture their students’ creative thinking skills. As far as studies are concerned, a good number of students mentioned that they started using creativity techniques to study differently with more focus on productivity.
4. Conclusion

Creativity is an important human characteristic. It is perhaps best thought of as a process, requiring a mixture of ingredients, including personality traits, abilities and skills. The purpose of the current study was to examine the results of a survey of Master’s students’ perceptions of creativity. The purpose of the study was to address two main questions:

- What are the students’ general perceptions of creativity?
- To what extent does the proposed training in creativity positively affect students’ general perceptions and attitudes towards creativity?

Students’ initial perceptions of creativity were in line with the previous findings in the literature. The findings reveal that students hold positive attitudes towards creativity in education. More importantly, the study shows that the creativity training workshops have positively affected students’ initial perceptions of creativity. The majority of the respondents believed that creativity is a potential inscribed in every human being. Many students reported that they used the new acquired skills in their daily life, at work or while studying. The participants noted also that they changed the way they think, study, and surmount obstacles.

In fact, teaching for creativity can be done simply by avoiding negative beliefs and practices that kill creativity and trying instead to help students establish positive beliefs about their abilities and strengthen their attitudes towards creativity as a life skill. Additionally, providing students with a number of creativity techniques is beneficial to reawaken their creative spirit to start combining in beautiful and useful ways. However, it is to be noted that the proposed creativity training should not be viewed as simply a particular program or the result of applying a fixed set of techniques. Instead, creativity trainings should be subject to revision and extension as we gradually develop a better understanding of creative thought and approaches that might be used to enhance creative thinking.

Numerous countries are now making efforts to infuse teaching curricula and classroom practices with idea generation, problem-based learning, real world inquiry, and innovation. The future of creativity in Morocco is promising. Hopefully, this investigation will lay a foundation for future research in the field of creativity. Educators and policy makers should contribute to design creative curricula that integrate creative and critical thinking skills. Teachers should act as models of creative thinkers to positively influence their students’ thinking processes. More efforts should be made to sensitize people to the importance of creativity for social development and well-being.
About the authors

Mohamed DIHI is a professor, researcher, and expert in creativity. He is a PhD student at the Faculty of Letters and Humanities of Oujda (Morocco). He got a master’s degree in Educational Technology. His researches revolve around the following topics: creativity, critical thinking, blended learning, flipped classrooms, and educational technology.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7222-2353

Abderrahmane BOUAMRI is a professor, researcher in ICT, learning and creativity. He received his PhD degree in “Educational technology, pedagogy and E-Learning solutions” and a master of advanced studies (DEA). He got a Master of Science in “The uses of ICT in education and training” and a university degree in ICT and Distance Learning. He is involved extensively in several activities related to education, educational technologies, learning to learn, innovation, Mind Mapping, creativity and E-learning.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9993-8685

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Use of Saudi EFL Adult Learners’ L1 to Address Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

Khaled Besher Albesher  
Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Muhammad Sabboor Hussain  
Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Aisha Farid  
Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
This study highlights the major emotional and psychological factors related to the medium of instruction (use of First Language (L1) in the classroom) in the domain of bilingual education for adult Saudi English as foreign language (EFL) learners. The primary area of emphasis is to consider whether the use of L1 in the class reduces the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) or it deprives the learners of the real and constant language inputs, viz., the words of the teacher in the target language. Thus, the main research question of the study is how the medium of instruction (use/mixing of Arabic or use of English-only approach) impacts the FLCA (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety) of Saudi adult learners. The quantitative research tool of survey has been administered on the teachers and students on five-point Likert-scale with the responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. There are twelve items in the survey and each item tends to explore different psychological dimension of the issue. 100 adult Saudi university students and 100 EFL teachers have responded to these items. The main finding of the study is that learner’s L1 speeds up the language learning process in a natural way if used occasionally and judiciously with the objective of keeping self-esteem and self image of the learners intact and bringing their FLCA down. The research study not only brings to surface the current state of bilingual EFL education in Saudi context, but also puts forth recommendations for learners, teachers, administrators, and policy makers to strengthen English language teaching/learning in EFL perspective in the bilingual context.

Keywords: bilingual education, foreign language classroom anxiety, medium of instruction, psychological factors, quantitative tool

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1. Introduction

The practices in English language teaching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) perspective usually go in opposed directions. On one hand learners’ psyches and psychological dimensions are compromised in the name of discipline and class management. On the other hand, the learners are let loose in such an awkward manner that teaching becomes almost impossible. The first scenario is Grammar Translation Method (GTM) and Lecture Method with excessive use of the first language (L1) where the purpose is to complete the syllabus without taking into account the learners’ psychological selves. The other scenario is Direct Method (DM) with interactive and students’ centered approach where again; the psychological dimensions and demands of the learners/learning are generally ignored.

Most adult language learners build up the highest level of anxiety when they find themselves unable to comprehend and express themselves in the presence of English speaking teachers. They develop the fear that they may be ridiculed if they try to communicate in the target language. Such a strong sense of discomfort, tension and fear induces an anxiety ridden need for defense, and the learners retreat into self-created cocoons. Resultantly, their minds never attain the ideal condition of calm as they get victim of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) and block all the language input provided to them in the class. Such inhibition caused by this unwanted and undue anxiety becomes a big obstacle in the way of language learning—comprehensible input and productive output.

Secondly, Saudi university students face a new environment in the classroom during the initial days after leaving schools. Their school socialization makes them confident about themselves in establishing relationship with their teachers as it is done in their comfort zones viz., use of the medium of L1. This level of high self-confidence becomes vulnerable when it comes to building up a new relationship with English speaking teachers. Most often, they get victim to psychological pressure resulting in poor perception and assimilation of linguistic input. This leads to poor performance in the class in general and in the exams in particular. To add fuel to the fire, the expectation in language skill development, pronounced loudly and unprofessionally in most cases, can put them under more stress. Class fellows with better backgrounds and performing better in the class activities cause further damage to their morale, self-esteem and self image.

Thirdly, if the adult learners get completely disinterested in the classroom, for one reason or the other, (due to lack of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation) they cannot see the need for continuing the language class. The immediate negative impact is quite obvious: they find themselves unable to set a definite goal of learning. Their learning objectives and targets slip out of sight. Mental harmony, relationship and interaction between the teacher and the learner are keys to curb de-motivation. The language teacher can definitely be an important external motivator. However, if adult language learners are unable to understand and express themselves in front of the English speaking teacher and cannot build up a relationship with him/her, they cannot make him/her understand their needs and the ways in which they can be motivated. In such a situation the teacher cannot help them out. This may aggravate the severity of the situation. De-motivation can emerge due to learners’ lack of trust in the teacher who shows disrespect to their language by
completely banning it in the class. An even worse situation would be when a conflict between a learner and a teacher emerges. This conflict, in some cases, arises from the learner’s inability to establish a better teacher-learner relationship, and in others, due to the unprofessional attitude of the teacher. Such an unwanted situation can further de-motivate the learners.

Here, instead of expecting some positive and miraculous role to be played by the learner, the teacher’s own energy level, self-motivation and self-faith on the unusual moves like occasional use of L1 can play a pivotal part in raising the morale of his/her bilingual adult language learners. Unskilled, ill-trained and unprofessional people involved in the English language teaching process tend to pollute the whole process and make this otherwise pleasurable experience of learning a new, modern, interesting lingua franca of the world, a dull drudgery with few rewards or signs of progress.

There is dire need to train teachers to teach the learners not the language or language system but the ways of acquiring a language. This study is an attempt to move some steps forward in this direction. This article explores the possibilities of making learners more enthusiastic towards English language learning by seeking their opinion on the occasional or excessive use of L1 in the class. It explores the possibilities of developing their sense of achievement, raising their morale and motivation and enhancing their participation with the help of innovative ideas. The present study analyzes the factors of excessive and continuous use of English, and occasional use of Arabic in the class to see their impact for the high/low affective filter between the brains of the learners and the language inputs provided to them. It tries to find out the ways and means whereby affective filter can be lowered, language inputs can be made comprehensible and FLCA can be reduced. This objective can be materialized when the teacher gives the complete performance at the sender’s end, and the learner is ready, vigilant and open with as many barriers removed at the receiver’s end. The variable explored at length is the use of L1 in the class.

In order to explore the impact of the medium of instruction on English language learning/teaching, various aspects of the research area at hand have been considered. The study analyzes holistically the psychological dimensions of bilingual education in EFL perspective by viewing different variables in relation to the use of L1 in the class: whether the learners feel free to tell their learning needs and problems; whether the learners are less afraid to speak English in the class; whether the teacher understands learners’ background better and relates the teaching to their culture; whether through the contrastive analysis of English and Arabic, teaching of English can be made more effective and learners can have a good start; whether the use of Arabic in teaching English helps a teacher evaluate learners’ comprehension level and identify learners’ learning problems; and whether use of Arabic in English class helps the teacher remove psychological barriers in the comprehensible language input. The stance of the teachers and the perception of the students on the use of Arabic to address FLCA of the learners has been given due consideration.

The study also explores negative impacts of the use of L1 in the class. With this end in view, the variables explored in relation to the use of L1 in the class are: whether use of Arabic in
English language class gives learners less exposure to English; whether use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less accurate pronunciations and intonation; whether use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less understanding of the English culture; whether use of Arabic in English language class makes learners rely too much on Language 1 (Arabic) in learning English; whether use of Arabic in English language class makes learners feel less the need for practicing and using English inside and outside the classroom; whether use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less understanding of colloquial/conversational English in their academic careers. The study will explore how far the teachers and the students agree on the negative impact of L1 in learning English effectively.

**Research Questions**

i) How does the medium of instruction (use/mixing of Arabic or use of English-only approach) impact the FLCA (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety) of Saudi adult learners?

ii) What is the difference in perception between EFL teachers and Saudi EFL students about the use of Arabic in the class?

**2. Literature Review**

There is dramatic increase in the number of non-native students in the classrooms of English-speaking countries in today’s world. Researchers and academicians have been trying to find out the best ways to meet the special needs of these learners. Same is true with the students in the countries like Saudi Arabia where the cultural and psychological barriers towards learning English are breaking fast. This has led to two opposing schools of thoughts viz., give maximum English language exposure to the students; or provide instructions to them in the mother tongue as well as in English. Krashen (1981) is a strong advocate of the second approach, which finds its implementation in one of the forms of bilingual education. The point he stresses the most is to bring down the barriers, what he terms as affective filter, between the language inputs and the brains of the learners.

Mostly bilingual models build the hypothesis that academic proficiency such as knowledge, understanding, skills, etc. acquired in the native language/mother tongue/L1 are available to the student when learning takes place in English (Cummins, 2000). English as medium of instruction has to be combined with L1, mainly because English is lingua franca all over the world in general and a medium of knowledge and learning in the leading educational institutes in the world. Furthermore, this academic proficiency obtained through mixed medium of instruction promotes and facilitates the acquisition/learning of English because it helps to make listening & reading inputs more comprehensible by making the learners extrinsically motivated. Thus much immersion or English-only instruction becomes incomprehensible to non-native speakers like Saudi students who, therefore, learn neither English nor subject content. Resultantly, the need of using L1 (Arabic), at least occasionally, in the class, requires due consideration. It is an area worth researching for deeper understanding of the psychological dimensions of bilingual education in EFL perspective.
There is a large variety of bilingual educational models available for the EFL learners/teachers. The one suggested by Collier & Thomas, (2004) is probably the most effective as it recommends two-way bilingual instruction. According to this model, bilingual class in Saudi context should consist of approximately equal numbers of very proficient speakers of English and speakers of Arabic. The class remains together for all of their lessons, some of which are in English and the remaining ones in Arabic. If this model is to be adopted, there should be mixed ability classes and teachers should adopt learner centered approach. There is a research need to carry on an experimental study in EFL context in Saudi Arabia by implementing this model to know the impact and the results of using learners L1 in the class.

Behaviorism led the EFL practitioners to believe that a contrastive analysis of languages is useful in teaching languages to define the difficult and easy areas of the target language. The similar areas of L1 and the target language would be easy for learners, but points in which they were different would be difficult for them. From these theories arose the Audio-Lingual Method. This method focuses on using drills for the formation of good language habits. Learners are given a stimulus to respond. If their response is correct and appropriate, it is rewarded, so the habit is formed; if it is incorrect, it is corrected, so that it is suppressed. The Direct Method, like Audio Lingual Method, developed as a reaction against the Grammar Translation Method with a strict stress on only the target language use in the class. In order to get the desired results through this method, the teachers need to have competence in language, stamina, energy, ability and time to create their own materials and courses (Richard, 1986). Both approaches namely, excessive English approach and excessive Arabic approach make teaching/learning both difficult and unpleasant and build psychological barriers in the way of learning/teaching. If planned and focused efforts are not made to remove such barriers, and teachers are not vigilant in doing their tasks, foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) can go very high.

The EFL teachers need to be aware that there are methodologies, including the Natural Approach, which emphasize active communicative interaction, language acquisition and creation of a pleasant classroom environment to address learners’ FLCA. These new methodologies have been found helpful for the learners to develop the language proficiency in a better way as compared to the traditional methodologies like GTM (Omagio-Hadley, 1993). In these non-traditional methodologies, language is acquired through comprehensible input instead of conscious learning of rules (Krashen, 1983). This leads to the hypothesis that the occasional use of L1 may help in lowering FLCA and facilitate language acquisition.

There are many renowned researchers who favor the use of L1 in the class. Littlewood (1981) argues that L1 use, if intended for social interaction and classroom management, could contribute to well-motivated communicative opportunities (pp. 44-45). Moreover, selective and occasional use of L1 helps understand what they are supposed to be learning. Thus, the linguistic input must be mixed with learners’ L1 as an aid to address learners’ FLCA. In the same way, Atkinson (1993) also stresses the need for more L2 use in the TESOL classroom while supplemented by occasional L1. Harbord (1992), though favouring the Direct Method, defines L1
use as a time-saving strategy. He supports L1 use for cross linguistic comparisons to facilitate a second/foreign language acquisition.

Latest research in the field of English as a foreign language also favors the use of L1 but in a prudent way (Shabir, 2017; Enama, 2016; Sipra, 2013). L1 is important as it is already known to the students and they usually rely on their previous knowledge to learn new things; therefore, it is pertinent to use L1 in the teaching of L2 for the ease and the comfort of the students in the learning process. “If human beings learn systematically by relating new knowledge to prior experience, then, the learning of any additional language takes place within the framework of the L1, and, therefore, the L1 should have a place in the EFL classroom (Enama, 2016, p.19). Shabir (2017) investigated the opinion of Australian teachers about their students’ demands regarding the use of L1 and concluded that English should be the main language for classroom communication because it would help the students practice English; however, excessive use of English is also found to have negative effects; therefore, use of L1 was recommended for specific activities like explaining complex grammar concepts, instructions for class activities and classroom management etc.

On the other hand, there is some criticism on the free use of L1 in teaching of English as a foreign language. Polio (1994) criticizes the use of L1 as shortsighted strategy and a barrier against providing learners with exposure to L2, but admit that “limited, but timely, exposure to an L1 item with appropriate target language support is in fact warranted by recent research on fostering language awareness and selective attention to grammatical form(s) among instructed learners …helping learners to notice specific gaps in their L2 knowledge and then proving them with the needed structures are fundamental aspects of L2 learning and teaching” (p. 325). Thus, if on one hand, the occasional and selective use of L1 may prove to be helpful in making the input more comprehensible, on the other hand, the L2-only approach (the use of the target language only) could give rise to FLCA resulting into misunderstanding and lack of comprehension (Modica, 1994; Stern, 1992; Weschler, 1997).

Auerbach (1993) criticizes the English–only approach or the DM declaring that it rests on unexamined assumptions. She further explains that a growing body of evidence shows the value of L1 and/or bilingual options. She is of the view that these options are effective and necessary for adult ESL learners with limited L1 literacy or schooling. Her survey displays the fact that 80% of the teachers allowed the use of L1 at times while they did not trust their own practice due to the L2-only theories. They regarded lapses into L1 as failures, thus, a cause for guilt.

There has been limited research carried out in the use of bilingualism or the use of Arabic (L1) in the EFL context in Saudi Arabia. Sipra (2013) investigated the spoken aspect of L2 along with L1 in integrated skills classes and the proper use of vocabulary while communicating at intermediate level in King AbdulAziz University, KSA, and concluded that bilingualism is an aid in learning/teaching English as a foreign language and does not reduce students’ exposure and capacity to communicate well in L2. AlAsmari (2014) focused on the EFL university teachers’ perceptions about the use of Arabic in the interactional patterns of Saudi PYP EFL classrooms,
and found out that the teachers believed in the effectiveness of use of Arabic in EFL classes; however, they did not know about the extent of its use to cater to the needs of the students and find it difficult to create a balance between Arabic and English. He declared that this could be the main reason for the students’ low proficiency in the English.

What is needed therefore is a different method. It should free the teachers from the clutches of GTM and DM by amalgamating indirect and direct methods. It should take into account data obtained from investigations into second language learning. The research can help find out an eclectic method which combines old/new teaching/learning activities to enable the learner to learn a language quickly, with little effort, less FLCA; and which gives the learner the opportunity to reach a level whereby s/he can think in that language and can transforms the acquired competence into effective and useful performance.

3. Methodology

**Population:** The target population, in case of the present research study is the native and non-native teachers teaching English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia and Saudi EFL students.

**Sampling:** In the present research, for the research survey, the researchers have used cluster sampling as it is the only feasible method of selecting a sample. Cluster sampling takes less time and is more convenient. According to this sampling strategy, any location within which a group has similar characteristics is chosen for data collection (Barnard, 1994) p.118.

**Research Tools:** The study uses the quantitative tool to serve the qualitative purposes. Creswell (2009) points out that “Quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables” (p-22). In order to understand and reach some conclusion regarding the psychological dimension of bilingual education in Saudi Arabia and the role and relationship of use of L1 (medium of instruction) and FLCA along with their different variables in teaching English to Saudi university students, following quantitative tool of 12-items survey (6 items in favor of L1 use in the class and 6 items against it) on Likert’s five point scale ranging from strongly disagree-disagree-no idea-agree-strongly agree was designed and administered at both the students (100) and the teachers (100) at the same time. First two items fall in the general category to know about the existing and the proposed medium of instruction in EFL classroom.

| Table 1. Quantitative Research Tool of the Study (adapted from Hussain, M.S. 2009) |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| What is the medium of instruction in your English language class? | What SHOULD BE the medium of instruction in your English language class? |
| 1. Arabic | 1. Arabic |
| 2. English | 2. English |
| 3. English-Arabic mixed | 3. English-Arabic mixed |
1. Use of occasional Arabic in English language class makes learners feel free to tell their learning problems and needs.

2. Use of occasional Arabic in English language class makes learners feel less afraid to speak English in the classroom.

3. By using Arabic in English language class occasionally, the teacher understands learners’ background better and relates the teaching to their culture.

4. Through the contrastive analysis of English and Arabic, teaching of English can be made more effective and learners can have a good start.

5. Using Arabic occasionally in teaching English helps a teacher evaluate learners’ comprehension level and identify learners’ learning problems.

6. Use of occasional Arabic in English class helps the teacher remove psychological barriers in the comprehensible language input.

7. Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less exposure to English.

8. Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less accurate pronunciations and intonation.

9. Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less understanding of the English culture.

10. Use of Arabic in English language class makes learners rely too much on Language1 in learning English.

11. Use of Arabic in English language class makes learners feel less the need for practicing and using English inside and outside the classroom.

12. Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less understanding of colloquial/conversational English in their academic careers.

4. Data Analysis

Following is the detailed data analysis with the help of bar charts having the comparative data/responses from the target populations of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia and Saudi EFL students:

The survey item to know about the existing medium of instruction in Saudi EFL context has revealed almost complete harmony between the teachers and the taught. Only 6% students reported about their teachers mixing Arabic in the class thus using the L1 of the learners as a tool to arrest the attention span of the learners and bring the FLCA down by involving the students in the input with the use of their mother tongue. Such teachers show their experimental bent of mind and do not consider it necessary to follow the institutional policy of English only approach in a slavish manner.
The survey item about the proposed medium of instruction highlights a small number of students and teachers who feel the need of Arabic mixing/use in the class. 8% teachers and 20% students are in favor of Arabic use in the class. 92% teachers show their agreement with the institutional policy of English only approach. 78% students also think on the same line and believe that the use of Arabic will lead to wrong habit formation and pollute the English speaking environment in the class. This approach also perhaps reflects their disgust about their past English language experience in the schools where English is taught with excessive use of Arabic in the class to such an extent that no English language learning/training takes place.

Knowing about the learning problems and needs of EFL learners is the issue of prime importance for any teacher if his/her objective is to bring FLCA of the EFL learners’ down. Teachers show a scattered bent of mind in this regard. 8% strongly disagreeing, 44% disagreeing, 8% having no idea and 40% agreeing responses about the use of learners’ L1 in this regard show a kind of chaos and lack of singleness of direction in the approach towards teaching. Almost the same scenario prevails among the Saudi EFL students with less intensity as just 6% among them strongly disagree and disagree. However 24% ‘No Idea’ response from the students and 8% from the teachers opens another research area on the same theme where an experimental study is carried out to eliminate this uncertainty. As for the role of Arabic in creating ease and comfort for the learners and the teachers to share learning problems and needs, sizeable majority from both camps (40% teachers and 46%+ 6% students favor the occasional use of Arabic.
Language learners’ inhibition and stage fright has to be treated by well thought out planning and strategies. The teachers as well as the students are divided on the proposition presented to them. Almost the same number of teachers (8%+44%) and students (2%+44%) disagree with the notion that L1 can play the role of removing the fear in the learners to speak English in the class. 4% and 16% of ‘No Idea’ responses by the teachers and the students respectively perhaps point towards the strict adherence to the institutional policy of complete ban on the use of Arabic in the class. 44% teachers and 30%+8% students favor the occasional use of Arabic to address the psychological problems of the learners which develop fear in them to speak English and participate in the class activities.

Use of occasional Arabic to understand learners’ background with a view to relate teaching to their culture and thereby removing the psychological barriers and FLCA in the way of effective English language learning is quite crucial. Almost half of the target populations from both the teachers and the learners (44% agreement from the teachers and 36%+8% agreement from the students) have shown their deeper understanding in this regard. The ‘No Idea’ response of 12% from the teachers and 32% from the students perhaps are the ones waiting for the change in the institutional policy which can allow them to make use of occasional Arabic in the class to bring harmony between the teacher and the taught whereby a smooth sailing in the learning scenario can take place. Also, perhaps, the disagreeing responses of 8%+36% from the teachers and 2%+22% from the students point towards this direction. They also seem to be from the school of thought who believes that language learning is in fact a habit formation process and even occasional use
of Arabic in the class will spoil the environment and the process instead of helping the teacher understand learners’ background better and relate the teaching to their culture.

Contrastive analysis of English and Arabic is of vital importance in bilingual EFL education in Saudi Arabia. On one hand, it makes the teachers and the students aware of intra-language errors to carry on the remedial work and on the other hand it arrests the attention span of the learners and engages them in the class activities in a meaningful and purposeful way, thus reducing FLCA. A teaming majority from both the teachers (56%) and the students (48%+6%) favor the proposition. Very few students (2%+6%) disagree perhaps because of the influence of their native teachers and the institutional English-Only-in-the-Class policy. Same goes for the ‘No Idea’ response of 16% from the teachers and 38% from the students.

Imposing complete ban on the use of Arabic on the Saudi EFL learners in the class can have psychological repercussions as it may push the shy and weak ones in their isolated cocoons forever and take FLCA to uncontrollable heights. At the same time, a successful teaching/learning scenario demands a continuous check on the learners’ comprehension level to know their learning problems and to work on them thereafter. On the question of occasional use of Arabic in the class in this regard, the target populations of the teachers and the students shape up in two schools of thought: 8% of the teachers strongly disagree and 44% of them disagree vs. 32% agree and 4% strongly agree. Same is the case with the students: 6% of them strongly disagree and 28% disagree vs. 40% agree and 6% strongly agree. What is interesting to note is that the students outnumber the teachers in agreeing to the proposition which indicates the pressing demand of the students to make
planned and occasional use of Arabic in the class so that teachers really get to know their comprehension level, identify their learning problems and work on their FLCA. 12% of the teachers and 20% of the students are uncertain who perhaps are waiting for the experimental study on the issue at hand to reach a concrete decision.

**Figure 7.** Questionnaire Item-6: Use of occasional Arabic in English class helps the teacher remove psychological barriers in the comprehensible language input.

The data figure shows that the teachers and the students have difference of approach and perception on the proposition presented to them. They face the problem in the same way but want to resolve it in the different way. Learners’ FLCA can only be addressed when psychological barriers between the input and the brain and communication barriers between the teacher and the taught are removed. 40% EFL teachers and 26%+2% Saudi EFL students give “Agree” response to the proposition. It reflects their belief that they want the psychological barriers removed, input made more comprehensible and FLCA reduced by the use of occasional Arabic in the class as a tool. Almost same number of respondents from both sides opposed the proposition (4% students strongly disagreed and 28% disagreed vs. 8% teachers strongly disagreed and 32% disagreed) suggesting that they persist with too much of direct method, teacher centered approach and bombardment of continuous English language on the brains of the learners, which they do taking it as the right habit formation process on the pattern of behaviorism. The uncertain respondents from both sides (20% teachers and 40% students) invite the educational administrators and policy makers to take steps in such a direction that air of confusion can be cleared.

**Figure 8.** Questionnaire Item-7: Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less exposure to English.
Use of Arabic in English language class has its obvious disadvantage. There is always a danger that allowing it ‘a bit or occasional’ will lead to ‘a lot or excessive’ which may lead to no language learning at all. Majority of the teachers (68%+16%) and the students (44%+22%) are well aware of this risk and agree to the proposition that use of Arabic will lead to less exposure to English in the class. However, there is a strong presence of a group of teachers and students with 12% disagreeing and 2%+16% disagreeing responses respectively who think that psychological advantages of the use of L1 to address FLCA outweigh the possible side effect which can be eliminated by disciplined and reflective teaching.

**Figure 9. Questionnaire Item-8: Use of Arabic in English language class gives learners less accurate pronunciations and intonation.**

Majority of the teachers as well as students (68% vs. 58%) believe that use of Arabic in the class negatively affects the pronunciation and intonation ability of the students in the target language. The response is according to this logic that when the students are partially exposed to the target language, they get a wrong impression that pronunciation and intonation are not important at all. Consequently, they just focus on the accuracy of grammatical structure instead of pronunciation and intonation. As a matter of fact, human ears play a vital role in the production of sounds; if they are not properly trained, the accurate pronunciation and intonation may not be possible. And the only solution to this barrier is the constant use of the target language in the class so that the learners should equip themselves with language competence in all the areas including the specified ones. However, some of the teachers and students (32%+42%) have expressed their disagreement which means that their experiences or perceptions are quite different and they prefer the use of L1 in the class which is occasional and planned, thus without impacting the learning of accurate pronunciations and intonation.
The target population seems to be quite aware of the fact that culture and language are inseparable because language is a part of culture. Both the teachers’ and students’ responses (60%+56%) reflect that majority of them acknowledge the truth that the use of Arabic in the class deprives the students of understanding the true picture of the English culture. Therefore, the use of L1 is not recommendable in an EFL class. The same numbers of (28% vs. 20%+8%) teachers and the students have recorded their disagreement in response to this statement which indicates that they do not think they need to teach or learn about English culture or use of Arabic in the class becomes a barrier in this regard class. In fact, FLCA can be reduced in EFL perspective in Saudi Arabia if the learners’ culture is given due regard and recognition.

Undoubtedly, the excessive use of L1 in an EFL class makes the students linguistically handicapped who fail to understand the target language. As a result, they rely too much on their native language which becomes a barrier in the process of learning L2. Thus, trying to reduce FLCA, one may sacrifice the real language learning/teaching objectives. In response to this question, 72% teachers and 46% students have endorsed the fact that use of L1 makes the students dependent on their native language. 32% students and 16% teachers expressed their unawareness of the fact by opting for the option “No Idea”, which raises the importance of conducting further study in this area. There are sizeable number of teachers and students (20%+22%) who have expressed their disagreement which points towards the growing importance of use of occasional Arabic in the class in order to bring FLCA of the learners down.
The strategy of use of L1 to address the learners’ FLCA has it possible side effects. It may lead the learners to unwanted directions. Perhaps dependency on L1 is the worst thing in the acquisition of L2. It disrupts the cognitive process of the learner who is forced to feel more comfortable in L1 and avoids the use of target language. The target population (80%+66%) has explicitly acknowledged this fact which is a clear indication of the fact that excessive use of L1 in an EFL class eliminates the importance of L2 from the students’ minds. Therefore, the use of L1 should be used with utmost care in the class to achieve the ultimate objective i.e., the acquisition of L2 without any FLCA. 8% of the teachers and 20% of the students show their disagreement and seem to insist on the occasional use of Arabic. This category of teachers and students reject any side effect of the use of Arabic in the class.

English language learning should intend to create communication competence including psycho/sociolinguistic aspect, non-verbal part, and paralinguistic features and body language aiming at making them speak effectively and successfully in different moods and situations. Above data chart shows that majority of the EFL teachers (76%) and Saudi EFL students (66%) agree that excessive use of Arabic can prove to be counterproductive in this regard. They fear that adopting the Arabic use policy will deprive them of the colloquial/conversational skills they need when they go to the practical life or abroad for job or higher studies. Other responses like 8% ‘No idea’ from teachers, 18% ‘No Idea’ from students and 16% ‘Disagree’ responses from the teachers and
students represent the group from the target populations who want to bring Arabic in the class at all costs. This leads us to conclude that L1 use in the class is like a double edged weapon which must be handed over to the trained and skilled hands viz., the teachers who may make its best use to address FLCA without compromising real language teaching/learning. There is need to conduct experimental further studies to make this strategy useful and effective.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The present research directs the practitioners in the teaching field to follow the middle path which lies between GTM and DM to address FLCA. The research proves that L1 of the learner can be used occasionally and judiciously to speed up the language learning process in a natural way. Thus, GTM cannot be discarded altogether. However, it is recommended that its use should be selective, planned, and based on the needs of the learners. The moment it is felt that the input is no more comprehensible or interesting; the shared knowledge of L1 between the teacher and the taught may be brought in to save the students from going to the undesired directions. The caution to be taken in this regard is that the quantity of the input is to be taken care of while maintaining the quality by giving maximum input and making it meaningful and comprehensible at the same time.

Another conclusion drawn from the research in the present study is that the use of Direct Method can also prove to be counterproductive when it affects the quality of language input by bombarding English-only on the brains of weak and shy students. At time, DM strains the brains of the learners especially if the teachers remain oblivious of the psychological states of the students and are unmindful of the mounting FLCA. The brains of the learners switch off and they start dozing or getting involved in the unwanted activities such as playing with the mobiles or chatting with their friends. The teacher, on such occasions, needs to be knowledgeable of the psychological selves of the learners and make such moves which can stop the input from getting incomprehensible and uninteresting. This may include the occasional use of learners’ L1 with the sole objective of addressing FLCA.

The research also points out both the positive and negative impact of the use of L1 in English language class. Excessive use of L1 has not been liked by both the teachers and the students. Occasional use of L1 has been received as a welcome move by sizeable number of the target populations with the objective of keeping self-esteem and self image of the learners intact and bringing their FLCA down. To achieve such targets, teachers should focus on fostering a sense of accomplishment within a positive learning atmosphere. For this, some directed training is desirable, so that teachers become more professional. Once the learners gain a good self-image, their self-confidence will go high and FLCA will subside to less troublesome levels. Puchta (2010) points out the significant influence of self-belief on learning outcomes, in that a learner with supportive beliefs will have a better basis and chances for success. This indicates that a learner’s self-confidence and positive faith in his own capabilities are crucial for success in a foreign/second language classroom. It is recommended for the educational administrators and policy makers to allow the occasional, selective, planned and judicious use of learners’ L1 as a key strategy to address this issue of great concern. This research study is a step forward in this direction in the
sense that it brings this crucial issue to the surface. Further research is needed to determine the occasions and timings of the use of L1 in the class.

The present study has also opened some researchable areas on the theme of bilingual EFL education. Future researchers can categorize the use of L1 of the EFL teachers into excessive users, occasional users and no-users according to the target population of Arab teachers, non-native teachers and the native teachers and see their psychological impact on the English language learning outcomes. Such studies can use the qualitative tools of interviews and classroom observation. Likewise, the theme can be further explored by conducting experimental studies. Two groups of Saudi EFL students can be targeted: one with no use of L1 and the other with occasional use of L1. Pre-test and post test can be administered on both the groups to find out the effectiveness of the approaches applied in EFL bilingual context in Saudi Arabia.

About the Authors:
Dr. Khaled Besher Albesher is currently the Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics in Department of English at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. He is PhD in Applied Linguistics from the United Kingdom. His research interests include Applied Linguistics and ELT related issues particularly in the EFL context in Saudi Arabia. He has many publications in the reputed journals. He is the patron-in-chief of English Language Research Team [ELRT] at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5652-2161

Dr. Muhammad Sabboor Hussain is currently Head, English Language Research Team (ELRT), PYP, Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. He holds PhD Degree in Applied Linguistics. He has diversified experience (19 years) of teaching English at different levels and at various places to the adult English language learners of various nationalities. His research interests include Psycholinguistics, Applied Linguistics, and issues related to ELT (EFL and ESL). He has numerous publications in reputed journals to his credit. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2448-1043

Dr. Aisha Farid has been teaching English Language and Literature for last 18 years. Her PhD is in Applied Linguistics. She has been actively engaged in different research projects in the field of Applied Linguistics, many of them have been published and others are under process. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5273-7045

References


Saudi Students’ Perceived Self-efficacy and its Relationship to their Achievement in English Language Proficiency

Mohammad Saleem
Faculty of Languages and Communication
Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin
Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia

Muhammad Ali
Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia

Radzuwan Ab Rashid
Faculty of Languages and Communication
Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin
Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia

Abstract
In the recent years, an increasing interest in self-efficacy has been observed. However, the impact of students’ perceived self-efficacy on their academic achievements needs more attention. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the effect of self-efficacy on English language proficiency of students at Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia. This study attempts to answer the question whether there exists any relationship between Saudi students’ perceived self-efficacy and their achievement in English language learning. Self-efficacy scales were used to gather data from 230 preparatory year students from Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Fifteen out of seventy-six sections were randomly selected from the three streams, namely, Medical, Scientific and Administration. For data analysis, descriptive statistical analysis was performed using SPSS. It is significant in terms of providing insights into the psychology of the students particularly regarding their perceived self-efficacy which will be of great help to the course designers, content developers and teachers in taking measures for the inclusion of the content to improve students’ self-efficacy. The findings show that there exists a positive correlation between General and English self-efficacy and achievements in English language learning. However, there is no positive correlation between social self-efficacy and English language achievements. On the basis of the findings, the study provides some recommendations to improve students’ self-efficacy for better performance in learning English. Based on the findings of the research, further research is recommended to compare self-efficacy of the students from different Saudi universities in order to explore the reasons for different levels of their self-efficacy and English language achievements.

Key words: English self-efficacy (ESE), general self-efficacy (GSE), language learning, Saudi students, social self-efficacy (SSE)

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Introduction

English, as a foreign language, is being given a primary importance in the curriculum of Saudi schools, colleges and universities. Almost all Saudi colleges and universities have English language centres, institutes or departments. In order to prepare the students for English language, there are Preparatory Year Programmes (PYPs) where they learn English for one or two semesters. Presently, English is the medium of instruction in most of the higher education institutions. Also, the students have started recognizing the significance of English as a language of higher education, international communication and business (Rahman & Alhaisoni, 2013).

The institutions, however, face challenges and obstacles in achieving the required targets. The challenges include i) social, environmental and economic issues, ii) personal and psychological issues of motivation, and iii) aptitude and initial preparedness. Such psychological factors also include the students’ perception about their self-efficacy. Self-efficacy belief is an individual’s perception of how competent s/he is in executing certain task(s) in particular situation (Graham, 2007). It is a belief in one’s abilities in fulfilling the requirements to accomplish a goal. The theory of self-efficacy holds the view that an individual’s perception about his/ her abilities casts a powerful impact on his/ her behavior. Self-efficacy is “a belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p.3).

The relationship between self-efficacy and performance is well documented. In recent years, researchers have become increasingly interested in teachers’ and students’ self-efficacy in relation to their performance in academic setting (e.g., Hassan & Alasmari, 2015; Alrabai, 2017; Kurbanoglu et al., 2018). It has been extensively studied, however, less attention has been paid to its relationship with English language proficiency. The previous research has not been very successful in explaining the relationship between Self-efficacy: General self-efficacy (GSE), Social self-efficacy (SSE) and English self-efficacy (ESE) and students’ English language ability. Hence, in order to explore the effect of self-efficacy on English language learning, additional studies are needed. The relationship of general, social and academic self-efficacy is worth investigating in order to use it to improve the academic performance of students. This paper attempts to evaluate the effect of self-efficacy on English language proficiency of students at Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

This study attempts to answer the following questions: Is there any relationship between Saudi students’ perceived self-efficacy and their achievement in English language learning? Is there any relation between GSE and students’ language ability? Is there any relation between SSE and students’ language ability? Is there any relation between ESE and students’ language ability?

Literature Review

The concept of self-efficacy, introduced long ago by Bandura (1977), has again received the interest of the researchers in the recent times. It is being studied as a psychological construct which plays a vital role in academic achievements including a foreign language learning. Research on self-efficacy provides an evidence that self-efficacy is a good predictor of performance and/or
achievement (Eysenck, 2004; Elliot & Dick, 2005; Yip, 2017; Lee & Stankov, 2017). It is generally believed that students with high degree of self-efficacy are more likely to attain higher academic achievement. For example, Karaway et al. (2003) argue that students’ enhanced self-efficacy helps in improving their academic achievements and participation in school. On the basis of such empirical findings, Choi (2005) emphasizes that classroom environment and activities should be focused in order to enhance students’ self-concept and self-efficacy. Various researchers locate a direct proportional link between self-efficacy beliefs and performance (e.g., Motlagh, Yazdani & Souri, 2011; Lilian, 2012; Jahanian & Mahjoubi, 2013; Loo & Choy, 2013; Azar, 2013; Hassan & Alasmari, 2015). However, other researchers assert that it is self-efficacy for self-regulation which has a positive correlation with language achievement rather than self-efficacy to obtain high grades (e.g. Chemers et al., 2000; Buyukselcuk, 2006; Mills et al., 2007). It is students’ persistence which leads to academic achievement and this perseverance is positively connected with their self-efficacy.

A positive connection between high self-efficacy and academic performance has been well documented. Empirical data suggest that students with high self-efficacy employ their skills and capabilities in an effective way to overcome the obstacles and challenges in their pursuit of success (Camgoz et al., 2008). Considering self-efficacy as a psychological factor, Paul and Gore (2012) study its relationship with students’ achievements and their adjustment in college. Yusuf (2011) argues that self-efficacy coupled with achievement motivation, and learning strategies had a great impact on students’ academic achievement.

Doménech-Betoret et al. (2017) analyze the relationships among academic self-efficacy, students’ expectancy-value beliefs, teaching process satisfaction, and academic achievement. The findings show that students’ expectancy-value beliefs, including the value of the subject, process and achievement expectancy, cost expectancy, played a mediator role between academic self-efficacy and the achievement/satisfaction relationship. Moreover, Patricia (2017) studies the themes that students identified as casting a positive or negative impact on their academic self-efficacy and concludes that gender and demographic differences have their effect on self-efficacy of the students.

While students from all around the world have been studied keeping in view their self-efficacy and its impact on their academic achievements, students from Saudi Arabia have also received the attention of researchers working on self-efficacy. For instance, Razek and Coyner (2014) explore the impact of self-efficacy in Saudi students’ performance at Riverside State University, USA. Likewise, the students studying in Saudi Arabian schools, colleges and universities attracted the attention of researchers. Al-Hattab (2006) discovers a positive correlation between the global self-esteem, situational self-esteem, and task self-esteem and writing achievement of Saudi students in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah region. El-Biza (2010) also analyzes self-efficacy among Australian and Saudi Muslim girls in Islamic and public schools and concluded that a concept like ‘interculturality’ needs to be inculcated in both minority and mainstream students for better results. Al Samadani and Ibnian (2015) study the factors affecting the attitude of the students of Umm Al-Qura University towards learning English and conclude...
that the students with high GPA have positive attitude towards learning English. Humaida (2017) examines the effect of self-efficacy, positive thinking and gender difference on academic achievement in Al Jouf University students, Saudi Arabia. The findings suggested that both self-efficacy and positive thinking were significant predictors for students’ academic achievement.

Rahemi (2007) investigates senior high school humanities students’ English self-efficacy beliefs and reveals that there is a positive correlation between students’ self-efficacy and their EFL achievements. He concludes that it is important to promote positive self-efficacy to help students improve their second or foreign language. However, Rahemi’s research focuses on students’ perceived English self-efficacy as a whole. Basaran and Cabaroglu (2014) provide a more comprehensive insight into students’ perceived English self-efficacy with an emphasis on four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, both the studies only attempt to find correlation between students’ perception about their English and their performance in English. Further, the studies conducted on Saudi students mainly focus students’ general self-efficacy and its relation with their academic achievements. Though, Al-Roomy (2015) evaluates Saudi students’ beliefs about learning English, he does not explore their relationship with their English language proficiency. Alrabai (2017) examines Saudi students’ self-esteem (which is a different concept from self-efficacy) and its relationship with their achievement in English language. However, this research, like the above mentioned researches, analyses the students’ perceived English self-efficacy as a whole on one hand and find correlation between students’ language self-esteem and their performance in English on the other. Thus, instead of merely taking into view the students’ English self-efficacy and comparing it with their achievements in English, the present study attempts to consider the complex/natural design which includes students’ general, social and English self-efficacy and its role in their ability to learn English language. The study further attempts to see if there is any relationship between students general, social and English self-efficacy.

It can be predicted that a correlation exists between a student’s perceived English self-efficacy and his/her ability in English. A sufficient body of research also supports this fact. Further, various researchers prove the fact that there is positive correlation between general self-efficacy and academic achievements (McCoy et al., 2014; Kurbanoglu et al., 2018). However, it is not necessary that a student’s general self-efficacy, social self-efficacy and English self-efficacy also have the same correlation. Thus the present study attempts to probe into the nature of relationship which exists between the above mentioned self-efficacies with reference to English language proficiency.

Methodology
This study is a correlational quantitative research. There were four variables in the study: GSE, SSE and ESE on the one hand and academic achievements/results on the other. The participants of the study are the Preparatory Year (PY) students of Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, Saudi Arabia. Fifteen out of seventy-six sections were randomly selected from the three streams, viz, Medical, Scientific and Administration. The sample consisted of 230 Preparatory Year students (as shown in Table 1) who study English for one year (English for General Purposes, EGP in the
first semester and English for Specific Purposes, ESP, in the second semester) before they join their respective departments/colleges.

Table 1. Stream wise distribution of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Groups per Stream</th>
<th>Students per Stream</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scientific</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three self-efficacy scales were used to explore the role of General, Social and English self-efficacy in Saudi students’ academic achievements. The scales used in the present study were GSE, SSE and ESE Scale. They were based on the scales developed by Sherer et al. (1982) and Basaran and Cabaroglu (2014). The first and the second scales were used to assess the students’ general and social self-efficacy and the third scale evaluates their perception of how competent they were in English. General Self-efficacy scale comprises 17 Items, Social Self-efficacy scale 6 Items and English Self-efficacy scale 20 Items. A non-random convenience sample of 230 students was given the Self efficacy scales. The English examination results summarized the students’ actual ability in English language including listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The participants filled out the questionnaires (i.e. GSES, ESES & ESES). In order to find out the relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance, the scores of the examination results were taken and compared with the results of the questionnaire. For data analysis, descriptive statistical analysis was performed using SPSS. It includes frequencies, means, and standard deviations. In the present study, self-efficacy was an independent variable whereas, academic performance was a dependent variable.

Results and Discussion
The present section presents the findings followed by discussion and interpretation. The results are divided into three parts: GSE of Medical Stream (MS), Scientific Stream (SS) and Administrative Stream (AS), SSE of MS, SS and AS, and ESE of MS, SS and AS.

The mean scores of General Self-efficacy (GSE) of all the streams, Medical, Scientific and Administrative, are 3.66, 3.63 and 3.60 respectively (see Appendix 1). So far as MS is concerned, the mean score is 3.66 which indicates medium GSE. The item with the highest mean, (4.12) is *If I can’t do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can*. It shows that the students are consistent in their GSE. However, the overall GSE of MS is medium. GSE of SS has been found 3.63 which also shows medium GSE of SS. The item, *I am a self-reliant person*, with mean 4.34 is the highest. GSE of AS is also medium with mean 3.60. The high mean of item *If I can’t do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can* (4.20) indicates the high GSE of AS. GSE of MS is highest as compared
to SS and AS. However, the difference among the streams is not quite significant. As far as their results in English exams are concerned, the data shows that students of MS are high achievers (M=93.99) whereas SS and AS are with 81.75 and 73.51 mean scores. Thus there is a positive correlation between GSE and English language achievements of the students of all streams.

The mean scores of SSE of MS, SS and AS are 3.32, 3.39 and 3.35 respectively (see Appendix 1 for more detail). SSE of all the streams is medium. The lowest mean of item, *When I’m trying to become friends with someone who seems uninterested at first, I don’t give up easily.* (MS=2.72, SS=2.85 & AS=2.95) show low efficacy. However, it is interesting to note that SSE of MS appears to be the lowest among all the streams (M=3.32). The students of SS are with highest mean score (M=3.39). While SSE of MS is the lowest, it also indicates that students of MS are less social and they devote more time to their studies. This fact also reflects in their exam result which is the highest among all the streams. However, it is evident from the highest mean of item, *I have acquired my friends through my personal abilities at making friends,* that the students of all the streams believe in their abilities regarding social self-efficacy. The findings show that there is no correlation between SSE and the students’ results in English examination.

ESE mean score of MS is the highest (M=3.83) among all the streams (see Appendix 1). AS is found at the bottom with mean 3.18. The ESE scale provides an insight into students’ perceptions about their self-efficacy in listening, speaking reading and writing as it focuses on individual language skills. The findings suggest that students’ perceived SE about their writing skill is the lowest (i.e., MS=3.30, SS=3.13 & AS=2.80) among all the language skills. AS shows the lowest ESE in writing among all the streams. As the figure demonstrates that all the streams show high self-efficacy regarding speaking skill.

![Figure 1 English Language Skills](image)

MS stands at the top with mean score 4.53 which is in harmony with high achievement in English examination (M=93.99). The mean of ESE of SS is 3.59 and its English examination achievement mean is 81.75. AS shows the lowest ESE (3.18) and marks in English examination (73.51).
ESE shows a strongly positive correlation with the students’ achievements in English language proficiency as demonstrated in the figure 2.

Conclusion
The paper attempts to explore the correlation between Saudi students’ perception of their General, Social and English Self-efficacy. The results demonstrate that there is a strongly positive correlation between General and English Self-efficacies and the students’ achievements in English language learning. So there is a need to focus GSE and ESE in order to help students improve their performance in English language learning. As the students’ GSE is lower than ESE, some measures are required to improve their GSE. There is a need to engage the students in such activities and tasks so that their GSE can be enhanced. However, so far as Social Self-efficacy is concerned, it has a negative correlation with students’ achievements in English language proficiency. MS shows low mean of SSE which is in opposition to their marks in English examination. The findings in this regard suggest that the there is need to strike a balance between academic and social life as both of them are essential for a balanced and successful life. The findings clearly demonstrate (as shown in Figure 1) that the students’ perceived self-efficacy is the lowest in writing skill. It indicates that more significance should be given to the activities which can help them improve the perception about their self-efficacy regarding writing skill.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future research
Keeping in view the limited scope of the study, it was confined to quantitative methods of data collection and analysis. Only questionnaires were used to collect data. Further, the paper is limited to male students only. Future researchers can use other quantitative and qualitative tools for data collection and analysis. Further, the participants may include both male and female students from other universities of Saudi Arabia so that the results can well be generalized. There is also need to compare self-efficacy of the students from different Saudi universities in order to explore the reasons behind different levels of their self-efficacy and English language achievements.
References


**APPENDICES**

### Appendix 1

**Descriptive Statistics (GSES) Medical Stream**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of my problems is that I cannot get down to work when I should.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I can’t do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I set important goals for myself, I rarely achieve them.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give up on things before completing them.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I avoid facing difficulties.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>.865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If something looks too complicated, I will not even bother to try it.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I have something unpleasant to do, I stick to it until I finish it.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I decide to do something, I go right to work on it.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When trying to learn something new, I soon give up if I am not initially successful.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>1.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When unexpected problems occur, I don’t handle them well.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I avoid trying to learn new things when they look too difficult for me.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure just makes me try harder.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel insecure about my ability to do things.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a self-reliant person.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>1.241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give up easily.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>1.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not seem capable of dealing with most problems that come up in life.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.946</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RESULT</strong></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>5.928</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Descriptive Statistics (GSES) Scientific Stream**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work.</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.770</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of my problems is that I cannot get down to work when I should. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.34 & 1.228 \\
If I can’t do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.98 & .971 \\
When I set important goals for myself, I rarely achieve them. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.50 & 1.259 \\
I give up on things before completing them. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.38 & 1.168 \\
I avoid facing difficulties. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.25 & 1.225 \\
If something looks too complicated, I will not even bother to try it. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.26 & 1.109 \\
When I have something unpleasant to do, I stick to it until I finish it. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.66 & 1.183 \\
When I decide to do something, I go right to work on it. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.40 & 1.160 \\
When trying to learn something new, I soon give up if I am not initially successful. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.70 & 1.041 \\
When unexpected problems occur, I don’t handle them well. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.19 & 1.060 \\
I avoid trying to learn new things when they look too difficult for me. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.23 & 1.162 \\
Failure just makes me try harder. & 88 & 2 & 5 & 4.02 & .947 \\
I feel insecure about my ability to do things. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.93 & 1.143 \\
I am a self-reliant person. & 88 & 2 & 5 & 4.34 & .869 \\nI give up easily. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.99 & 1.077 \\
I do not seem capable of dealing with most problems that come up in life. & 88 & 1 & 5 & 3.52 & 1.203 \\
RESULT & 88 & 28 & 100 & 81.7 & 15.428 \\

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Statistics (GSES) Administrative Stream</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>.862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of my problems is that I cannot get down to work when I should.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I can’t do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I set important goals for myself, I rarely achieve them.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give up on things before completing them.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>1.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I avoid facing difficulties.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If something looks too complicated, I will not even bother to try it.</td>
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<td>When I have something unpleasant to do, I stick to it until I finish it.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.123</td>
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<tr>
<td>When I decide to do something, I go right to work on it.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When trying to learn something new, I soon give up if I am not initially successful.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.124</td>
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<tr>
<td>When unexpected problems occur, I don’t handle them well.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I avoid trying to learn new things when they look too difficult for me.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure just makes me try harder.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.060</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel insecure about my ability to do things.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>.912</td>
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<tr>
<td>I am a self-reliant person.</td>
<td>66</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.296</td>
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<tr>
<td>I give up easily.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>.986</td>
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<td>I do not seem capable of dealing with most problems that come up in life.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.081</td>
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### Descriptive Statistics (SSES) Medical Stream

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult for me to make new friends</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I see someone I would like to meet, I go to that person instead of waiting for him or her to come to me</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I meet someone interesting who is hard to make friends with, I’ll soon stop trying to make friends with that person</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I’m trying to become friends with someone who seems uninterested at first, I don’t give up easily.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not handle myself well in social gathering.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have acquired my friends through my personal abilities at making friends.</td>
<td>72</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>1.039</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>RESULT</strong></td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>100</td>
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### Descriptive Statistics (SSES) Scientific Stream

<table>
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<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult for me to make new friends</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1.293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I see someone I would like to meet, I go to that person instead of waiting for him or her to come to me</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>1.050</td>
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<tr>
<td>If I meet someone interesting who is hard to make friends with, I’ll soon stop trying to make friends with that person</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I’m trying to become friends with someone who seems uninterested at first, I don’t give up easily.</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.369</td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not handle myself well in social gathering.</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>I have acquired my friends through my personal abilities at making friends.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3.69</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>82.58 16.774</td>
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### Valid N (listwise)

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<th>stream</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scientific</td>
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### Descriptive Statistics (ESES) Medical Stream

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<tr>
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<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is difficult for me to make new friends</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I see someone I would like to meet, I go to that person instead of waiting for him or her to come to me</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I meet someone interesting who is hard to make friends with, I’ll soon stop trying to make friends with that person</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.279</td>
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<tr>
<td>When I’m trying to become friends with someone who seems uninterested at first, I don’t give up easily.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not handle myself well in social gathering.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have acquired my friends through my personal abilities at making friends.</td>
<td>66</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.228</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Valid N (listwise)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If an American or British person speaks to me, I can understand him/her easily.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the teacher speaks English in the class, I can understand him/her easily.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can understand English movies and TV series easily.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe I will be successful in listening sections of English Exams.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that someday I will speak English very well.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that one day I will be able to speak English with American or British accent</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I want to say something in the class, I can say it in English.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can talk to a foreigner and introduce myself</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can read and understand advanced level stories.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can read and understand unabridged English texts and newspaper columns.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can read and understand simple English dialogues</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe I will be successful in reading sections of English Exams.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very confident about writing in English; I can write long and detailed passages</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can do written chat with foreigners.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the teacher says a sentence in English, I can write it correctly.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can rewrite an English text using my own expressions.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have got a special ability for learning English.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am sure I can solve any problems I face in learning English.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m sure that I can improve my English by trying more.</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I do not do well in this lesson, it is only because I do not exert enough effort</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULT

Descriptive Statistics (ESES) Scientific Stream

If an American or British person speaks to me, I can understand him/her easily. | 88 | 1    | 5    | 3.58 | .956           |
When the teacher speaks English in the class, I can understand him/her easily. | 88 | 1    | 5    | 3.74 | 1.067          |
I can understand English movies and TV series easily.                          | 88 | 1    | 5    | 3.58 | 1.058          |
I believe I will be successful in listening sections of English Exams.        | 88 | 1    | 5    | 4.09 | 1.100          |
I think that someday I will speak English very well.                           | 88 | 1    | 5    | 3.67 | 1.238          |
I believe that one day I will be able to speak English with American or British accent | 88 | 1    | 5    | 4.08 | .997           |
If I want to say something in the class, I can say it in English.             | 88 | 1    | 5    | 3.40 | 1.180          |
I can talk to a foreigner and introduce myself                                | 88 | 1    | 5    | 3.90 | 1.051          |
I can read and understand advanced level stories.                             | 88 | 1    | 5    | 3.00 | 1.135          |
I can read and understand unabridged English texts and newspaper columns.    | 88 | 1    | 5    | 3.14 | 1.008          |
I can read and understand simple English dialogues                            | 88 | 1    | 5    | 4.14 | .873           |
I believe I will be successful in reading sections of English Exams.         | 88 | 1    | 5    | 3.90 | 1.051          |
I am very confident about writing in English; I can write long and detailed passages | 88 | 1    | 5    | 2.81 | 1.245          |
I can do written chat with foreigners.                                        | 88 | 1    | 5    | 3.18 | 1.189          |
If the teacher says a sentence in English, I can write it correctly.          | 88 | 1    | 5    | 3.38 | .986           |
I can rewrite an English text using my own expressions. 88 1 5 3.15 1.023
I have got a special ability for learning English. 88 1 5 3.53 .934
I am sure I can solve any problems I face in learning English. 88 1 5 3.68 1.001
I’m sure that I can improve my English by trying more. 88 1 5 3.72 1.295
If I do not do well in this lesson, it is only because I do not exert enough effort. 88 1 5 3.92 1.116

RESULT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If an American or British person speaks to me, I can understand him/her easily.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the teacher speaks English in the class, I can understand him/her easily.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can understand English movies and TV series easily.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe I will be successful in listening sections of English Exams.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think that someday I will speak English very well.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that one day I will be able to speak English with American or British accent</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I want to say something in the class, I can say it in English.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can talk to a foreigner and introduce myself</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can read and understand advanced level stories.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can read and understand unabridged English texts and newspaper columns.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can read and understand simple English dialogues</td>
<td>66</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.618</td>
</tr>
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<td>I believe I will be successful in reading sections of English Exams.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very confident about writing in English; I can write long and detailed passages.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can do written chat with foreigners.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.219</td>
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<tr>
<td>If the teacher says a sentence in English, I can write it correctly.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can rewrite an English text using my own expressions.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>1.291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have got a special ability for learning English.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.433</td>
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<td>I am sure I can solve any problems I face in learning English.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.423</td>
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<td>I’m sure that I can improve my English by trying more.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I do not do well in this lesson, it is only because I do not exert enough effort.</td>
<td>66</td>
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RESULT

Appendix 2

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<th>اسم</th>
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اقرأ الجمل التالية بعناية ثم قم باختيار رقم الاجابة التي تمثل رأيك

Arab World English Journal
www.awej.org
ISSN: 2229-9327
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>شفرة مناقشة</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<td>1. عندما أضع خططًا، أكون على ثقة من قدرتي على القيام بها.</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>2. أحد مشاكلني أنني لا أستطيع الانخراط بالعمل عندما ينبغي علي ذلك.</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>3. إذا لم أستطيع القيام بالعمل منذ المرة الأولى، فإني أستمر بالمحاولة حتى أستطيع ذلك.</td>
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<td>4. عندما أجد أهداف مهمة ليكون فيها، فإنني لا أصدق ما أحققها.</td>
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<td>5. أيض من الأعمال قبل اكتمالها.</td>
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<td>6. اجنب مواجهة الصعوبات.</td>
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<td>7. إذا كان شيء ما يبدو معقدا جداً، فإنني لا أزعج نفسى حتى المحاولة.</td>
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<td>8. عندما تبتغي على القيام بعمل Again إعادة، فإنني أنزله به حتى أكمله.</td>
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<td>9. عندما أقرر القيام بعمل ما، فإنني ابدا بالفعل.</td>
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<td>10. عندما أحاول تعلم شيء جديد، فإنني استسلم سريعا إذا لم تكن البداية ناجحة.</td>
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<td>13. الفضيل يجعلني أحاول جهد أكبر.</td>
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<td>17. يبدو أنني لا أستطيع التعامل مع أغلب المشاكل التي تحدث في حياتي.</td>
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<td>أنا متأكد من قدرتي على إيجاد حل لأي مشكلة تواجهني في مجال تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.</td>
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<td>أنا متأكد باني قادر على تحسين لغتي الإنجليزية عن طريق تكرار المحاولة.</td>
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<td>عندما يكون أدائي في درس اللغة سيئا فإن السبب في الغالب هو عدم بذلي ما يكفي من الإجتهاد و المحاولة.</td>
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Enhancing Mentoring Quality: The Tri-spheric Ecological Approach to Mentor Selection (TEAMS)

Rachid Moussaid
Faculty of Education, Mohammed V University
Rabat, Morocco

Badia Zerhouni
Faculty of Education, Mohammed V University
Rabat, Morocco

Abstract
The central role of mentoring in developing and preparing prospective teachers during the clinical experience has been consistently documented in the literature. Screening candidates and selecting the fittest to serve as mentors is an essential process to the successful provision of the necessary professional and personal assistance to the new entrants to the profession. Based on this premise, the present conceptual paper aims to provide a new perspective to the selection process of mentor teachers to support pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the Moroccan context. At the current time, the only formal requirements for becoming a mentor are based on a simple expression of interest and a consideration of the academic qualifications the candidate has. This method of selection proved to be problematic in light of new empirical evidence that showed its inherent limitedness and how it created unnecessary difficulties for trainee teachers during practice teaching. The Tri-spheric Ecological Approach to Mentor Selection (TEAMS) framework this paper tries to put forward adds more layers to the screening process of mentor teachers and places it in a wider context with more important factors and players to consider. This approach is then hoped to enhance the quality of mentoring during the practicum and circumvent numerous reported problems that pre-service teachers, unnecessarily, have to endure under the current mentor selection process.

Keywords: collaboration, mentoring, mentoring quality, mentor selection, pre-service training

1. Introduction
An overview of the related literature shows that programs of teacher education differ widely in terms of structure, length, content and even goals. While there are great variations in the ways in which they operate, they all aim at developing teachers who are knowledgeable and well trained to promote student learning and lever up the effectiveness and quality of teaching in schools. The role of school-based mentoring, a common thread that weaves through all the models, is at the heart of the teacher preparation process and of considerable importance to facilitate the transition of teacher trainees into the professional world. The literature indicates that mentoring is crucial in helping trainee teachers balance theory and practice and see the relevance of the connection (Zeichner, 2010).

2. Models of Teacher Preparation Programs
In countries like England, USA, and Australia, for instance, managing mentoring teachers is based on a whole-school commitment in close partnership with a university or a higher education institute (HEI) that usually runs the teacher training program. The HEI takes care of theory grounding about teaching while the partner school is in charge of providing relevant and effective classroom teaching practice. In Morocco, quite a different approach, the university has nothing to do with pre-service teacher training, except that in the case of an undergraduate professional Bachelor of Arts (BA) in education a short-term field placement is organized towards the end of the three-year course of studies - which does not guarantee direct recruitment in the public school. BA holders who want to become teachers join one of the Regional Centers of Education Careers and Training (CRMEFs), higher education institutes in principle but have nothing to do with the university in that they are created and completely managed by the ministry of education to serve as the only route to becoming a teacher at any school level up to high school. In contrast to the higher education-centered teacher training where trainees spend from three to four years of study, pre-service teachers at the CRMEF spend only one year of which 60 % is devoted to the practicum.

The following figure 1 shows roughly the different school-based parties that collaborate to manage the mentoring of teacher trainees during their practice teaching in an HEI-led program.

![Figure 1](image-url)
As it shows, before a mentor sets to work, there is a hierarchical chain of events that have to precede. First, the HEI co-signs a contractual arrangement with the head of a partner school to provide mentoring service and practical experience to its trainees. Second, the school senior management usually names a senior member of the school staff to serve as a ‘professional mentor’ to coordinate and supervise the whole school’s mentoring and staff development in collaboration with the ‘professional tutor’ designated by the HEI to oversee the fieldwork of trainees in the school. The professional mentor, on the other hand, forms and leads a team of qualified ‘subject mentors’ representative of the different departments expected to host HEI trainees. This core mentoring team or ‘Mentor Core Team’ (Blank & Kershaw, 2009) serves as a communication and collaboration platform a) to keep the team members up-to-date to ensure uniformity, b) to be responsible for the quality assurance of the in-school mentoring practices and c) to design, coordinate, and implement professional development training workshops for the school staff.

In this respect, Glover and Mardle (1996) point out that the accredited partner schools approach their contractual agreement with the university to provide mentoring support to pre-service teachers at three levels of involvement, namely that 1) the school principal is fully responsible for the daily implementation of the HEI-school agreement, or 2) the school principal determines the policy and the professional mentor follows through with it, or 3) the professional mentor assumes total responsibility of the program when it goes into effect.

It is worth noting that various researchers use varied terminology to name the key people who contribute to the setup and implementation of a school-level mentoring program. For instance, the university professional tutor is referred to as a ‘university teacher’ (Arbon, 1994), a ‘link tutor’ (Tomlinson, 2001), a ‘college tutor’ (Corbett & Wright, 1994) and a ‘placement coordinator’ (Schwille, Nagel & DeBolt, 2000). The professional mentor is referred to as a ‘school coordinator’, an ‘Initial Teacher Training coordinator’ (Tomlinson, 2001), a ‘mentor’s mentor’, a ‘program coordinator’ (Jonson, 2008), a ‘senior mentor’ (Furlong et al., 1997) or as a ‘lead mentor’ (Blank & Kershaw, 2009). The subject teacher takes on different labels such as a ‘clinical teacher’ (Zimpher & Rieger, 1988), ‘teacher tutor’ (Tomlinson, 2001), ‘colleague teacher’ (Arbon, 1994) and ‘class teacher’ (Corbett & Wright, 1993). Though the nomenclature varies considerably in the literature, it can be argued that this difference in designations is only formal in the sense that they perform, more or less, the same core functions of their positions in the team regardless of the nature of the teacher education program in which they are engaged.

Against this backdrop, the school-based mentoring practice of pre-service teachers in Morocco seems ‘simplistically straightforward’. As figure 2 displays, a candidate teacher is selected to work as a mentor via the formal administrative channel: 1) the CRMEF sends out a formal advertisement to schools via the provincial directorate to announce the need for mentor teachers, 2) interested candidates send their applications back (through the same channel) detailing their academic qualifications to the respective CRMEF department, and 3) finally departmental trainers select the suitable teachers to host and mentor CRMEF trainee teachers. Supervisors are sometimes called in to help select prospective mentors.
Figure 2  Current Moroccan Practice of Mentor-CRMEF Collaboration

The partner school administration then receives a notification from the provincial directorate that one or more of its teachers are going to serve as mentors and that trainees will be present with them during practicum periods. Afterwards, the mentor becomes the only partner school member to directly communicate and collaborate with the CRMEF subject trainers. The current model of mentor-CRMEF mentoring collaboration rules out a huge number of key features that can take pre-service mentoring to a whole new quality level. As will be discussed in the proposed TEAMS model, only when an effective CRMEF coordination with not only the partner school and the provincial directorate but also with the regional academy can offer new possibilities to elevate the status of mentor teachers, optimize their mentoring practice and rid the trainees’ practical experience of several important issues.

3. School and Mentor Selection criteria

3.1 Selection of Partner Schools

When HEIs and schools of education that provide initial teacher preparation programs are accredited by the department of education in advisory consultation with other agencies like, for instance, the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) in UK or The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in the USA, they need in turn to select and form partnerships with schools to plan and manage quality mentoring for their teacher trainees during practice teaching. The main expected contribution of schools is to provide practical experience and access to the knowledge and expertise of their experienced practitioners through a combination of classroom observation, individual and collaborative teaching, planned reflection and feedback and seminars and workshops dealing with specific aspects of teaching and other professional concerns (Brooks & Sikes, 1997).

There are various reasons for a school’s participation in an HEI’s teacher preparation program. While material remuneration - the payment of a per capita fee for each trainee mentored (Corbett & Wright, 1994), is one main motive to engage in initial teacher training programs, it is argued that participation also brings to the school a host of non-monetary benefits ranging from:
maintaining a strong relationship with an HEI and capitalizing on that in case of need of help with curriculum development, enhancing the school’s reputation as involvement is believed to be a reflection of perceived quality, and bringing new ideas and opportunities for school improvement through HEI-offered staff development training (Brooks & Sikes, 1997; Glover & Mardle, 1996). The selected partner schools are usually accredited mostly based on criteria like proximity to the trainee’s place of residence for economic and domestic considerations, the suitability of the management style to the practicum course objectives (Corbett & Wright, 1994) and a track record of the school’s performance in terms of the quality of teaching, learning and staff professional development (Brooks & Sikes, 1997).

3.2 Selection of Mentor Teachers
Part of the contractual arrangement the partner school needs to make is the selection of the cooperating teachers who will serve as school-based mentors. Based on the literature, mentor teachers are usually designated by either the school senior management, the professional mentor, departmental colleagues, or through a coordination of two or more of the previous parties with the HEI professional tutor (Blank & Kershaw, 2009; Futrell, 1988; Gordan & Maxey, 2000; Mwanza, Moyo & Maphosa, 2015). The strategies for selecting mentors differ from one partner school to another. They, however, seem to range from a personal invitation to a class teacher who possesses the necessary abilities (Brooks & Sikes, 1997), through formal self-nomination based on an internal advertisement of the position and application (Blank & Kershaw, 2009; Schwille et al., 2000) to simply having the role added to a teacher’s role or tied to a professional ladder (Mullinix, 2002).

The literature is replete with a host of perspectives with regard to what requirements eligible teachers need to meet to be considered for the mentoring role. In fact, different teacher training programs identify different mentor selection criteria based on their vision of mentoring and practicum goals. Yet, there is a great overlap among the lists of selection criteria reviewed in the literature with little to no difference sometimes. Towards the top of the list, effective mentors are reported to have a genuine interest and willingness to make the necessary time commitment to carry out the entailed mentoring responsibilities and continuously develop their support skills and practice; a commitment to provide both professional and empathetic support to trainee teachers and being sensitive to their needs; a reputational record of successful classroom teaching and management; and finally a teaching experience of no less than three years (Clarke 2001; Schwille et al., 2000). It was found that having and/or being well informed about the mentoring experience is a prerequisite criterion for eligibility to serve as a mentor teacher (Glover & Mardle, 1996). Successful mentors are also believed to possess strong communicative skills and are good listeners along with having the desirable personality traits (e.g. caring; humor; wisdom; nurturing) and the ability to work with and help adult learners to self-assess and develop action plans (Brooks & Sikes, 1997; Corbett & Wright, 1994). Effective mentors are additionally expected to have the ability and readiness to be reflective and critical of their own teaching practices and to share that with their mentees (Zimpher & Rieger, 1988). Along the same line of thought, good mentors refrain from being judgmental of their trainees’ approach to teaching and are open-minded with the view that their way of instruction is not the only one nor the most effective (Jonson, 2008).
Finally, prospective mentors are sometimes recruited on the basis of their academic qualifications (Gordan & Maxey, 2000) - a rare occurrence in most lists of selection criteria reviewed.

In contrast, selecting would-be mentors from a pool of eligible candidates under the new model of teacher training in Morocco seems to hinge on two principal conditions, namely an interest to volunteer and assume the role translated into submitting a formal application form and a consideration of the number of academic diplomas and certificates the candidates have. At the current time, there is a need for a new selection approach that extends the ‘stripped-down’ list to incorporate more important criteria covering not only the various personal, interpersonal and professional skills, but also the school location, the classroom where trainees practice teaching and the support teaching materials available.

While the positive impact of mentoring on trainee teachers’ personal and professional development has been extensively documented, several other studies have reported as well the positive effects of mentoring on mentor teachers themselves along with the various benefits they reap out of their service in the capacity. For instance, Gordan and Maxey (2000) and Huling and Resta (2001) have reported that teachers who served as mentors improved their professional knowledge and refined their teaching styles; they grew more self-reflective on their teaching practice; they developed their communication skills and formed new friendships through collaboration and collegiality; and finally their self-confidence and self-esteem increased noticeably as a function of feeling special, professional and publically recognized. For the benefits mentors derive from mentoring are both financial and non-financial. Financially, in most mentoring programs mentors get monetary compensation in return for their service in the form of a stipend paid by the partner school from the money allocated to it by the HEI (Schwille et al., 2000). Mentors also accrue other non-financial benefits such as public formal recognition for their contribution (Mullinix, 2002), increased status and respect (Arbon, 1994), release time, partial discharge from classroom responsibilities to further support their mentees at work (Jonson, 2008) and a substitute teacher cover (Hurling & Resta, 2001). Other reported benefits included earning a college training credit for personal and professional development (Glover & Mardle, 1996), getting more involvement in decision-making, and an increased possibility to be recruited into administrative positions (Zimpher & Rieger, 1988).

Along the same line of thought, based on my experiences as an EFL teacher mentor first for two years and later as a teacher trainer at the CRMEF over a period of four years so far, we have held regular meetings with the different mentors that co-operate with the English department to coordinate and discuss various practicum issues. I can state with confidence that despite the fact that EFL mentor teachers in Morocco assume the implementation of 60 % of the year-long CRMEF teacher training program, they are, regrettably, very much less recompensed for their immense contribution. They get no release time - much-asked-for - to provide appropriate feedback to their mentees, no mentor training to carry out their roles effectively, no school support, etc. All they get are a meager stipend paid always late and an end-of-the-year insufficient recognition for service at the graduation ceremony attended mostly by trainees, trainers and mentors. It is high time that not only a new mentor selection approach was adopted to recruit only the most suitable co-
operating teachers to help with the pre-service practicum component but also a generously fairer system had to be in place to encourage and reward the efforts of mentors.

4. The TEAMS Framework

4.1 Nomenclature and Background

As mentioned earlier, this paper intends to present a new perspective to the current selection process of mentor teachers as the latter has showed its limitedness to set up adequate conditions to optimize the professional placement component for trainee teachers. The assumption is that the present process may be effective to carefully choose ‘academically qualified’ teachers to serve as mentors but experience has equally taught us that half-way through any training year, we, trainers, were faced with frequent contextual problems on multiple occasions that marred trainees’ practicum experience and that, ironically, had little to do with the mentor’s quality profile. It was found that the type of problems that mostly cropped up, for example, related to the distant location of the school, the absence of support materials, the kind of students taught, and the classroom setup nature (Moussaid & Zerhouni, 2017).

It is worth noting that the proposed selection framework draws essentially on research insights from the literature reviewed, the experiences of mentoring in other countries and the context of pre-service teacher training in Morocco. It is based primarily on the existing practice of choosing school-based mentors but re-thought to enhance the quality of mentoring support for trainee teachers in light of recent research data on the most frequent problems of pre-service EFL teachers during the practicum.

![Figure 3](image-url)  
*Figure 3*  The Tri-spheric Ecological Approach to Mentor Selection (TEAMS) Framework
As Figure 3 displays, the framework’s acronym (TEAMS) is not haphazard nor accidental but a well thought-out name to highlight the fact that more than one party has to be involved to form the team that should coordinate, contribute to, and assure the successful implementation of the pre-service practicum component. The term ‘ecological’ is used here to stress the important effect of the school and classroom environment on trainees’ practical experience. As illustrated, the framework is designed in three interactive spheres (regional academy, partner school, and the classroom) to rule out the hierarchical nature that characterizes the current practice of selecting mentors (CRMEF through the provincial directorate to the mentor). It also sports two wedges (CRMEF and directorate) that cut through the three spheres toward the core, namely the mentor who is the target of all the concerted efforts. The CRMEF along with the regional academy, the provincial directorate, and the partner school are conceived to work as a team (either bilaterally or multilaterally at times) to recruit the right school mentors and prepare the optimal conditions for the practicum experience.

**TEAMS Implementation**

*4.1.1 Current Issues*

The current pre-service practicum implementation has been found fraught with several problems relative to the partner school, the mentor’s classroom where trainees practice teaching, and the mentors themselves (Moussaid & Zerhouni, 2017). It has also been found that a fair number of these problems stemmed principally from factors that were not considered during the selection process of mentor teachers. Hence, practicum issues will be presented first based on our research data (1511 post-lesson written reflections, 337 end-of-each-practicum reports, and 1624 mentor feedback comments) collected from a cohort of 60 EFL pre-service teachers and 12 mentors and then a discussion follows of the roles of the regional academy, the partner school, the CRMEF and the provincial directorate (wedges) and how they could interconnect and collectively contribute to the solution of several reported practicum problems.

Based on our research findings, trainees reported that the remote location of three partner schools from their places of residence triggered psychological and financial concerns. Some trainees had to spend a three-hour stressful commute on busses and taxis back and forth, which affected their teaching preparation and performance. A trainee typically described this issue as follows:

The main problems I and my colleagues faced in this TP [Teaching Practice] were transportation and the remoteness of the high school which was situated at around 10 minutes after getting off the taxi. I take two busses and I spend at least one hour and a half in order to reach the school. We had to wait for long time for the taxi to depart; otherwise, we sometimes had to pay the other places so as to reach the school on time. This affected the preparation time of the lesson of the upcoming day as we always arrived home late. It was hard for me to manage as I got definitely exhausted.

Apart from the time wasted on trips to their assigned practice schools, the economic expense of commuting was a heavy burden for the majority, if not all, given the meager scholarship they often
get delayed. In the event of insufficient funds, trainees’ performance inside the classroom is therefore affected. The following is a typical reflection that portrays how lack of enough financial support can considerably affect trainees’ well-being and performance during the practicum. A trainee wrote that:

Today’s class was the worst one ever! I relied on technology because I didn’t have money to make photocopies for students. Actually, I wasn’t in my mood while I was teaching. How can you teach while you’re thinking about how to get back home because you’re broke? The delay of our scholarship is really affecting my performance in this TP [teaching practice]. I wish they would give it to us as soon as possible so I can work hard and find money for the material I’m going to use.

In fact, putting trainees in such a pathetic situation is unacceptable and, regardless of the main reasons leading to the chronic delay of the scholarship, this practice does not serve the greater purpose of the new reform in teacher education.

Classroom-wise, the number one complaint was about the non-availability of a data projector at the school, which militated against their efforts to integrate ICT materials in their teaching. They also complained about the lack of loudspeakers, classroom tables, color chalk, an eraser, an in-school printing facility and the absence of electricity power outlet for the data projector in some of the classrooms where they worked. They even talked about how ‘dirty’ and ‘dusty’ some classrooms and blackboards were. On the lack of the video projector and electricity a trainee wrote regrettably that:

Another problem that exists in most Moroccan high schools is the absence of all kinds of ICT tools, including CD player and data projector. Hopefully this school, as opposed to [name of school], has electric plugs. ICT would have saved me both time and effort if it were available. For example, I would not need to use the blackboard which takes time - besides I wouldn’t be obliged to xerox one copy for each student in a class of forty pupils. In fact, not having access to the data projector made life difficult for me.

The dire need for a data projector around also shows the financial concerns of trainees on practicum in that this trainee would not have been obliged to make copies for students - whose cost eats away from the already limited scholarship. Besides the classroom’s poor equipment, trainees reported what may be termed as the ‘syndrome’ of classroom instability, an issue created by the school’s ill management of the classrooms distribution. While the norm is typically a classroom shared by at least two teachers who work in alternation (morning and afternoon), it is not uncommon in some schools that this alternation is somehow broken and the teacher works as a traveler form one classroom to another with each class period. As a result, time is wasted as the teacher changes rooms and has to begin all over again. One typically inclusive reflection about this and other classroom-related issues was provided by a trainee through the following statement:
As for the difficulties we faced in this TP, they are of two types: high school and students noise. I had to deal with overcrowded classes in classrooms which sometimes lacked the bare necessities of teaching like boards, tables, electricity sockets and eraser. The classrooms were dirty and dusty. We taught in laboratories on Wednesdays and Fridays. Actually, we taught in four classrooms, and sometimes we had to change the classroom for each class. As in the previous TP, the lack of data projector and above all the lack of electricity forced us to do away with ICT.

This classroom instability even worsened with having trainees teach in science laboratories that usually lacked enough seats for students, who had to make noisy trips to nearby classrooms in search for spare chairs. Teaching in science labs was always associated with the issues of class control and coverage. While overcrowdedness is generally a widespread phenomenon, trainees reported unanimously that some specific schools were far more notorious for overcrowdedness and for their students’ misbehavior, unpunctuality, and failure to bring their textbooks regularly than the rest. These findings suggest that when the mentor’s classroom is under-equipped and/or unstable, trainees’ practice teaching is seriously affected even when the mentor is doing a good job.

The findings of the study also showed that mentor teachers did a great job with their teams of trainees and the latter’s reflective accounts are overly replete with highly positive feedback about the support and efforts mentors provided them with during the entire practicum. The findings revealed, however, that there were several cases of dissatisfaction with few mentors on a variety of issues, namely a) limited or absence of model teaching, b) overly negative, limited, judgmental, or only oral/written feedback, c) occasional absenteeism, d) lack of full collaboration and lesson planning with the mentor, and finally e) mentors’ differential treatment of trainees. It is significant to mention that the mentors involved in the study did not get any training on mentoring. They all seemed to enact the role according to their personal convictions and past experiences. Many of the reported problems could have been forestalled had the mentors been well selected or, at least, got some training on how to carry out their job effectively.

4.1.2 The New Perspective
It is true that a given mentor may be fairly qualified for the job but a non-optimal classroom environment for practice teaching can have a negative influence on the trainees’ perception of, and attitude towards the teaching profession. Some might argue that trainees have to adapt themselves to the conditions of the schools they do practice in since, as future teachers, they will most probably work in similar conditions, if not worse. This is partly true but it is a risky adventure in the sense that the ‘harsh’ reality may override the motivation to teach, corrode the determination to change conditions, and end up producing teachers who are doomed to adapt to the status quo and reproduce problems rather than lift the challenge to reform it from within. If the intention is to prepare and produce agents of change who are well prepared to help improve the quality of teaching and student learning, there is an urgent need to provide trainees with the best training conditions so they develop a sense of good working conditions and try to change theirs when they are entrusted the job.
There is strong evidence from the study that the way mentors are chosen needs to shift from a full focus on the candidate’s academic qualifications to the adoption of a more comprehensive ecological approach that considers not only the candidate mentor but also value both the classroom environment where trainees will practice teaching and the location of the school. In fact, placing trainees under the mentorship of a mentor teacher whose workplace is either far away or notorious for discipline problems, where classes are overcrowded, and classrooms are poorly equipped and/or unstable, tends to add unnecessary difficulties for trainees. The TEAMS framework provides a workable solution to counteract these collateral difficulties. One way this can be done is through inviting candidates to provide, along with their application, a description of their classrooms, grades taught, timetables, availability of classroom equipment (enough seats, a data projector, a screen, power outlets, loudspeakers, chalk, etc.), accessibility to the school location (round trip fare, time, and distance vis-à-vis the training center). The framework will also allow CRMEF teacher trainers to glean more feedback about the exact working conditions of each candidate mentor and be able to recruit only the ones whose application meets the selection criteria about the optimal environmental context of practice teaching. This alone is, however, not enough unless both the provincial directorate and the school administration are also involved in the process to facilitate the job of mentor teachers once recruited. They can make sure that the concerned teachers have stable, well equipped classrooms, non-overcrowded classes and reduced timetables to spend more time with trainees on planning lessons and providing feedback. Not the least, these parties along with the CRMEF, unlike what is done now, need to ensure that mentors are well recognized for the key role they play and appropriately remunerated for their service.

In the same vein, it is ironic that the new model of teacher training in Morocco puts a high premium on pre-service teachers’ school-based experience (60 % of the whole training); yet, as mentioned earlier, mentor teachers, when recruited, have no guidance or training on how to fulfil their new responsibilities. Given their intimate knowledge of and work with teacher trainees (and in collaboration with the regional academy and the provincial directorate), CRMEF teacher trainers are best suited to design and deliver a suitable training module for mentor teachers about the skills, strategies, and ways of providing support and feedback to trainees. Such training will make a world of difference for would-be and/or practicing mentors and enable them to have a good understanding of their role expectations and become aware of the frequent problems and needs of trainees throughout the different stages of the field experience. It will also help standardize the mentoring practice and serve as a forum for experiences exchange and enrichment.

Accordingly, the following table lays down some of the roles in the TEAMS framework, and highlights the major tasks each party can carry out to ameliorate the process of selecting mentors and partner schools, through the provision of ongoing mentor training and support to the appropriate recognition, and encouraging compensation of mentors’ national service to the preparation of future generations of teachers. It should be noted that this is a tentative framework to improve the experiences of mentoring practice and pre-service practicum and it can, in light of new research findings, be further improved to include more ideas, parties, tasks, and roles.
Table 1: The TEAMS Framework for the Roles and Tasks of the CRMEF, Regional Academy, Provincial Directorate, and the Partner School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection of mentors</th>
<th>CRMEF</th>
<th>Regional Academy</th>
<th>Directorate</th>
<th>Partner School</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Announces need for mentors.</td>
<td>• Coordinator supervisor communicates the need to the provincial supervisor.</td>
<td>• Sends out announcement to schools.</td>
<td>• Notifies interested teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaborates with coordinator and provincial supervisors.</td>
<td>• Helps with selection.</td>
<td>• Notifies selected mentor teachers.</td>
<td>• Notifies selected mentor teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Selects partner schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Provides substitution cover in case of shortage.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recruits mentors.</td>
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<td>• Provincial supervisor and school principal recommend eligible candidates and help with selection.</td>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training</th>
<th>CRMEF</th>
<th>Regional Academy</th>
<th>Directorate</th>
<th>Partner School</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Designs and implements the mentor training package.</td>
<td>• Contributes to the training: supervisors organize / attend workshops to give guidance on mentoring strategies.</td>
<td>• Notifies and allows mentors to attend.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Organizes workshops/study days.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment/ materials</th>
<th>CRMEF</th>
<th>Regional Academy</th>
<th>Directorate</th>
<th>Partner School</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify / provide support materials (data projector, printing facility, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Provides classroom stability and equipment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Facilitates trainees’ non-teaching activities.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timetabling</th>
<th>CRMEF</th>
<th>Regional Academy</th>
<th>Directorate</th>
<th>Partner School</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provides weekly time envelope needed for practicum.</td>
<td>• Directorate assures substitution cover.</td>
<td>• Provides reduced timetable for practicing mentors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trainers pay mentoring visits to trainees on practicum.</td>
<td>• Coordinator and/or provincial supervisor (s) pay (s) mentoring visits to trainees on practicum.</td>
<td>• Coordinates visits to trainees.</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recognition</th>
<th>CRMEF</th>
<th>Regional Academy</th>
<th>Directorate</th>
<th>Partner School</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Give formal recognition and incentives: certificates / letters of appreciation / awards / etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Pay for related conferences and professional development workshops.</td>
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</table>
Remuneration


It is significant to state that in some areas like training, equipment, recognition, the tasks mentioned in the table can be done by either one of the parties or all of them altogether. Close coordination is very important to allow the parties to see what they can do individually and what can be done in collaboration.

For a better implementation of the TEAMS framework, it is imperative that mentors be selected prior to the school and training year so they can get some training before they assume their new role. This will allow the school administration to plan and allocate a stable, well-equipped classroom along with a light work timetable for its mentors. The school will also have enough time to seek substitution cover from the provincial directorate for the mentors’ left classes of mentors early enough to avoid any problems of teacher shortage in the following school year.

5. Conclusion

Given the central role that teacher mentors play in practicum settings, the present paper has tried to present a new team-based perspective to the recruitment process of these support people with a view to enhance the quality of their service and neutralize several of the collateral problems that beset the clinical experience of Moroccan EFL pre-service teachers. Besides our recent research on the most frequent practicum problems and needs of EFL trainee teachers, the TEAMS framework is largely informed by insights from the literature and relevant national and international experiences. The new mentor selection approach necessitates a strong cooperation across the CRMEF, regional academy, directorate and partner schools. It also lays down the basic roles, tasks, and possible collaboration pathways for each party involved in the implementation of the professional practicum component and the selection and preparation of mentors. In effect, a comprehensive approach to the practicum component is thus urgently needed to provide trainees with not only effective mentors but also a training-friendly environment for practice.

About the authors:

Rachid Moussaid is an EFL teacher, teacher trainer and researcher from Morocco. He holds an MA in Applied Linguistics and TEFL. He is currently doing his doctoral studies in teacher education at the faculty of Education at Mohammed V University, Rabat. His areas of interests include: Applied linguistics, TEFL issues, teacher training, mentoring & professional development, Educational research, and materials development. ORCiD ID: 0000-0002-4789-9936

Prof. Badia Zerhouni, (Ph.D holder from Ottawa university, Canada) is an associate professor of Applied Linguistics at the Faculty of Education, Rabat, Morocco, and former director of the Doctoral Centre of the Faculty of Education. She currently teaches and supervises research projects in MA Applied linguistics /TEFL programs and supervises doctoral research in different subjects related to AL/ELT. Her research interests include reading, writing and vocabulary acquisition in EFL contexts as well as the issue of academic failure and teacher education.
ORCiD ID: 0000-0001-8994-2309

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Vowel Instruction for Spelling Enhancement of Arabic-speaking Learners of English

Marinette S. Ishizaki
Center for English as a Lingua Franca
Tamagawa University, Tokyo, Japan

Abstract
Word spellings are often a common linguistic issue among Arabic-speaking learners of English, and English vowels are one of the most difficult to resolve. Therefore, the study presented vowel instruction as an intervention to address this issue by determining its effect on the spelling performance on monosyllables and bi-syllables. Vowel instruction sessions were then offered to 15 university freshman students for two months. Instructional strategies consisted of teaching vowel pronunciation, vowel letter-to-sound relationships, vowel spelling patterns, word-breaking, and providing various spelling opportunities. To measure overall spelling performance, pre-test and post-test on vowel spellings were conducted which revealed a significant increase in the mean scores. This suggests that vowel instruction was facilitative in the improved spelling performance on monosyllabic and bi-syllabic words, with more misspellings in the latter than in the former. The strategies used were generally perceived as beneficial, and it is recommended that including them in language lessons could improve vowel spelling skill and minimize English vowel confusions. Moreover, constant exposure of learners to many English words and more spelling activities are still necessary for better English vowel recognition and whole word spelling.

Keywords: Arab learners, English vowels, spelling performance, strategies

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Introduction

Arabic-speaking learners of English often suffer from poor spelling of English words. This undoubtedly matters to any language teachers and Arab students because spelling mistakes can affect their overall communication skills. Spelling is oftentimes overlooked in the syllabi of many language instructors probably because it is not a glamorous classroom activity and has less communicative value (Pushpa, 2005; Randall & Groom, 2009). However, the spelling difficulties of Arab learners are so prevalent that they should be taken seriously in the classroom.

Literatures suggest that the frequent spelling problems of Arab learners are attributed to their perplexity with English vowels described by Ryan and Meara (1996) as *vowel blindness* and by Pushpa (2005) as *vowel confusion* or *vowel substitution*. This vowel issue is believed to be common to this group. It occurs because of the influence of their first language. Long vowels in Arabic are written in text while short vowels are only marked with diacritics above or below the consonants. Arabic-speaking learners tend to disregard the presence of vowels when storing vocabulary and tend to choose the wrong vowels in their communication skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Al-Busaidi & Al-Saqqaf, 2015; Bowen, 2011; Pushpa, 2005).

English and Arabic languages are obviously different in script and sound (Bowen, 2011; Pushpa, 2005; Smith, 2001). Arabic-speaking learners cannot relate their written and spoken languages that they tend to do the same habit when learning English (Bowen, 2011). Therefore, Arabic-speaking learners try to guess the vowels that they hear. As a result, they write the spellings of words strangely and incorrectly in which more errors are committed in the vowels than in the consonants leaving the former to be mostly unresolved (Al-Badawi & Salim, 2014; Al-Busaidi & Al-Saqqaf, 2015; Bowen, 2011; Pushpa, 2005; Ryan and Meara, 1991; Saigh & Schmitt, 2012).

The researcher proposed vowel instruction as an intervention to improve the vowel spelling problems of Arabic-speaking learners of English. It used the suggestions of various studies conducted on the spelling issues of this group of learners. It refers to the employment of teaching vowel sounds, presenting vowel letter-sound relationships, showing vowel spelling patterns, word-breaking, and providing spelling opportunities. It used the approaches of cognitive, behaviorist, and communicative language teaching in the given activities because learning spelling of words takes cognitive effort, constant practice, and practical opportunities (Bowen, 2011; Cook, 2008; Harmer, 2007; Nasr, 1993 as cited in Mahmoud, 2015; Nunan, 1999). Learning a foreign and second language is not easy, but it should not also be boring or repetitive particularly if this is related to spelling. Therefore, vowel instruction attempted to combine the idea of function and form in the language sessions as these are both needed by the Arabic-speaking learners of English.

The spellings of monosyllabic words (one-vowel sound) and bi-syllabic words (two-vowel sounds) were the emphasis of the study. It was deemed necessary to teach these first before leveling up to complicated and multisyllabic words. Words in both groups included frequent and infrequent spellings.
The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of vowel instruction on the spelling performance of Arabic-speaking learners of English on monosyllabic and bi-syllabic words. It specifically aimed to answer the following questions:

1) What is the spelling performance of Arabic-speaking learners on monosyllabic and bi-syllabic words before and after the vowel instruction?
2) What are the strategies of vowel instruction that can be used to enhance the vowel spelling on monosyllabic and bi-syllabic words?

Methods

Participants
The participants of the study were 15 Arabic-speaking students (5 females and 10 males, mostly from Saudi Arabia) enrolled at a university in the Philippines. All the students had very low scores in the spelling section and the overall results of the university-administered English Proficiency Test (EPT). The researcher used the Vowel Sensitivity Test of Ryan and Meara (1996) to determine whether participants have issues with the English vowels. All students received scores below 10 with a mean score of 2.81 indicating that they had problems with the English vowels.

Procedure
The English language enhancement sessions were voluntarily offered for two months to each participant three times a week for about an hour. A vowel spelling test (pre-test and post-test, see appendix A for student’s copy) constructed by the researcher was given to the participants. The test consisted of 60 items and was divided into two parts: monosyllabic (30) and bi-syllabic words (30). The words consist of 14 English vowel sounds that were taught within two months. Common and rare vowel spellings for each sound were also presented. The test was highly reliable (0.93 using Split-half Reliability Test and 0.96 using Spearman Brown for the whole test). Mean, standard deviation, frequency counts of misspelled words, and paired-sample test analysis were used to describe the spelling performance on monosyllabic and bi-syllabic words. Spelling performance generally refers to the attained scores on these words before and after the conduct of vowel instruction.

The Vowel Spelling Test was carefully dictated in simple sentences with three chances of hearing the target word on each item. Familiar words with common and uncommon spellings were included in the test. Fourteen English vowels ([i], [ɪ], [eɪ], [æ], [a], [ʊ], [ʌ], [ɒ], [ɑ], [ɔ], [ʌɪ], and [ɔɪ]) were taught and discussed during the two-month session. The pronunciation book of Dale and Poms (2005) was used as the main reference in the sessions to illustrate articulation and production of sounds. The participants listened and filled out the missing vowel letters (regular vowels a, e, i, o, u and semi-vowels w and y) in the test. The US-based English spelling was used all throughout the sessions but the UK-based English (neighbour, centre, and flavour) was also presented during sessions to avoid confusions.
A teacher-guided evaluation sheet was provided to the participants by the end of the sessions to determine whether vowel instruction was beneficial in improving their spelling performance.

**Vowel Instruction**

All English vowel sounds were introduced from the start of the session. In each lesson, students were asked to identify and match pictures, repeat and read words displayed on the board. Then, they were asked to listen and identify the common vowel sound they hear from these words. Next, participants were taught pronunciation by producing the sound and by distinguishing it (e.g. through minimal pair drills). Afterward, they were instructed to group printed words (in flash cards) with similar vowel spellings using a chart (see appendix B). As an extra challenge, students had to hear, write down dictated words, and group them. Spelling patterns and rules were also illustrated and discussed. Later, they were tasked to underline vowel letters, count, and divide syllables in the words. Finally, students were provided review of vocabulary exercises (picture identification or matching type), writing activities (short sentences or paragraphs), short reading (short articles or rhymes), and spelling drills (gap-fill and whole word).

**Spelling Performance on Monosyllabic and Bi-syllabic Words Before and After**

Results revealed that there is a significant increase (at 0.05) in the spelling performance of Arabic-speaking participants before and after the vowel instruction. The mean scores increased from 30.67 to 43.07 with standard deviations of 8.61 and 9.61, respectively. The mean scores also increased in monosyllabic (from 18.33 to 23.4) and bi-syllabic words (from 12.33 to 19.67). The difference in the mean scores indicate that participants improved more in bi-syllables than in monosyllables. Table 1 reveals the summary of the vowel spelling test before and after vowel instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test (60)</th>
<th>Post-test (60)</th>
<th>Pre-test (30)</th>
<th>Post-test (30)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>460</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>30.67</td>
<td>43.07</td>
<td>18.33</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part A: Monosyllable</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part B: Bi-syllable</strong></td>
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</table>

**Monosyllabic words.** The findings of the study show that several monosyllabic words were still difficult to spell, and some words were spelled correctly.

The following results were the highlights of this study:

- The most misspelled monosyllabic word was *caught* [ɔ] followed by *build* [I].
- Other high frequency misspelled words included *style* [aI], *head* [e], *blue* [u], *join* [ɔI], *boat* [OU], *soup* [u], and *train* [eI] – all contain vowel spelling patterns that were still confusing for the participants.
Back [æ], catch [æ], and good [ʊ] received correct spellings despite the absence of these sounds in Arabic, though, the sounds [æ] and [a] in English are two spoken sounds (allophones) of the Arabic phoneme /a:/ and the Arabic [u] and [ɒ] are two allophones of Damma /u/ (Al-Busaidi & Al-Saqqaf, 2015).

The word push [o] mostly spelled ‘posh’ and full [o] mostly spelled ‘fell’ or ‘foll’ were still problematic which may have been influenced by the change in the duration of the short vowel sound [ʊ].

The words gym [I] and build [I] had the most noticeable decrease in misspelled monosyllabic words.

Words with silent ‘e’ like style [aɪ] and bike [aɪ] were spoken well but frequently misspelled, and that ‘i’ and ‘y’ that ends with silent ‘e’ seems unfamiliar for the vowel sound [aɪ].

The word boat [oʊ] with vowel spelling ‘oa’ was still difficult to master as it remained unchanged in frequency, but this vowel sound was not difficult to pronounce to all the participants.

The words caught [ɒ] often pronounced as /kɒt/ and bought [ɔ] as /boʊt/ were the most misspelled monosyllabic words in which all the participants struggled to pronounce the sound and spell their vowel letters.

Bi-syllabic words. Bi-syllabic words were still harder to spell and had more misspellings in the tests. The following results were the highlights of the study:

The word ‘awful’ [ɔ] was the most misspelled bi-syllabic word in the pre-test since all the participants got this incorrectly followed by words ‘neighbor’ [eɪ], ‘author’ [ɔ], and ‘heavy’ [e].

Least misspelled bi-syllabic words included father [a], wallet [a], tonight [ar], island [ar], and many [ɛ].

Bi-syllabic words afraid [eɪ] did not change at all which was almost identical to the case of monosyllabic train [eɪ]. The word afraid which was associated with similar-sounding words great and veil was still spelled as ‘afreid,’ ‘afread,’ ‘afried,’ and ‘afraed.’

The confusion of the English vowel [ɛ] with vowel [i] was still obvious in the bi-syllable word ‘letter’ as indicated by the few decrease in the frequency of misspellings.

The confusion of the English vowel [ɛ] with vowel [i] also transpired in the second syllable of the word foolish in which many participants wrote ‘foolesh,’ ‘foulesh,’ or ‘fuolesh’.

Words that end with the vowel sound [i] like many, lucky, and heavy were written as ‘mane’, ‘lucke,’ or ‘heave’ in which letter ‘e’ was used instead of ‘y’ suggesting the vowel-letter confusion for vowel [i].

The words heavy [e] and head [e] contains vowel spelling ‘ea’ that seemed unfamiliar to the participants and had several mistakes in the pre-test while many (a rare vowel spelling for this vowel sound) got few incorrect spellings.
The word *minute* (with rare vowel spelling for [I]) also received several mistakes which was still misspelled as ‘menita,’ ‘minuta,’ ‘munite,’ ‘menute,’ or ‘minate.’

The word *eyebrow* [aʊ] with equivalent Arabic sound received few spelling mistakes in the post-test along with the words around, house, and town.

Monosyllabic words were easier to spell than the bi-syllabic words which could be linked to the number of vowel sounds that needed to be analyzed and spelled by learners. The English vowel [ʌ] in the words bought, caught, awful and author appeared to be the most difficult to spell and pronounce, which remains to be one of the most confusing English vowels for Arab learners (Smith, 2001). Hence, the need to work on this vowel more.

Words like gym, back, and good received few frequencies of incorrect spellings. The amount of exposure and usage of these words (good, gym) to the extent of overuse were helpful in perfectly spelling them. For instance, all students encountered the word gym during their Physical Education classes and often passed by this area on the way to the tutorial classes. They also used the word good every day to greet foreign friends, classmates, and professors or to describe something nice and pleasant (from food to feelings) that the word became too familiar and were used without hesitations, thus, confirming that greater participation, exposure, experiences, and language use do lead to improvements in language proficiency and automaticity (Cook, 2008; Harmer, 2007; Logan, 1997; Lim, 1992 as cited in Nunan, 1999). However, this overuse may result in overgeneralization which also undermines ability to spell well because the participants tend to the do same habit in other words as in the case of afraid and train. The vowel sound [ei] seemed to be generalized as having the spellings of vowel letters ‘ea’ or ‘ei’ only. It appears that most of the participants were unfamiliar that the vowel sound [ei] can be spelled as ‘ai’. At other times, guessing the letters within the words as in caught or bought without any conscious thought or effort (perhaps for the sake of finishing the task) could be linked to failure of spelling words.

Arabic speakers tend to perceive all the English vowels differently from other groups of learners especially the vowels [u], [o], [i], [I], [ɛ], [æ], [ou], and [ɔ] and rely on their phonetic spelling strategy to write English vowel letters. However, this leads to spelling errors linked to difficulties on perceiving vowels (Alshangiti & Evans, 2015; Post, Swank, Hiscock, & Fowler, 1999; Smith, 2001). Second language learners have difficulty learning a foreign language because they perceive vowel sounds differently from the native speakers of English (Al-Badawi & Salim, 2014). Moreover, this could also be linked to the lack of knowledge on vowel letter-and-sound relationships (Al-Jarf, 1998; Bowen, 2011; Mahmoud, 2015). Therefore, explicit teaching of the vowel spelling/letter-and-sound correspondence and vowel sound awareness would really benefit the Arabic-speaking learners.

In general, the incorrect spellings of monosyllable and bi-syllable words may be attributed to first language interference, overgeneralization and guessing of words, reliance on their phonetic spelling strategy, unfamiliarity with spellings of many English words or insufficient knowledge on letter-and-sound correspondence, and difficulty in perceiving vowel sounds (Al-Badawi &
Table 2 reveals the summary of the frequency of misspelled monosyllabic and bi-syllabic words before and after vowel instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowel Instruction for Spelling Enhancement</th>
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**Table 2**

*Frequency of Misspellings on Monosyllabic and Bi-syllabic Words Before and After*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monosyllabic words</th>
<th>IPA symbol</th>
<th>f Pre (15)</th>
<th>f Post (15)</th>
<th>Bi-syllabic words</th>
<th>IPA symbol</th>
<th>f Pre (15)</th>
<th>f Post (15)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>[i]</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>minute</td>
<td>[i]</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>build</td>
<td>[i]</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>winter</td>
<td>[i]</td>
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<td>mean</td>
<td>[i]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>believe</td>
<td>[i]</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>need</td>
<td>[i]</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>people</td>
<td>[i]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>train</td>
<td>[ɛ]</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>neighbor</td>
<td>[ɛ]</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>eight</td>
<td>[ɛ]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>afraid</td>
<td>[ɛ]</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>head</td>
<td>[ɛ]</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>many</td>
<td>[ɛ]</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>friend</td>
<td>[ɛ]</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>heavy</td>
<td>[ɛ]</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>west</td>
<td>[ɛ]</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>letter</td>
<td>[ɛ]</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>catch</td>
<td>[æ]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>laughter</td>
<td>[æ]</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clap</td>
<td>[æ]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>after</td>
<td>[æ]</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>back</td>
<td>[æ]</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>wallet</td>
<td>[a]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>dark</td>
<td>[a]</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>father</td>
<td>[a]</td>
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<td>stop</td>
<td>[a]</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>[u]</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>foolish</td>
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<td>[u]</td>
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<td>bullet</td>
<td>[o]</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>[o]</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>lucky</td>
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<td>[ʌ]</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>[ʌ]</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>window</td>
<td>[oo]</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>snow</td>
<td>[oo]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>alone</td>
<td>[oo]</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boat</td>
<td>[oo]</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>eyebrow</td>
<td>[aʊ]</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>house</td>
<td>[aʊ]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>around</td>
<td>[aʊ]</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>town</td>
<td>[aʊ]</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>tonight</td>
<td>[aɪ]</td>
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<td>[aɪ]</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>[aɪ]</td>
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<td>[aɪ]</td>
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<td>enjoy</td>
<td>[ɔ]</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>join</td>
<td>[ɔ]</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>avoid</td>
<td>[ɔ]</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>caught</td>
<td>[ɔ]</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>author</td>
<td>[ɔ]</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>awful</td>
<td>[ɔ]</td>
<td>15</td>
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</table>
Vowel Instruction Strategies

Presentation of vowel-letter-sound relationships was one of the favorite activities during the sessions as 13 students considered it useful, effective, and interesting. Spelling opportunities like reading were perceived similarly by 13 students, writing by 12, and spelling drills by nine. Eleven participants had the same opinion on vowel pronunciation, nine on vowel patterns, and 11 on word-breaking.

Vowel pronunciation. Although 11 students perceived teaching vowel pronunciation as beneficial, majority of them appeared to respond and spell better when seeing the words first rather than hearing the sounds. This suggests that learning by sight was a less confusing method than learning by sound in learning spelling (Pushpa, 2005), and that teaching vowel pronunciation needs both presentation of the spoken and visual forms (Mahmoud, 2015). Teaching pronunciation somehow helped in increasing the awareness of the different English vowels sounds as expressed by 12 participants. Though it may take time to teach this, more vowel production trainings should be provided as this could help the Arabic-speakers improve their production and perception of the English vowels which also depends on their motivation and environment (Alshangiti & Evans, 2015).

Vowel letter-and-sound relationship. Presenting the vowel letter-and-sound correspondences through groupings of words with similar vowels spellings may have influenced the improved spelling performance of the participants. This was facilitated with the use of spelling chart and mnemonic sentences. Word groupings with the aid of spellings charts may have reinforced skills such as looking for keywords and word association. Looking for a hidden keyword within the word was helpful in remembering the spelling of vowel letters as accounted by three students who tried to remember the word eat in spelling ‘meat’ or the word eight in spelling ‘neighbor’ and ‘weight.’ Word grouping through spelling chart, as expressed by two participants, also strengthened association of words (e.g. build with guitar and guilty). Many mistakes on the spellings of monosyllabic and bi-syllabic words could be attributed to the unfamiliarity of English word spellings and the lack of knowledge on letter-sound correspondence. Thus, more focus and practice on these should be provided to all English vowels especially on the confusing ones like [u], [ʊ], [i], [I], [ɛ], [æ], [ʊ], and [ə].

Vowel patterns. Learning vowel patterns through rules may not be as interesting and enjoyable for some participants, but it was still perceived as useful. Some past studies suggest that learning spelling rules can improve awareness of language patterns and that mastery of spelling rules can affect the spelling ability of language learners (Al-Jarf, 1998). This may be true for participants who were perceived to have wider vocabulary and better speaking skills because they were more attentive, interested, and responsive to this information. Students who seemed to have low vocabulary could not easily follow the spelling rules and new information instructed to them. Instead, they needed colorful illustrations and more examples to simply copy and write on their notebooks. Thus, teaching vowel patterns through rules may need to consider the linguistic level of the learners.
Spelling rules that were illustrated and discussed to show the patterns of vowel letters include:

- writing of letter ‘i’ after ‘e’ in letters with ‘c’ (e.g. ceiling, receive);
- writing words with silent ‘e’;
- changing of ‘y’ into ‘i’, then add –es or –ed for words with consonant-consonant-vowel letter pattern;
- writing letter ‘y’ when the last vowel sound of the words is [i] as in lucky, heavy, many; and
- using and writing suffixes ~ous, ~er to change the form of words.

**Word-breaking.** In the study, word breaking focused on counting the number of syllables in spoken words and allowing learners to understand that one syllable equals one vowel sound. All the participants could count the vowel sounds for each given word indicating that they could somehow distinguish the different vowel sounds in a word. Six students expressed that segmenting syllables made them realize its importance in pronouncing, reading, and spelling words. However, more syllabication practice (particularly on confusing vowel sounds) is still needed because it is considered as a necessary skill in improving the sound awareness and spelling abilities of learners. It was used as spelling strategy by good spellers and even learners with disabilities (Baleghizadeh & Dargahi, 2011; Taylor, 1997). Segmenting syllables on multi-syllabic words would be another way to determine the ability of learners to identify the number of vowel sounds within a word.

**Spelling opportunities.** Spelling exercises involved vocabulary activities for review (picture identification, matching type), spelling drills (gap-fill and whole word), sentence and paragraph writing, and reading exercises (short articles, rhymes) – all were done at the end of each session. Sentence and paragraph writing allowed the students to construct and use the target words in their own sentence. Short reading activities were also perceived as helpful particularly rhymes. Five participants expressed that they could remember spellings of words like town and eyebrow because it was rhymed with owl, cow, and how. Thus, all these spelling opportunities that expose learners to use English words may have contributed to their improved spelling scores.

**Limitations of the Study**

Despite the positive results, the study was not without limitations which may affect the generalizability of the findings. The limitations relate to: a) the sample size, b) time, scope, and resources, and c) application and delivery that should be considered when conducting similar studies in the future.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The results generally suggest that teaching English vowels could help improve the vowel spelling ability of this group of learners. Vowel instruction can be concluded as beneficial and facilitative in the spelling enhancement of monosyllabic and bi-syllabic words among the Arabic-speaking learners of English. Including this in the language syllabus or lesson plans of teachers would eventually benefit the learners. Bi-syllabic words which received higher frequency of
Vowel Instruction for Spelling Enhancement

Misspellings than monosyllabic words require more exposure and practice because Arab learners tend to be more confused with the spellings of vowels in longer words. Words with unfamiliar spellings also need more training, exercises, and spelling opportunities to recognize the English vowels and spell the whole words better. While the participants showed improvement in their scores, they still require constant exposure to many English words to have better spelling skills. Majority of the participants considered the strategies as interesting, effective, and useful. Careful consideration, preparation, and application of these strategies in the English as a Second Language/English as a Foreign Language classrooms would be advantageous in minimizing the vowel confusion and vowel spelling issues of the Arabic learners. In the end, it would contribute to a better spelling of whole words.

About the Author:
Marinette Soriano Ishizaki was an ESL instructor in the Philippines for over eight years, and she is currently teaching at Center for English as a Lingua Franca, Tamagawa University, Japan. Her interests include English language education, teaching methodology, multilingualism, ESL, EFL, and ELF. ORCid ID: 0000-0003-1139-831X

References


Appendix A. Vowel Spelling Test (Student’s Copy)

Name: ___________________      Major/Course: ________      L1: _____      Date:______

A. One-syllable words. Listen and spell the words correctly by filling out the missing regular vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and semi-vowels (y, w). You will hear the word in each item three times.

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B. Two-syllable words. Listen and spell the words correctly by filling out the missing regular vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and semi-vowels (y, w). You will hear the word in each item three times.

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<td>f</td>
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</table>

Appendix B. Vowel Spelling Chart

Vowel letter spellings: oo, ou, u-e, ui, ew, oe, o, u

Vowel Sound [u]

Mnemonic Sentence: It is truly cool for you to use your blue suit with your new shoes.

Activity: Group the words (written in colored cards) with similar vowel spellings and place them in the chart. Afterward, copy and write the words on your workbook/notebook.
Using the Rasch Model for the Affective Assessment of EFL Learners

Siti Mariam
Post Graduate School of Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

Mursid Saleh
Semarang State University of Semarang, Indonesia

Warsono
Semarang State University of Semarang, Indonesia

Januarius Mujiyanto
Semarang State University of Semarang, Indonesia

Abstract
Affective assessment is one of the components of authentic assessment which requires English teachers to assess the students comprehensively. This study aims to (1) explain the ways in which affective aspects improve students’ English achievement, (2) explain the formulation of an affective assessment for EFL learners using the Rasch model. This research and development approach was employed as the basis to develop rating scale model as an instruments measuring the students’ affective aspects in EFL classroom. The data were analyzed using the Rasch Model. The validity and reliability, in the small-scale field tryout were item reliability 1.00 and person reliability 0.93. Meanwhile, item validity are 0.90 and person validity 0.87 were used in the large-scale field one. The results of this study indicate that: (1) there are five affective dimensions or variables developed in this study. They are attitude, motivation, interest, self-concept, and personal value. The five dimensions consist of 24 aspects or sub variables and 35 indicators that become the basis of constructing the 120 item instrument, and as inventory rating scale model. It can be inferred that the affective measuring instrument with the 120 items of statement has a model fit with the data. It means that the model is able to estimate population covariance matrix which is not different from the sample covariance matrix so that the estimation result becomes a basis for generalization.

Keywords: affective, assessment, EFL learner, English competence, Rasch model

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Introduction

Affective assessment in higher education is a difficult area to write about since everyone has a view and many assumptions which are commonly expressed ‘assessment drives the learning. Students are more strategic and mark-oriented than they were. Interestingly, though, assessment is sometimes the last thing that lecturers think about when designing their courses, we tend to think about the curriculum and what should be covered and only when that has been determined do we turn our attention to how we might assess what our students have learned. The implementation of affective education in college or university must be done through a special approach, meaning it can not be equated with an affective education approach for groups of primary and secondary education, because adolescents who are considered ‘immature’ can still be fully controlled by parents and teachers which is the largest affective factor in their lives (Slavin, 2006). Therefore the application of affective domains in the education process feels easier, whereas for groups of students considered to be adults, the application of affective domains must go through a specific strategy in order to have a real impact on the next journey of life as a citizen. In practice, the impact of affective domains in education is often overlooked by researchers. This is because they assume that affective domains are very difficult to measure and have dependence on other factors such as economic, political, social and cultural factors as well as psychological or personal life factors (Lynch, Baker & Lyons, 2009). On the other hand, the affective domain actually has a very significant influence on the cognitive domain (Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, 1964, pp.49-50), so the outcome of the affective domain application is very much needed in the learning process. Affective learning domains related to feelings, emotions, or students' responses to their learning experiences. Affective behavior, among others, are shown by the attitude, interest, attention and awareness. However, to implement these three domains or skills in assessment is not easy because of the various factors, including (1) low commitment, (2) insufficient knowledge (3) limited facilities and supporting funds, (4) political will either from central and regional government; and (5) dissemination of less effective information. Affective problems are important to everyone, but their implementation is poor. (Mariam, 2018, p.1). This is because designing the achievement of affective learning goals is not as easy as cognitive and psychomotor learning. The educational unit should design the right learning activities to achieve affective learning objectives. The success of educators in implementing affective domain of learning and the success of learners achieving affective competencies needs to be assessed. Therefore it is necessary to develop a reference for the development of affective domain appraisal tools and their measurement results.

The study aims to develop an affective assessment for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners by using the Rasch Model. The findings of the study will surely contribute to English Language Teaching (ELT), mainly in English language evaluation in higher education.

Literature Review

Affective aspect plays an important role in man’s life, mainly in making decision, perception, interaction, communication and intelligence. According to Airasia & Russell (2008) “a second behavior domain is the affective domain. The affective domain involves feelings, attitudes, interests, preferences, values, and emotions. Emotional stability, motivation, trustworthiness, self-control, and personality are all examples of affective characteristics” (Pp.69) Various research
results showed that effectiveness of cognitive achievement occurred in accordance with effectiveness of affective achievement. In general, students who have good academic achievement (cognitive), they also have high learning motivation and positive attitude towards the subject (affective). On the other hand, when they have low achievement, usually their motivations are low besides that their attitude towards the subject is also negative. According to the research results, around 25 percent of variant of learning cognitive achievement is contributed by affective characteristics owned by a student individually in the beginning of learning. Basically, students’ learning achievement cannot be seen from cognitive and psychomotoric domain only as practiced today in our education, but also must be seen from affective achievement. The three domains have reciprocal relationship, although the power of the relationships varies from one case to another.

Assessment and giving feedback to learners is one of the eight specified areas of activity, core knowledge and professional values articulated in the Education of National Standards framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education. Such recognition of the centrality of assessment to the learning process means all who teach and facilitate students learning need to reflect critically on assessment practices in higher education.

The use of the word ‘affect’ in the course of general conversation is rare, although the use of its derivatives (such as ‘affectionate’: a disposition to act from a kindly feeling or love towards one another) are more common. In psychology, the term is commonly used in conjunction with cognition (e.g. Clark & Fisk, 1982; Tomkins & Izard, 1966), but not so in educational discourse, where references to ‘affective education’ or ‘affective learning’ are infrequent.

Affective domain is difficult to define and measure. There are limited evaluation instruments to measure and assess. There is an unwillingness to give mark in affective domain because it is related to the validity and reliability aspects. It is difficult to determine behavior standard that reflects affective domain and there are less direct consequences that reflect in affective behavior. The reality shows that not many teachers use affective assessment to measure students’ English proficiency. There are many reasons why affective assessment should be used by English teachers to assess students’ competence comprehensively. From the identification of the problem above, it seems that teachers need a means that can facilitate them to assess their students comprehensively. Up till now, there is no affective assessment model of English subject for students of non-English department. Therefore, a model of affective assessment of English subject for students of non-English department is needed to facilitate English. There is an interaction between language learning and the environmental components in which the students were grown up. Both negative and positive attitudes have a strong impact on the success of language learning teachers in higher education.

The researcher proposes that affective dimensions consist of five aspects namely: attitude, motivation, self concept, interest, and personal value.

First, according to Gajalakshmi (2013), attitude is determined by the individual’s beliefs about outcomes or attributes of performing the behavior (behavioral beliefs), weighted by
evaluations of those outcomes or attributes. Thus, a person who holds strong beliefs that positively valued outcomes will result from performing the behavior will have a positive attitude toward the behavior. Conversely, a person who holds strong beliefs that negatively valued outcomes will result from the behavior will have a negative attitude. Attitude concept can be viewed from these three dimensions. Each one of these dimensions has different features to bring out language attitude results. Accordingly, the attitude concept has three components i.e. behavioral, cognitive and affective. These three attitudal aspects are based on the three theoretical approaches of behaviorism, cognitivism, and humanism respectively.

Second, motivation is a key force in understanding adult learning. Motivation is inherent in humans and is the driving force for people to behave in certain ways to achieve objectives. The expectancy x value theory (Feather 1982) states that adult learners are motivated when they see value in doing something which drives them to exert the effort to achieve the expected outcome. Two types of motivation are extrinsic and intrinsic. With extrinsic motivation, learners are motivated to learn because of the personal satisfaction gained from acquiring new knowledge or skill. Knowles (1984) identifies five factors that distinguish andragogy (adult learning) from pedagogy children’s learning. These factors were, as people mature, they a) become self-directed learners, b) bring a wealth of experience to learning, c) have a readiness to learn according to their roles in society, d) like to engage in problem-based learning, and e) become more internally motivated to learn. Two models of adult learning were presented: the expectancy-valence model (Vroom, 1964) and the force-field-analysis model (Lewin, 1951). The assumption of the expectancy-valence model was that learners’ motivation would increase if they felt that their expectations and values were being met. The basis of the force-field-analysis model was that positive and negative forces exist in the mind-set of learners and the push and pull effect of the forces will affect a learner’s motivation to learn about things that require changes in their thinking or practices. In some contexts, it was suggested (Brookfield, 1983) that adults are more focused on learning in non-credit, non-academic, vocational or recreational fields. However, it was also argued that both male and female adults actively participate in professional upgrading programs when they have the opportunity or are sufficiently motivated, and can afford the fees or be sponsored.

Third, the skill-development model highlights that academic achievement influences academic self-concept (Marsh, 2006; Marsh et al. 2002; Marsh et al. 1999). Lastly, according to Guay et al (2003) both academic self-concept and academic achievement directly influence each other, that is, they are reciprocal. The debate among researchers concerning whether prior academic self-concept influences academic achievement or prior academic achievement results into subsequent academic self-concept has been considered an egg-chicken question (Marsh et al. 2002).

Forth, interest is often thought of as a process that contributes to learning and achievement. That is, being interested in a topic is a mental resource that enhances learning, which then leads to better performance and achievement (Hidi, 1990). Indeed, research has demonstrated that both
situational and individual interest promote attention, recall, task persistence, and effort (Ainley, Hidi, & Berndorff, 2002; Hidi, 1990; Hidi & Renninger, 2006). From this perspective, then, interest appears to play a very important role in learning and academic achievement. As important as interest is for performance and achievement, however, we believe that interest is critically important in its own right. Indeed, one of the primary goals of college education is to help students discover their true interests and chart a life course based on interests developed and nurtured in college. Thus interest may be viewed as essential with respect to adjustment and happiness in life. Relegating interest to the role of a mediator (i.e. a motivational process that is important only because it influences performance) misses the central importance of interest in our lives. Researchers in positive and health psychology have demonstrated that happiness life satisfaction is an important component of well-being (Lucas, 2007; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2007). Pursuing activities and topics that we find interesting play an important part in determining how fulfilled we are with our lives, and not doing so leaves us with a feeling of unease and discontent (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Therefore, we endorse the perspective that interest is an important outcome, and we believe that it is a crucial component of success in academics, sports, or other areas of our lives (Harackiewicz, Durik, & Barron, 2005; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Maehr, 1989; Nicholls, 1979). Researchers (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Pintrich, 2000) have found that individuals can pursue these two types of goals in one of two ways: by trying to attain the desired outcomes, such as learning as much as possible mastery-approach and doing better than others performance-approach, or trying to avoid negative outcomes such as not learning the material mastery-avoidance or doing worse than others performance-avoidance. As mentioned earlier, the goals that individuals choose to pursue in achievement settings provide purposes or reasons, for task engagement, and serve to orient their attention and effort while engaged in the activity. Of particular relevance to interest development, a focus on task mastery and skill development may encourage the individual to explore all aspects of the task, master it and develop skills, and experience positive affect (Flum & Kaplan, 2006; Renninger, 2000).

Fifth, personal values have been proposed to have a significant influence on decision-making (e.g. Rokeach, 1973). Specifically, it may be argued that an individual’s values may propel him or her to behave in an ethical or unethical manner (Baird & Zelin, 2007). Personal values, although individualistic in nature, are largely influenced by societal and cultural factors and tend to vary across nations (Lan et al., 2009). Research indicates that personal values influence an individual’s behavior and attitude, and this can at times conflict with the values held by colleagues or organisations within which they work (e.g. Lan et al., 2009). Personal values may be regarded as deep-seated, pervasive, core-beliefs or guiding principles that transcend specific situations to direct or propel human behavior in decision-making. This belief coincides with Rokeach’s (1973) definition of a value described as “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence.” (p.5). Rokeach (1973) purports that values are central to an individual’s thought processes, and therefore instrumental in the formation of attitudes and the execution of purposive behaviors in many circumstances or issues. It was further suggested that an individual’s values are arranged or classified according to a value system which subsequently influences acceptable behavior responses.
Research Methods

Design
This research and development approach aimed at developing product in the form of instruments of rating scale model to measure students’ affective aspects in EFL classroom. The research process was carried out through the stages of (1) pre-development: theoretical review on affective aspects in English language teaching and learning, (2) development process consisting of (a) arrangement of test specification and instrument items, (b) the evaluation by English Language Teaching (ELT) experts and measurement by psychometric experts, (c) analysis of tryout data quantitatively, and (3) presentation, that is to rearrange the instruments after revision so that it was ready to use. The validity and reliability, in the small-scale field tryout were item reliability 1.00 and person reliability 0.93. Meanwhile, the item validity was 0.90 and person validity was 0.87.

Subjects
The tryout subjects were respondents who had the same characteristic or almost same as the respondents in data collection. The tryout subjects were students of Education and Teacher Training Faculty, Walisongo State Islamic University of Semarang, Indonesia. The location of the tryout test was non-English department and faculties. They were the Islamic Education department, the Arabic Education department, the Islamic Education Management department, the Chemistry department, the Physic department, the Biology department, and the Mathematic department. The tryout subjects from each department were chosen using the purposive sampling technique.

Research Instruments
The instruments that were developed or produced in this research were the instruments of affective measurement for non-English department students. They are inventory, self report, or affective scale. The kind of scale developed is summated rating scale or scale of modified Likert model into variety five alternative points of answers in accordance with context of statements. The affective scale becomes the instruments of data collection for try-out product activity in field testing.

Data Analysis Techniques with Rasch Model Approach
The technique of data analysis of the empirical test result was done by descriptive qualitative and quantitative. Techniques of analyzing the results of empirical empirical measurements in the research are derived from such activities, (1) readability testing of English Affective product, (2) test of English Affective product implementation, (3) model suitability or dimensionality, (4) Calibration of test items, (5) Measurement of Students’ English Affective (6) practicality and (7) the effectiveness of English Affective products. The empirical analysis employs the Rasch poltomous and dichotomous model. The activity of the data analysis. The measurement result analysis was performed using RSM (Rating Scale Model) measurement model to test the poltomous IRT model. In order to apply the IRT approach, both IRT assumptions i.e. unidimensionality and local independence must be met (Hambleton, Swaminathan & Rogers, 1991). The affective instrument satisfies unidimensionality assumptions based on CFA testing as it proves to measure one factor, namely affective. Regarding with the assumption of local
independence, the participant's response to an affective measuring instrument item is not related or influenced by other items, so that local independence assumptions are also met. Therefore, the application of the IRT model can be done.

The model in the Item Response Theory (IRT) is selected based on the mathematical form of the item characteristic function and the number of parameters involved in the model. Appropriate or fit model with a certain measuring scale, not necessarily fit with another scale. The researcher used polytomous IRT model because this affective measuring instrument is designed using Likert type scale with four answer response options. The applied politomy model is the rating scale model, an IRT politomy model that uses a single item parameter. This model is in line with the Rasch Model on the dichotomous IRT model. The model was chosen because this research seeks to develop affective measuring instrument that can be used over and over again, so that sampling invariant is required. For that reason, the researcher used a measurement model approach and used one parameter statement. The analysis is done using Winstep software. This software lets the researcher know the index of the threshold value (delta) of each answer option for each item, commonly called the degree of statement approval statement, or in this case the degree of propensity for statement approval. The calculation of fit statistics statement based on the infit value was also done to see whether the item is good or bad. Furthermore, the testing of differential item functioning (DIF) to see the possibility of a statement item that has a bias response to gender. DIF analysis also uses Winstep program.

**Findings**

**Rasch Model**

According to Linacre (2011), Rasch developed an analytical model of the Item Response Theory (IRT) in the 1960s which is commonly called “one logistic parameter” (IPL). This mathematical model was later popularized by Wright. With raw data in the form of dichotomous data (right and wrong form) indicating the ability of the students, Rasch formulated this to be a model that connects students and items. A student who is able to do 80% problems correctly has better abilities than those who can only workout 65% of the problems. The data percentage indicates that the raw data obtained is called ordinal data type which is rank rather than linear in nature. Because ordinal data do not have the same interval, they need to be converted into ratio data for the purposes of statistical analysis. So that a person gets a score of 80%, then the odds ratio is 80:20, which is nothing but the data ratio that is more appropriate for the purpose of measurement. Through this ratio data Rasch develops a measurement model that determines the relationship between individual ability level and item difficulty level by using the functionality of the algorithm to produce measurements of the same interval. The result is a new unit called logit (log odds unit) that indicates students' abilities and the problem of the item, so that later from the logit score obtained, it is concluded that the success rate of the students in the work depends on the level of abilities and the difficulty level.

Within the scope of social science, it obtains data in the form of a common source number that can usually be in the forms of attitude and opinions on the statement items or questions in a given instrument. The instrument is designed from variables that have been satisfactorily defined,
then identified relevant constructs. From there is the items are made and developed to be able to measure the variables intended. At the same time the choice of answers provided generally follows a scoring pattern followed by the classical test theory (CTT). In the context of the Rasch model, these 'settled' polymers are nothing but measurements whose results depend on the test dependent scoring; while what should be done in quantitative research in social science is objective measurement.

According to Wright & Mok (2004), the concept of objective and fair measurement in the social sciences must have five criterias: (1) Provide a linear measure with the same interval; (2) Conduct a proper estimation process; (3) Find items that are not exact (misfits) or not common (outliers); (4) Overcoming lost data; (5) Generate replicable measurements for independent of the parameters studied.

Of the five conditions earlier, so far it is only the Rasch model that meets the five requirements. In other words, the quality of measurement in the social sciences done with Rasch model will have the same quality as the measurements made in the field of Physics. When viewed further, the log odds unit generated in the Rasch model is a scale with equal intervals and is linear derived from the odds data ratio rather than the raw data scores obtained. Therefore the process of estimating one's abilities or the degree of difficulty of the problem will have a more precise estimation value and can be compared because it has the same unit (logit). Since the algorithm used will perform a structured sorting between the respondents of high abilities into low, which simultaneously also sort the problems from the easy to the difficult, the presence of inaccuracies/consistency of answers from respondents (misfit) or patterns outside the habits (outlier) will be easily detected; as well as for the response patterns received by a particular item. The ordering of respondents' abilities and difficulty in structured ways also makes the Rasch model can predict when there is missing data. The resulting log scale generates a value that depends on the given response pattern, rather than on a predetermined initial score, so that the Rasch model will always result in independent measurement. Analysis by Rasch model resulted in a fit statistics analysis that informed the researchers whether the data obtained were ideally described as having high abilities giving the answer pattern to the item according to the degree of difficulty. The parameters used are infit and outfit from mean square and standardized values. According to the Masters, infit (inlier sensitive or information weighted fit) is the sensitivity of the response pattern to the target item on the respondent (person) or vice versa, while the outfit (outlier sensitive fit) measures the sensitivity of the response pattern to the item about a certain difficulty level on the respondent or vice versa.

Quantitative research in social science has always faced fundamental criticism in terms of testing its research instruments. The usual quantitative test instrument used in CTT is the realibility index (alpha Cronbach) which only measures the interaction between item and person, how individual quality of item can never be done because of the absence of a measurement index that can be done; the same time to detect an inconsistent respondent's answer is not available. Different from the classical test theory, in Rasch model analysis the items are done to the level of each item. In addition to the item, the model Rasch also simultaneously tests the person (respondent), which
will show a consistent answer pattern that tends to approve (in the attitude instrument) and identify the original answer. Test for instrument research can also be done in the form of dimensionality test, rank scale used or detection of the bias of the items tested. All that can be done because basically the Rasch model meets all the objective measurement requirements.

Data analysis techniques performed at the development and evaluation stage include theoretical and empirical analysis of the English Affective draft. Theoretical test results technique is analyzed descriptively qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive technique. The quantitative data of Delphi results were analyzed using quantitative descriptive techniques. Expert input from the Delphi process is used as a foothold in quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. Quantitative descriptive technique using Rasch model. MFRM analysis using Facet 3.70 software help. Quantitative data analysis techniques Rasch model that involves experts as a composite assessor (rater) that is MFRM (Multi Facets Rasch Measurement). The MFRM results are the logit of the check list, the interagency rater and logit of the English Affective product observed. The results of MFRM analysis resulted in a rater agreement on content validity, content reliability, practicality and Affective of English. Content validity includes two aspects: (1) content relevance and (2) the content coverage of an English Affective product. The relevance of the content refers to the suitability of each of the English Affective products with theoretical content. Coverage refers to the scope / breadth of the content aspect of the English Affective product. Assessment of content relevance as well as the coverage of English Affective contents based on expert considerations. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) results data are processed descriptively qualitative.

**Unidimensional Testing Using Rasch Model**

Testing of construct validity is done using factor analysis method that is with Rasch model which is done to test dimensionality as reference to test unidimensionality assumption of measuring instrument. Rasch also gave information on whether the fit model to measure affective uses of this measuring instrument. At this stage, the analysis is done using Winstep 3.71 program 2016 output. To assess whether the measurement model is really fit with the data, please note the value of fit index. The fit index generated from the analysis using the Rasch model method there is a wide range. An index indicating that the model is fit does not guarantee that the model is perfectly fit, or vice versa. So researchers do not just rely on one index fit to test the model. This study uses the criteria of the index fit forms residue between items or statement items.

**Unidimensional Analysis and Response Independence**

Rasch models are unidimensional measurement models that require statistically independent responses. The unidimensional measurement model means only one dimension of the individual being the focus, i.e. the ability on the dimension (β). Testing is not unidimensional means there are other factors than an individual other than β who has responded to the test question. Marais & Andrich (2008) referred to it as trait dependence.

Independent response statistically means the probability of an outcome is independent of other outcomes. A person's response to more than one problem means one's response to a problem
is independent of its response to another problem (Andrich, 1988). Independent statically is not met when the response to an item is affected by its response to the previous item. Marais & Andrich (2008) referred to this as response dependence. In the literature of trait dependence and response dependence are generally not distinguished, both are categorized as local independence. Checking the unidimensionality through Winstep and Facet can be seen from the output (Tennant & Pallant, 2006). For the Winstep program the limit of unidimensionality is measured by the rules Raw variance explained by the following measurement.

a. Sufficient, 20% ≤ Raw variance explained by measurement ≤ 40%.
b. Good, 40% < Raw variance explained by measurement ≤ 60%.
c. Excellent, 60% < Raw variance explained by measurement ≤ 100%.

Local independence violation can be done by calculating residual correlation between items. Dependencies are suspected when the relative residual correlation between item is relatively high (Tennant & Gonaghan, 2007; Zenisky, Hambleton & Sireci, 2002). High residual correlations indicate the existence of dependencies between items that can not be explained by the ability parameters / approval levels of people and items. High residual correlation means that in addition to the measured variables there are dimensions or other factors that affect the individual response to a particular item. Relatively high residual correlations may indicate trait dependence or response dependence.

**Unidimensional Results of Affective Instrument Measuring**

Result of dimensionality of affective instrument based on scoring result according to Rasch modeling. Based on the Rasch instrument modeling it is of sufficient quality if Raw variance explained by measures yields more than 20% or 0.2. The full results of affective instruments are shown in the table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Standardized Residual Variance</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raw variance explained by measures</td>
<td>Empirical 67.3% modeled 64.4%</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Raw variance explained by persons</td>
<td>31.0% 29.7%</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Raw variance explained by items</td>
<td>36.3% 34.7%</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Raw unexplained variance (total)</td>
<td>32.7% 35.6%</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results processed from Winstep 3.71

The result of identification of dimensional units on affective instruments according to Rasch criteria of the model stated good. Polytomous scoring for raw variance explained provide greater empirical value than expected models, which means that the affective instrument gives good results. Raw unexplained variance (total) scoring result is smaller than expected model gives
good result. The result states that the dimension of the affective instrument of scoring only measures one unit of affective dimension.

Unidimension test results with other software are facets. Unidimensional facets have the meaning of a scoring model having unidimensional if the value of variance is explained by Rasch measures is less than 30%. The result of the identification of dimensionality using facets software is presented in table 2. The result stated that the distance distribution of variance value explained by Rasch measures 17.1% to 42.76%, this means the result of the affective instrument fulfills the unidimensionality element. This provides the basis that affective measuring instrument can be used to analyze the student's affective assertions.

Table 2 Result of Identification Unidimensionality Affective Instrument with Facets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Standardized Residual Variance</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Raw-score variance of observations</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Variance explained by Rasch measures</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>34.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Variance of residuals</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>65.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results processed from Facets 3.71

Assessment Practicality of the Items Statement

The practicality of Affective products in addition to being judged theoretically by experts is also assessed empirically by the user. The practicality indicators of Affective products are easy to understand, easy to implement, easy to do and easy to administer. Assessment of the practicality of Affective product at the stage of initiation at the development and evaluation stage is carried out by the user using the same rating sheet in the practical part. The results of the practicality assessment were analyzed statistically based on the Rasch Model reference framework. Statistical results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Test Results Initiation Product Practicality of Affective Instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results of the analysis for Assessment</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obs Agree.</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
<td>Obs. Agr.= Observation Agreement, MNSQ=meansquare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Agree.</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation Ratio</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average infit</td>
<td>1.00 (MNSQ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average outfit</td>
<td>0.99 (MNSQ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average logit</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using the Rasch Model for the Affective

Siti Mariam, Saleh, Warsono & Mujiyanto

**Figure 1** Graph of Trust  
(Results of data research with software Facet 3.70.3)

Based on the results of the assisted statistical analysis of the software of Facet 3.70.3. All assessors stated that Affective products begin conceptually to scoring guidelines based on Rasch Model Reference frame practically with 53.0% deal. The resulting separation ratio is also small 0.33 this means no different statements by the assessors. The average value of infit and outfit is still in the range of 0.5 to 1.5 ie 1.00 and 0.99 with a distribution of 0.77 to 1.25.

**Discussion**

This study designs an affective measuring instruments based on the theory proposed by Rogers (1991) because it is considered more capable of describing the effectiveness as a psychological variable. However, it still needs to be tested to prove that the affective theory has a valid construct. The affective measurement test process gives the calculation results of the validity of the measuring instruments and the unidimensionality test based on the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) method which confirms that the construct of the affective measuring instrument proposed by Rogers (1991) valid. This research also performed testing using first order and second order CFA method to test unidimensionality assumption. The first order CFA test towards 120 items fit affective statements gives a fit result on RMSEA, but chi-square is not fit. This can be considered fit considering that chi-square has sensitivity to the number of samples and data normality. But generally the chi-square index is more believed so that the researcher decided again to carry out the CFA first order test by eliminating the statement items that contribute small. Elimination resulted in a total of 120 affective questions items that carried out the CFA first order test. The 120 items of the question are also tested by the five CFA second order factors. The results of the first order test and the five factors of second order CFA indicate that the model used fit with the data so it can be ascertained that the statement items designed in this study fit to measure affective of English competence.

**Conclusion**

There are five affective aspects that are developed in this study, namely attitude, motivation, interest, self-concept, and personal value. Attitude dimension has four aspects, namely attitude towards English subject, attitude towards learning English, attitude towards student’s self, and attitude towards who are different from the student. Attitude aspects have five indicators, namely attitude of curiosity, attitude of critical thinking, attitude of honesty, attitude of carefulness, and
attitude of flexibility. Motivation dimension has six aspects, namely desire and eagerness to succeed, urging and need of learning, expectation and aspiration in the future, appreciation in learning English, interesting activities in learning English, and conducive learning environment so that it makes a student able to learn English well. Motivation aspects have nine indicators, namely: strong willing to learn English, preserving against difficulties in English learning, the amount of time available to learn English, prefer to work autonomously, high willingness to follow English lessons, be able to defend his or her opinions, working hard on English assignment, participate to be the best in learning English, and like to look for and solve problems in learning. Interest dimension has four aspects, namely having glad feeling in learning English, students’ involvement in English learning, attracting on learning English activities, and having a stable tendency to pay attention in learning English. Interest aspects have seven indicators, namely receive English lessons happily, learning English continuously, not to be forced to learn English, students’ activeness in learning English, content of English lessons in accordance with students’ need, following teacher’s explanation, and doing homework and assignment. Self-concept dimension has two aspects, namely students’ knowledge on English language and students’ expectation on ideal English learning. While self-concept aspects have three indicators, namely students’ point of view related to their English competence, students’ point of view related to the advantages of English competence and students’ active role in English learning. Personal value dimension has eight aspects, namely self-expectation, orientation towards life, working ability, self-actualization, self-integrity, self-confidence, self-direction, and intellectual thinking. Meanwhile personal value aspects have ten indicators, namely having English competence, the meaning of life, hard-working, having competence in working, wisdom, a wide perspective, honesty, helpful, brave to try, and being responsible. Thus, 35 indicators from five dimensions of affective become the basis of instruments item arrangement.

The formulation of affective instruments as the result of this research and development is in the shape of inventory or self-report rating scale model or Affective Scale. This affective scale consists of 120 statement items that covering the five of affective dimensions, namely attitude, motivation, interest, self-concept, and personal value. The affective scale has the validity and reliability, in the small–scale field tryout were item reliability 1.00 and person reliability 0.93. Meanwhile item validity 0.90 and person validity 0.87. The instrument validity is significant as it shows, an infit mean square value for the affective measuring instrument was 0.97. For that reason, it can be said that the affective measuring instruments with 120 items of statement has a model fit with the data.

The affective scale has the result that shows overall measurement model fit or the model is suitable with the data. It means that the model that hypothesized or proposed can estimate covariant matrix of population that is not different from covariant matrix of sample. It means that the estimation result that is obtained from the sample data can be the basis for making generalization.

Suggestions
Based on the research conclusions above, it can be put forward several suggestions related to product benefits, namely:
The affective scale that becomes the research product is designed to be able to be used for measuring students affective aspects in learning English. This affective scale has two benefits, either for enhancing students English achievement or overcoming students’ difficulties in learning English. So that is the reason why English teachers should design authentic assessment that involve the three domain of learning, namely cognitive, psychomotoric, and affective point of view.

Although this affective scale produced in this study had been tried out to non–English department students of Walisongo State Islamic University of Semarang, but indeed, the affective scale can be applied to all of non English department students to others university. Because this instruments are arranged based on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) that is implemented by all over higher education in Indonesia.

About Authors :
Siti Mariam is currently a lecturer in English Language Education Department of Walisongo State Islamic University of Semarang. Her research interests include ELT Method and Language Learning Evaluation. Currently, she is pursuing her Ph.D in Postgraduate School of Semarang State University of Indonesia. Her ORCid ID is 0000-0002-3639-1301

Mursid Saleh a Professor in English Language Department of Languages and Art Faculty of Semarang State University of Indonesia, He earned his master’s degree and Ph.D from Macquarie University of Sydney, Australia.

Warsono a Professor in English Language Department of Languages and Art Faculty of Semarang State University of Indonesia.

Januarius Mujiyanto a Professor in English Language Department of Languages and Art Faculty of Semarang State University of Indonesia.

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Book Review

A Concise Introduction to General American Pronunciation. Segmented Features

Author: Rastislav Metruk
Publisher: University of Žilina
Year of Publication: 2017
Place of Publication: Žilina, Slovak Republic
Pages: P.75
Reviewer: Yevgeniya Karpenko

Significance and Vitality of Phonetics in Spoken Language: Mastering American Pronunciation

There are many books on the pronunciation of English and on the phonetics and phonology of English. As an English language teacher, I would often choose some chapters from books such as Mojsin L. K. (2016) “Mastering the American Accent”, Kreidler C. W. (2004) “The Pronunciation of English: A Course Book” as both are intended for teachers and prospective teachers of English who require a full understanding of a sound system of English and for students...
of linguistics, who know English but need to acquire an understanding of phonology. The books deal mainly with American English and give a good picture of American sounding rhythm and American intonation. But these books about teaching pronunciation have been written with an audience of mainly native speakers of English in mind and don’t touch on many issues that students who have learned English as a second language want and need to know about - questions and problems that may not occur to native-speaker teachers and students.

The book by Metruk R. “A Concise Introduction to General American Pronunciation. Segment Features.” has been written with special consideration of the needs and interests of Slovak speakers of English. The approach of this book is a little different to previous similarly practical books on pronunciation for teachers in that the underlying theory and activities suit Slovak students, and it does make the whole topic very accessible for both Slovak teachers and students. Designed for Slovak students working alone as well as for classroom use it provides intensive practice in stress and intonation of particular sound contrasts. In this pronunciation course for intermediate Slovak students of English, each unit provides intensive practice in key intonation patterns of English, and shows how English sound contrasts are difficult for speakers of Slovak. This book is for teachers who are looking for ways to incorporate some theoretical issues of phonetics, and pronunciation into their classes and those who want to learn more about phonology and would make a great source book about pronunciation work for teaching training purposes.

The preface with notes facing the theory explains how the book is organized. All 7 units can be used independently of each other. The examples and tasks in each unit lead students from theory to practice in sounds, stress and intonation in relation to connected material found in real life. The first part in the book offers the reader with some general questions or statements to consider and reflect upon how and what sounds humans produce in language. This area develops the reader’s understanding in relation to phonetics and phonology, English accents along with some aspects of teaching pronunciation. This includes pronunciation models learners should aim to achieve, and why teachers should focus on pronunciation during lessons.

Unit 2 is dedicated to detailed explanation of the movement and sound produced in the mouth. The author also provides a detailed description of the parts of the articulatory system - the tongue, teeth, and lips etc. along with visual images of the position of the articulators during speech.

Units 3, 4 focus on the properties of segments i.e., vowels, consonants and diphthongs with the corresponding spelling in English. These units are extensive and students, should they be able to dedicate the time to reading this area, will develop their awareness of pronunciation, such as explanations of fricatives, plosives, etc, as well as further information on more learner related issues, consonant clusters, word stress or connective speech.

Unit 5 is devoted to teaching pronunciation, which “is undoubtedly a matter of considerable importance” (Metruk R. “A Concise Introduction to General American Pronunciation. Segment Features.” P.51). As the book is aimed mainly at prospective English language teachers, this is one of the important issues to be discussed.
There are many things that prospective English language teachers need to know how to fit into their limited class time in future – grammar, vocabulary, reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Students often think it isn’t that important, or there will be not enough time to teach pronunciation so it often gets pushed to the bottom of the list. But if we want our students to be prepared to teach pupils to speak English understandably, pronunciation is important. The days when learners only needed writing and reading skills in English are past. The learners will need to speak and understand English in real life to communicate with both native speakers of English and speakers of other languages. Even if their vocabulary and grammar are strong, if their pronunciation isn’t easy to understand, their communication will fail. We owe it to our students, as prospective English language teachers, to give them the tools they’ll need to be able to teach their pupils to communicate successfully in English.

Under conditions of successful language learning three main requirements are mentioned: motivation, exposure and output. Learners make more progress if they want to learn. No teacher can force learners to learn if they’re not motivated. This also can be applied to teaching pronunciation. Teachers can provide information and many chances to practice, but they don’t have the power to change the learners’ pronunciation for them. They have to want to work at it themselves. However, it is stated I the book, that “when EFL learners enjoy success, and when they feel satisfaction with what they have accomplished, they is every likelihood that they will become motivated.” (Metruk R. “A Concise Introduction to General American Pronunciation. Segmented Features.” P.51). So, teachers can help motivate the learners by showing them how improving their pronunciation will help them reach their goals.

Exposure refers to the contact that the learner has with the language that they are learning, either generally or with specific language points. Referring to the language in general and pronunciation in particular, it often refers to contacts outside the classroom. One of the most important tasks of the teacher is to give learners enough exposure to examples of pronunciation from different speakers. The teachers can also use natural input from CDs, television, video, web sites, magazines, and books.

Dr R. Metruk also presents some practical considerations and recommendations for the output phase in teaching speaking and pronunciation, when students are encouraged to use what has been presented as input and to expand their spoken repertoire. In his opinion, communication-based activities which guide students from input to output offer them the opportunity to foster accurate pronunciation skills in the target language. The final two units – “Errors in the English pronunciation by Slovak EFL learners”, “English-Slovak dictionary of phonetic terms” – are obviously self-explanatory and focus on these areas of pronunciation.

This book is an excellent introduction to, or review of, the basics of phonology together with some useful activities to use with students for in-service training sessions. The book contains wealth of ideas and the terminology related to the area of phonology and phonetics, as well about learner-related issues regarding pronunciation and the practical aspects of teaching pronunciation in the classroom.
Reviewer: Yevgeniya Karpenko, PhD, senior lecturer, Zhytomyr state Ivan Franko university, Ukraine

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