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## Developing a Pragmatics Test for Arabic ESL Learners

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### **Abstract**

The present study replicated Liu's (2007) study on validating a multiple-choice discourse completion test (MCDCT) for measuring second language (L2) pragmatics. In order to investigate whether his validation methods can be applied to a different speech act with learners from a different linguistic and cultural background, this study was conducted for native speakers of Arabic learning English as a Second Language (ESL) to assess the speech act of refusal. First, an exemplar generation and situation likelihood questionnaire was administered to 15 Arabic participants to elicit refusal situations to be used for constructing a MCDCT. Following this, metapragmatic assessment was carried out in order to determine social variables of status/power, distance, and severity in each of the elicited situations. Then, a situation pilot questionnaire was given to 14 Arabic-speakers and 11 English-speakers to collect responses to be used for answer keys and distracters for the MCDCT. Two native speakers of English rated responses by Arabic-speakers and those marked inappropriate were used as distracters for the instrument, while English-speakers' responses were included as keys. Due to a small sample size and low inter-rater agreement, the resultant item number for the MCDCT became six.

**Key words:** Arabic learners of English, MCDCT, pragmatics, refusals, tests,

## Introduction

Bachman (1990) has suggested that communicative competence consists of two components: organizational competence which refers to grammatical knowledge, and pragmatic competence which refers to the “capacity for implementing, or executing [organizational] competence in appropriate, contextualized communicative language use” (p. 84). This pragmatic competence has been identified as one of the indispensable communicative competences by many researchers (e.g., Bachman, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980). When this pragmatic competence fails in communication, that is, when the speaker’s utterance is perceived differently by a hearer than how the speaker intended it to be perceived, serious miscommunication or misunderstanding could arise. However, pragmatics has not received vigorous attention in the language classroom compared to other skill areas. In addition, little attention has been given to the assessment of second language (L2) pragmatics (Liu, 2006), or more specifically, assessment of L2 pragmatics in classroom contexts (Ishihara, 2009). Reflecting this, there are no established and widely used pragmatics instruments available (Bachman, 1990; Roever, 2004). Difficulty in the assessment of pragmatics has also been pointed out due to its contextualized nature; there is a tension between the construction of authentic assessment tasks and practicality (McNamara & Roever, 2006; Roever, 2004).

## Literature Review

### *Previous Studies on Assessment of L2 Pragmatics*

In order to better assess language learners’ pragmatics competence, researchers have designed at least six instruments described below (Enochs & Yoshitake-Strain, 1996, 1999; Hudson, Detmer, & Brown, 1992; Hudson et al., 1995; Roever, 2005; Yamashita, 1996; and Yoshitake-Strain, 1997). The measures that Hudson et al. (1992; 1995) developed are as follows: (1) self-assessment test (SA), (2) listening laboratory production test (LL), (3) open discourse completion test (OPDCT), (4) multiple choice discourse completion test (MCDCT), (5) role-play self-assessment test (RPSA), and (6) role-play test (RP). These instruments for Japanese learners studying English as a second language (ESL) varied in type, method, and settings for each study, measuring speech acts of requests, refusals, and apologies along with the different socio-cultural variables of power, distance, and imposition.

In developing their MCDCT, the following three points were considered: (a) strategy use, (b) sociopragmatic misjudgments, and (c) phrasing/expressions. Keys were created based on native speakers’ responses, while distracters were from non-native speakers’ responses. Some issues associated with their MCDCT are that no systematic protocol study was conducted, that no agreement data on metapragmatic assessment between native speakers and non-native speakers of English was provided, and that no statistical analyses associated with reliability and validity were carried out (Liu, 2006).

These instruments were statistically analyzed by Yamashita (1996) with translated versions of Hudson et al.’s tests (1992, 1995) with some modifications. Her participants were learners of Japanese studying in a Japanese as a second language (JSL) context. Results showed that although high reliability and validity were found in the five assessment instruments (e.g, SA, LL, OPDCT, and RPSA), the MCDCT had many issues such as low reliability. It was also found that the translated instruments were appropriate to be used for English speakers studying JSL. One limitation with Yamashita’s study (1996) is that a metapragmatic assessment was not conducted to investigate social variables (Liu, 2006).

Enochs and Yoshitake-Strain (1996, 1999) conducted a validation study of Hudson et al. (1992,



1995) using Japanese EFL learners. Without modification, Hudson et al.'s (1992, 1995) six instruments were administered to investigate their reliability and validity. Results revealed that, similar to Yamashita (1996), reliability and validity were confirmed with the instruments except for OPDCT and MCDCT. Similar results were also found in Yoshitake-Strain's study (1997) in which she conducted a qualitative analysis on the four instruments (i.e., OPDCT, MCDCT, LL, and RP) used in Hudson et al.'s study (1992, 1995). Her participants were Japanese learners of English and analyses involved examining pragmatic features and the strategies used by them.

These previous studies have contributed to validating L2 pragmatics instruments. However, according to Hudson (2001), variability of speaker behavior in discourse needs to be considered. This means variability related to the social nature of the speech event and the speaker's strategic and linguistic choices to achieve communicative goals. Yamashita (1996) and Yoshitake-Strain (1997) lack such variability among the informants.

Roever (2005) developed web-based tests of ESL pragmalinguistics using MCDCTs, to investigate recognition of situational routine formulas, comprehension of implicature, and knowledge of speech act strategies. The instruments were pilot-tested several times, including concurrent verbal protocols. Results showed that the degree of imposition and proficiency caused difficulty in the speech act section, similarly, proficiency influenced knowledge of ESL implicature. Exposure to the target culture accounted for knowledge of routines. In addition, strong evidence for the validity of the MCDCT was found.

As shown earlier, previous studies except for Roever (2005) have revealed MCDCT's low reliability in assessing L2 learners' pragmatic competence. In addition, there are other weaknesses associated with related instruments such as that DCTs do not neatly replicate actual speech; some items used in DCTs are not used in real-world conversations (e.g., Golato, 2003). However, the primary advantage of MCDCTs is their high practicality in administration and the ease of scoring (Liu, 2006) unlike other measures such as RP or LL. In various classroom settings where instructors have a limited time in administering and scoring tests, there might be cases when they do not appropriately measure their students' learning outcomes due to impracticality of other pragmatic instruments. Since "the consequences of *not* administering the test" (Roever, 2004) should be taken into consideration, MCDCTs could still be instrumental in assessing L2 learners' pragmatic abilities if developed appropriately. In fact, Liu (2007) was able to design a MCDCT which achieved high reliability and validity to assess Chinese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' knowledge of the speech act of apology by carefully following several steps. First, students in China were asked to identify the situations which require apologies, and to report how likely such situations would occur in their daily lives. Second, metapragmatic assessment that involved both Chinese and American students was carried out to analyze the social variables to be applied in each scenario, followed by validation of the scenarios and designing multiple-choice options for each scenario. Finally, a pilot test was conducted on Chinese university students.

Accordingly, since there is a call for more research as stated by Liu (2006, 2007) to investigate if his method can be applied to other speech acts in different linguistic and cultural contexts, the present study was conducted. The purpose of this study is to validate the instrument to assess the speech act of refusal demonstrated by native speakers of Arabic studying in an intensive English program (IEP) in a university in North America. This study can be considered as a replication of Liu's (2007) study described above with a different native language group of students in an ESL context with a different speech act (i.e., refusal).

### ***The Speech Act of Refusals***

The speech act of refusal happens in response to invitations or suggestions (Al-Eryani, 2007). Refusals are often influenced by gender, age, education level, power/status, and social distance (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Mills, 2003). It should be noted that different languages and cultures refuse in a different manner (Al-Eryani, 2007). Because refusal is a face-threatening act to the listener or requester, with aforementioned various factors that need to be considered when appropriately making a refusal, refusals are difficult speech acts (Know, 2004).

In the present study, refusals were selected as the target speech act because there was a call for research with different speech acts (Liu, 2007). Moreover, compared to other speech acts such as apologies or requests, refusals have not been widely studied in the area of language assessment.

### **Method**

#### ***Method in Liu's (2007) Study***

In his original study, there were five steps to develop the MCDCT, followed by its pilot test. The first five stages consisted of exemplar generation, situation likelihood investigation, metapragmatic assessment, situation pilot study, and development of multiple-choice options. For exemplar generation, topics for the scenarios which required apologies were obtained by means of an exemplar generation questionnaire. This was particularly important as authenticity is of special importance in language testing; in addition, its potential influence on test-takers' performance has been reported (Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

In situation likelihood investigation, likelihood of each of the 46 situations elicited in the exemplar generation questionnaire was investigated on a scale of one to five with five being the most likely and one being the least likely in their daily life. The 30 situations that earned the highest means were chosen for further investigation.

The third step, metapragmatic assessment, was aimed at examining social variables (i.e., social distance, relative power and status, and the severity of a specific apology situation) empirically. This assessment was conducted to capture potential culture-specificity of pragmatic expectations, assessments, and sociopragmatic elements (Blum-Kulka, 1991; Spencer-Oatey, 1993). In addition, a metapragmatic judgment is useful in establishing degrees of equivalence between multiple languages both at the sociocultural and pragmalinguistic levels (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1984). Both Chinese native speakers and English native speakers were recruited for this assessment in which they were asked to identify the variables of power, distance, and severity on a scale of one to five. Since this numerical scale did not produce high agreement among participants, different judgment scales were implemented to achieve higher agreement, followed by statistical analyses to identify significant differences between Chinese and English native speakers.

Following this, a situation pilot study was conducted to obtain preliminary data for alternatives and keys in each MCDCT item. Both Chinese and English native speakers were asked to respond to the situations which were narrowed down in the previous stage. Two trained English-speaking raters evaluated their responses on a five-point scale to determine their appropriateness.

For the development of multiple-choice options, the data collected in the situation pilot study were used to develop alternatives as well as keys for each item. Responses by English-speakers were coded as the "key" and responses by Chinese-speakers categorized as inappropriate were coded as "distractor." Based on these keys and alternatives, a new multiple-choice questionnaire was created for native English speakers to identify appropriateness of each alternative for all items. The same procedure was repeated after refining alternatives and items in the previous

questionnaire.

### *Procedure in the Present Study*

The present study employed the following four steps: an exemplar generation and situation likelihood-combined questionnaire, metapragmatic assessment, a situation pilot study, and development of multiple-choice options. Description and participants involved in each step is described below.

**Exemplar generation and situation likelihood-combined questionnaire.** For this questionnaire, 15 male native speakers of Arabic completed the instrument to elicit ten situations that they had actually either experienced, or seen, or heard, involving a refusal in their home country (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Kuwait). Due to limited time, situation likelihood investigation was also included in the questionnaire in which participants were asked to mark the likelihood of each situation that they described on a scale of one to five with one being least likely and five being very likely.

The participants were all enrolled in the IEP at a university in the southwestern US. They were recruited for this study in their own classrooms after their regular instruction. Their English proficiency varied; from approximately a 30 in the internet-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to between 60 and 70. Their length of stay in the US also varied from a few months to several years. For the lowest proficiency group of participants, a bilingual of Arabic and English translated the researcher's instruction to elicit accurate information for the questionnaire. They were also allowed to provide their answers in Arabic; however, only a few did so. The same bilingual graduate student translated their responses into English.

After giving instructions for the questionnaire by providing examples, the questionnaire was distributed and participants were asked to bring it to the researcher at their earliest convenience. This instrument elicited a total of 66 refusal situations as most participants did not provide ten situations.

**Metapragmatic assessment.** In Liu's (2007) study, a group of Chinese-speakers and another group of English-speakers completed a metapragmatic assessment questionnaire to determine social variables such as relative power and status, social distance, and the severity of a specific apology situation. However, in the present study, the assessment was conducted by the researcher herself only.

In each situation, the people involved were first identified (e.g., a father and a son). Then, social variables of power and status, social distance, and the severity of each refusal situation were examined. The variables were coded with either a lack or an existence of each variable. For power and status, equal status was also identified. Following this, all situations were compared with Liu's situations and ten situations that had similar variable combinations (e.g., higher interlocutor's status, a lack of social distance between the speakers, and a lack of severity) with Liu's were selected. Table 1 summarizes the situation variables after the metapragmatic assessment.

**Table 1**

### *The Distribution of the Situation Variables after the Metapragmatic Assessment*

Situation Variables	Cell number and attributes									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Power (P)	-	-	-	=	=	=	=	+	+	=
Distance (D)	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+
Severity (S)	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	-

*Notes:* The cell numbers correspond to item numbers in the situation pilot questionnaire.

**Situation pilot study.** In order to collect responses to be used as either keys or alternatives for the MCDCT, a questionnaire was developed based on the situations narrowed down in the metapragmatic assessment. Ten situations were listed with the directions and an example (see Appendix A). Participants for this situation pilot study consisted of 14 Arabic-speaking students most of whom also completed the first exemplar generation and situation likelihood questionnaire (N = 14; 13 male, 1 female). In addition, 11 native speakers of English who were all graduate students of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) or applied linguistics answered the same questionnaire. The latter group of participants were contacted by e-mail for recruitment and those who agreed to participate in the study returned the questionnaire to the researcher. The procedure and directions were given in the e-mail. Both groups of participants were asked to respond in writing as if they encountered the ten situations. Although most Arabic participants responded to all ten situations, nine responses were not provided out of a possible 140 responses. On the other hand, most English speaking participants provided their answers in all ten situations; however, one participant was unable to respond to one situation.

Following this, two native English speakers who did not complete the questionnaire rated Arabic participants' responses. Before the rating session, training was provided based on Hudson et al.'s (1995) training manual, which was also used in Liu (2007). They were asked to rate their answers on a scale of one to five, one being least appropriate and five being most appropriate. They were reminded to ignore grammatical errors as long as the responses were comprehensible. Moreover, since both raters had extensive experiences in teaching ESL, it was assumed that they had more tolerance for pragmatic errors than average native English speakers without such a background. Therefore, they were instructed not to be overly tolerant when evaluating their responses.

After their grading, inter-rater reliability was computed. The percentage of exact agreement was 32.4 %. This increased to 65.7 % when the percentage of time raters' agreed within one point. Cohen's Kappa was considerably low, at .13.

**Development of multiple-choice options.** After reviewing the two raters' evaluation of Arabic participants' responses, two to three responses marked inappropriate (i.e., scores of one or two) with exact or close agreement between the raters (i.e., within one point difference) were included as alternatives. Following this, English-speakers' responses were reviewed and similar responses to each item were eliminated. Then, two of their responses were included per item as keys. Grammatical errors in Arabic participants' responses were corrected as much as possible.

## Results and Discussion

### *Exemplar Generation and Situation Likelihood Questionnaire*

The exemplar generation and situation likelihood questionnaire which was administered to Arabic participants generated a total of 66 situations that involved a refusal. Table 2 below summarizes the situations elicited by the instrument.

Most frequently occurred refusal situations were between friends, reported 23 times (see

Appendix B for some examples of various refusal situations). The likelihood of the situations involving friends varied, but higher frequency (i.e., frequency of 4 and 5) was indicated more than lower frequency (i.e., frequency of 1 and 2). Refusal situations with family members such as “parents and son,” “father and son,” “mother and son,” “sister and brother,” and “between brothers” were often described, producing a total of 28 situations. Particularly, situations between “mother and son” were reported most with a higher frequency of occurrences with 4s and 5s. Among non-family member relationships, except for the relationship “between friends,” situations involving “girlfriend and boyfriend,” “strangers,” and “classmates” were reported with a few occurrences. Finally, the category “others” included situations involving “government official and ordinary person,” “shop clerk and customer,” “teacher and student,” and “employer and employee.” For these situations, both relatively high and low frequency of occurrences was reported.

**Table 2**  
*Results of Exemplar Generation and Situation Likelihood Questionnaire*

Relationship	Occurrences	Likelihood					N/A
		1	2	3	4	5	
Parents-son	2	1	0	0	1	0	0
Father-son	6	1	1	0	2	2	0
Mother-son	10	0	2	0	4	2	2
Sister-brother	3	0	0	0	3	0	0
Between brothers	6	0	2	0	4	0	0
Grandmother-grandson	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Girlfriend-boyfriend	4	0	0	0	1	1	2
Between strangers	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Between friends	23	1	7	2	9	5	0
Between classmates	2	0	0	1	0	0	1
Others	8	0	3	0	4	0	2
Total	66	5	15	3	28	10	7

*Notes:* The numbers below “likelihood” shows the frequency scale. Numbers in each relationship show raw counts of each frequency in each situation.

Overall, the questionnaire seemed to be able to elicit refusal situations. However, some participants with low English proficiency did not understand the directions and provided unrelated responses. Having expected this problem, the aforementioned bilingual graduate student translated the researcher’s instruction into Arabic for this questionnaire for low English proficiency learners. However, this translation service was not provided to other students who had higher English proficiency. How much of this translation influenced refusal situation elicitation is not known; however, it would have been better to provide translation to all participants or not provide translation at all to minimize any extraneous influences on the instrument.

Another issue worth noting is that even though participants were asked to describe refusal situations that they had experienced, seen, or heard in their home country, it is not known whether the situations they described actually happened or not. They could be something they made up by themselves. Also, even if participants had actually experienced those situations, it is



not clear whether they actually happened in their home country or not. Since all participants had lived in the US when this study was conducted, it is possible that they were unintentionally thinking about refusal situations that they had experienced in the US.

Furthermore, the participants were all native speakers of Arabic, but their home country slightly varied; a majority from Saudi Arabia, but a few from Kuwait, Egypt, and Yemen. Since cultural differences would be assumed even among countries that share the same language, the effects of these cultural differences on their responses are possible. Yet, a few native speakers of English who responded to the subsequent questionnaire indicated that some of the situations listed on the instrument were somewhat unfamiliar to them. This suggests that the situations elicited in the first questionnaire should contain at least a few authentic situations unique to Arabic-speaking cultures.

### *Metapragmatic Assessment*

In order to identify situational variables, namely, power/status relationship, distance between the speakers, and severity of each situation, metapragmatic assessment was conducted. Table 3 shows its results. A + in power indicates that the speaker had a higher status than the listener and a – indicates that the speaker had a lower status than the listener. A = means an equal status. For the variable of distance, a + shows the speaker and the listener were familiar with each other, whereas a – shows they were strangers. For the variable of severity, a + means the situation was severe, while a – means the situation was not severe.

**Table 3**  
*Summary of Situational Variables*

Relationship	Power	Distance	Severity
Parents-son	-	+	-
Father-son	-	+	-
Mother-son	-	+	-
Sister-brother	+/-	+	-
Between brothers	+/-	+	-
Grandmother-grandson	-	+	-
Girlfriend-boyfriend	+	+	-
Between strangers	=	-	-
Between friends	=	+	-
Between classmates	=	+	-
Others	varies	-	+/-

For the power variable, situations involving parents were all given a – as well as a situation with “grandmother and grandson.” Situations with “sister and brother” or “between brothers” were given both a + and a – as it was not known if the sibling was older or younger. Situations with “boyfriend and girlfriend” were given a plus as it seems that men generally have a higher social status than women in Arabic-speaking countries. “Classmates,” “friends,” and “strangers” were all given a = since they are in equal status in most cases.

In regards to distance, since most situations involved people that participants knew well, such as family members, friends, classmates, a + was given to all situations except for “others” and “strangers.”

Finally, most situations were involved with trivial requests which were refused subsequently, such as refusing to go to the market with parents, or to go to lunch with friends. Therefore, a – was given to all situations except for “others.”

Relationships named “others” was identified as “varies” for power and a - for distance as it included a customer and a shop clerk, or a student and his professor, or a government official and an ordinary citizen. For severity, most situations were more severe than other situations with family members or friends. For example, there was a case reported that a government official asked for a bribe to complete a paperwork requested by a citizen who actually refused to give a bribe. Because not providing a bribe could result in not having the paperwork done, this case was considered severe. As mentioned previously, after identifying social variables, their combinations of variables were compared with Liu’s (2007), and ten situations that carried similar variable combinations with Liu’s study were chosen for a situation pilot study (see Table 1 given earlier for more reference).

Metapragmatic assessment is important in developing pragmatics instrument as it is possible that people from different cultures perceive situations differently (Liu, 2006, 2007). Therefore, Liu had two groups of participants for this assessment: a group of native speakers of English and another group of Chinese speakers to examine the degree of equivalence between two languages both at the sociocultural and pragmalinguistic levels (Olshetain & Blum-Kulka, 1984). In the present study, this assessment was conducted by the researcher herself. Since she is not extremely familiar with Arabic-speaking culture, such as how age and gender influence a power relationship, the results of this metapragmatic assessment could be problematic. As Liu did, it would have been better if native speakers of Arabic and English actually identified social variables, especially because the researcher’s native language is not English, and because the major purpose of this assessment was to investigate the degree of equivalence between two languages from sociocultural and pragmalinguistic perspectives. Yet, this metapragmatic assessment had to be conducted to select situations for the following situation pilot study.

### ***Situation Pilot Study***

A questionnaire that contained the ten situations chosen as a result of metapragmatic assessment was administered to both native speakers of Arabic and English (see Appendix A for the sample questionnaire). The purpose of this pilot study was to elicit responses to the situations, which would be used as keys and alternatives for the MCDCT. A total of 131 responses were obtained from Arabic participants and 109 responses from American participants. Among Arabic participants, there seemed to be some learners who did not understand the directions probably due to their low English proficiency. Accordingly, some responses were either incomprehensible or unrelated to the situations. The resulting responses from Arabic participants were 102. These responses were evaluated by two native speakers of English who did not provide responses to this pilot study questionnaire.

Generally the questionnaire was able to elicit responses to refusal situations well from both groups of participants. However, some situations seemed to be universal; that is, pragmatic transfer was possible in which even Arabic participants with low English proficiency did not have trouble providing appropriate answers. Therefore, in situations like item number six where a stranger asked for a cigarette, most Arabic participants were able to supply appropriate answers. This prevented obtaining inappropriate responses to be used as alternatives. Furthermore, as indicated earlier, the agreement between the two raters was quite low; which made it difficult to obtain many inappropriate responses as distracters. Both raters were graduate

students of TESL or applied linguistics, but one was female in her late 20s and the other was male in his late 30s. These age and gender differences might have influenced their ratings. The effect of their ESL teaching experience did not seem to influence the results, however, because the male rater who had longer teaching experiences than the female rater was not as lenient as the female rater. Another issue related to the rating was that the training session was not conducted together, but they were given separately, although the training was provided in a very similar manner. If the session had been given together and if the raters had discussed their ratings, higher rater agreement could have been achieved.

### ***Development of Multiple-Choice Options***

To develop keys and distracters for the MCDCT, inappropriate responses by Arabic-speakers which had high rater agreement were chosen as alternatives for each item. Responses by English-speakers which had similar lengths as other distracters were selected as keys as much as possible, because longer responses often give a clue to test-takers (Miller, Lin, & Gronlund, 1995). Situations that were not successful in obtaining inappropriate responses were eliminated. The number of alternatives varies due to the distractor availability and the rater agreement rate (see Appendix C for the MCDCT).

Since four situations could not obtain inappropriate responses, remaining six situations were presented in the MCDCT. Most distracters seem to be clearly inappropriate to each given situation. Generally speaking, Arabic participants' responses were shorter than those by English-speaking participants. This made it difficult to control the length of answer keys. Responses marked inappropriate by Arabic learners often lacked explanations or reasons for the refusal and they seemed abrupt. These issues surely need to be addressed for them to gain better pragmatics skills. On the other hand, although there were some varieties of responses among native English speakers, most supplied reasons and an apology for refusing a request.

It is unfortunate that due to a limited number of obtained situations in the first questionnaire and low rater agreement, four situations had to be eliminated from this instrument. More varieties of situations need to be collected in order to obtain and assess a large enough sample of learners' pragmatics competence. This is particularly important to achieve validity (Miller et al., 1995). In addition, raters have to be trained better to achieve a higher agreement rate in order to collect more possible distracters.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations need attention. First of all, the sample size for both instruments was very small. This, particularly for Arabic participants, negatively influenced the number of situations obtained for the first questionnaire, and responses for the second questionnaire. A larger number of participants will be needed for a future study. Their English proficiency level should have been controlled. In order to recruit as many participants as possible, Arabic learners with limited English skills were also included in this study. In order to address this potential problem, translation was provided for some subjects. However, as mentioned previously, since not all participants had access to this service, not only was it not fair to participants, but that lack of translation could have possibly influenced their responses.

Rating for the second instrument suggested a major problem. With the low rater agreement, most responses by Arabic speakers had to be discarded. Liu (2007) also had problems in achieving a high agreement rate; however, by identifying the sources of disagreement, and improving the training, higher agreement needs to be obtained.



Finally, for metapragmatic assessment, it would have been necessary to have groups of Arabic and English speakers to identify social variables and examine the extent to which their perceptions differed for the situations. Even without having a large group of participants of those two languages, at least it would have been more valid to have a few Arabic speakers to check the researcher's interpretation of the variables.

### Conclusion

Even though pragmatics has still not gained as much popularity in ESL/EFL classrooms as other areas such as grammar and vocabulary, it is still an important area with which even advanced learners have trouble. Because instruction and assessment cannot be separated, language assessment researchers should continue to strive for developing better instruments to measure L2 pragmatics for better pragmatics instruction for language learners. Liu's (2007) study well reflects the need for constructing and validating such instruments.

Accordingly, further studies to develop instruments for L2 pragmatics should be carried out based on his method. First, it is proposed that native speakers of English, in addition to native speakers of Arabic, will be recruited for the first questionnaire of exemplar generation and situation likelihood. This way, it should help examine any differences in refusal situations between the two cultures. Second, metapragmatic assessment should be conducted more thoroughly by actually having both Arabic and English native speakers identify social variables. Next, with newly obtained data, multiple-choice options should be revised and the number of items should be increased. Following this, a pilot study of the new MCDCT should be carried out accompanied by statistical analyses to examine reliability and validity of the instrument. If a large group of Arabic learners participate in the pilot study, Rasch analyses should be conducted as well.

Many steps are to be implemented to design a valid and reliable L2 pragmatics instrument through the present study. It is hoped that with revision and expansion of Liu's methods, this study will provide a basis for future studies in not only the area of language assessment but also L2 pragmatics.

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University, California.

**Appendix A  
Questionnaire 2**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Level: \_\_\_\_\_ Your country: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Please read the following example first. Then read the following situations carefully. Next, please respond to each situation in detail. That is, what would you say if you were in the following situations? Please pay special attention to each situation and who you are talking to (ex. Is he/she somebody you need to show respect or not?).

Situation: My mother asked me to clean the living room. But I was too busy and I didn't want to do it.

My mother: "*Sawako, can you clean the living room?*"

My response: *I have other things to do. So I can't.*

- 1) Situation: A shop clerk tries to sell his product very persistently, but you don't want to buy it. What would you tell the clerk?

Your response: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 2) Situation: Your father asked you to get some groceries from the market, but you don't want to. What would you tell your father?

Your response: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 3) Situation: In a university class, you were asked to leave the class because of your bad behavior (e.g., sleeping in class, chatting with your classmates), but you don't want to. What would you tell the professor?

Your response: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 4) Situation: Your best friend asked you for a lot of money, but you don't want to. What would you tell him?

Your response: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 5) Situation: A stranger asked you for a cigarette, but you don't want to give one. What would you tell the person?

Your response: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 6) Situation: Your friend asked you to have lunch with him, but you have to take your father to the market. So you cannot go to lunch with your friend. What would you tell your friend?

Your response: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- 7) Situation: Your co-worker (= colleague) asked you to cover for him because he is sick. But you are not close to the person and you don't want to cover for him. What would you tell your co-worker?

Your response: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- 8) Situation: Your little brother asked you to buy an expensive toy for him, but you don't want to. What would you tell him?

Your response: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- 9) Situation: You work at a grocery store and your customer called you to deliver some food to his home, but you can't because you are too busy. What would you tell the customer?

Your response: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- 10) Situation: Your friend asked you to help with his homework, but you have an appointment with your dentist, so you can't help him. What would you tell him?

Your response: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B**  
**Refusal Situations**

Likelihood	Relationship	Situation
4	Between brothers	A brother asked another brother to do the work that he was supposed to do by himself. The task that was originally asked by their father.
2	Government officials-ordinary person	Somebody needed a paper work at a government office and was asked to give money as a bribe to a government official.
2	Student-professor	In a university class, a student was asked to leave because of his bad behavior, but the student refused and university guards had to take him out from the classroom.
4	Shop clerk-customer	A persistent clerk tries to sell products to his/her customer. But the customer refused.

3	Acquaintance-friend	A person needed to sell his car because he was in need of money. But his friends tried to take an advantage of the situation and offered less money than the car's actual value. The seller refused.
2	Father-son	A father asked his son to bring some groceries from the supermarket, but the son refused.
3	Between friends	A friend invited another friend to lunch, but he refused.
4	Sister-brother	A sister asked her brother to go with her to clothing shops, but he refused.
2	Mother-son	A mother asked her son to go with her to see his grandmother but he refused.
1	Grandmother-grandson	A grandmother asked her grandson to go with her to see his mother but he refused.
5	Mother-son	A mother asked her son to take her to the market.
?	Girlfriend-boyfriend	A girlfriend asked her boyfriend to have breakfast with her.

### Appendix C MCDCT

Note: Alternatives in italics are responses from native speakers of English.

1) Situation: A shop clerk tries to sell his product very persistently, but you don't want to buy it.

What would you tell the clerk?

- a) *No, thank you, I'm not interested.*
- b) I have something similar.
- c) I'm sorry, I don't want to buy anything. I am really sorry.
- d) Sorry, I don't have time. I have to go to my house.
- e) *No.. it looks great, but I'm not going to get anything today.*

2) Situation: Your father asked you to get some groceries from the market, but you don't want to.

What would you tell your father?

- a) You should go.
- b) *Can I do it later?*
- c) I don't have enough money. Sorry.
- d) *Ok, but I'm really busy today.*

3) Situation: Your best friend asked you for a lot of money, but you don't want to. What would you tell him?

- a) I don't have money right now.
- b) *I'd love to help you out, but unfortunately, I can't lend you the money.*
- c) *I really don't have it to spare.*
- d) Now, I can't give you.

4) Situation: Your friend asked you to have lunch with him, but you have to take your father to the market. So you cannot go to lunch with your friend. What would you tell your friend?

- a) *I wish I could but I have to help my dad.*
- b) *That would be fun, but I promised to take dad shopping. How about tomorrow?*
- c) What about next day?
- d) Sorry, I don't have time.

5) Situation: You work at a grocery store and your customer called you to deliver some food to his home, but you can't because you are too busy. What would you tell the customer?

- a) Sorry because we don't have a car.
- b) *I'm sorry. We are too busy right now, and there is a long delay on food delivery.*
- c) Sorry, I don't have time.
- d) *I'm sorry sir. We aren't able to bring groceries directly to our customers. We just don't have the staff for that kind of service.*

6) Situation: Your friend asked you to help with his homework, but you have an appointment with your dentist, so you can't help him. What would you tell him?

- a) Talk to somebody else. I have an appointment.
- b) Sorry, I don't have to do it.
- c) *I can't right now because I have to go to the dentist, but what about later today?*
- d) *I'm sorry, but I have a dentist appointment then. Maybe a different time?*

## Grammatical Pairs in English and Arabic Translation<sup>i</sup>

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### Abstract

Grammatical pairs are surface markers which encode different processing strategies but seem to work in free variation. For translation trainees and foreign language learners, these pairs often become a recurring nightmare not only because of their close connection but also because most have no direct equivalents in their native language. The long list of English grammatical pairs includes such formal markers as *nearly/almost*, *as if/as though*, *will/shall*, *may/might*, *must/have to*, *whether/if*, *yet/already*, *enough + noun / noun + enough*, *because/for*, *barely/hardly...* and verbal patterns like  $(v_1+v_2)$ ,  $(v_1 \text{ to } v_2)$  and  $(v_1-v_2\text{-ing})$ . In Arabic, the list includes dichotomies such as *'inna/laqad*, *lam/ma:*, *la:/lan*, *sa-/sawfa*, *faqat/fahasb*, *na:hi:ka/fadhlan*, *la:/kalla:*, *na'am/'ajal*, etc. This study, based on corpus analysis, claims that if grammatical surface similarities often induce Arab translation trainees to under- and mistranslation, this has less to do with the absence of direct equivalents in L1 than with the approach adopted in pedagogical grammar intended to account for the working of such markers in both languages. In fact, present-day foreign language pedagogy has been hampered not only by a descriptive sentence-grammar, which has perpetuated static binaries between Arabic and other languages, but also by a monolingual bias which prevents any insight into the working of natural languages. Findings suggest that an updated contrastive Arabic-English grammar, tailored for translation training and derived from real languages at work, is a prerequisite for effective training and successful interlingual transfer.

**Keywords:** Grammatical pairs, metalinguistic awareness, translation training, translation sign, processing strategy.



### Introduction

When zealous concern for fidelity to the source language (SL) becomes a predominant feature of translation training, it often produces less effective student translations which offend the norms of readability in the target language (TL), thereby violating the expectations of TT readers. This tendency to foreground the SL has been further consolidated by theoretical research in which the major translation categories, such as fidelity, equivalence, deviation, shift, loss and effect, have been approached mostly from the perspective of the SL. Such reductionism is detrimental not only to the status of the overshadowed TL, but also to the training process, which sometimes turns into a situation of didactic disempowerment far from satisfying the needs of prospective translators.

This paper claims that for a translation to be effective it should pull in the direction of both languages. In fact, the process involves an L1, an L2 and a provisional translator's inter-language marked by constant negotiation of the *meaning* in L1 and the *form* in L2. In Saussurean terms, the *translation sign* has a cross-linguistic status with the signified in L1 and the signifier in L2. The merit of the metaphor is that it reveals the range of complexity involved in interlingual transfer. Compared to the linguistic sign, the translation sign is, first, more complex, consisting of a word, a phrase and often a larger structure. Second, the signifier in translation is not always predetermined but often negotiated in the light of the differences between L1 and L2. Thus in certain contexts we have zero signifiers like the English formal markers *do*, *be* and *-ing* which have no overt equivalents in Standard Arabic:

- She is a lady of about forty. هي سيدة تناهز الأربعين.

Zero signifiers are also detected when a cultural value resists interlingual transfer (محراب / cathedral/ etc.) Third, the signified-signifier relationship is not arbitrary since the selection of the signifier depends on the semantic or grammatical value conveyed by the signified as it works in  $l_1$ ; otherwise the attempt at transfer turns into a free writing exercise. Fourth, when the signified is a grammatical value the choice of the signifier often depends more on L2 than on L1. This is because different languages offer different grammatical solutions to linguistic phenomena e.g. reference to time, aspect, mood, voice, modality, negation, quantification, etc. These are grammatical operations common to natural languages but at their surfaces very often encoded differently. A pertinent example is *negation*, which is encoded in at least six negators in Arabic and only one in English. Approached from this angle, adherence to form in L2 becomes a prerequisite for effective transfer of L1 content. In consequence, *fidelity*, as a major translation category, is no longer the monopoly of L1 because it is extended to L2. The potential claim that adherence to form in L2 is assumed in every translation is based on very slim didactic evidence. It is probably assumed by trainers and professional translators, but not necessarily by budding prospective translators, especially when they are not sufficiently trained to properly adhere to form in L2. Teachers' assumptions should therefore be translated into techniques, if not new courses and strategies, enabling students to go beyond what is encoded at the surface of each language. In this respect, having long perpetuated differences between languages, monolingual grammars should now give way to tailored alternative contrastive grammars, building on the widely shared conviction that "languages diffuse into each other" (Steiner, 1998). Only when English or Arabic grammars are approached and taught in a way that gives learners insights into the working of human languages will translation course cease to be a tedious quest for equivalents and approximations. This would open up new perspectives in deciphering the mystery of each language's hidden architecture and the way it intersects with other languages (Adamczewski, 2002). In this study, I will focus on a selection of English and Arabic



grammatical pairs and the translational problems arising from their surface similarities in the SL, on the one hand, and from the unavailability of overt equivalents in the TL, on the other.

### Background

Translation training cannot be approached separately from current theoretical research, whether in translation studies or in theoretical linguistics. In most translation models (Munday, 2012), the ST still exerts a strong influence on the translation process to the extent that fidelity, a basic translation category, is understood by most trainees as exclusive to the ST. The functionalist alternative conception of translation as an act of intercultural communication has brought the TT/TL into sharper focus. It has led to a rehabilitation of the unprivileged status of the TT, thus elevating the status and function of the TL. Major among these approaches are Reiss and Vermeer's skopos theory (1984), Snell-Hornby's integrated approach (1995), Holz-Manttari's translatorial action model (1984) and Nord's loyalty principle (1997). Seen from a functionalist perspective, the translator, as Munday puts it, "should first ensure that the TT fulfils its purpose, then make sure the TT is itself coherent and only then see that the TT demonstrates coherence with the ST(...). This downplaying (or 'dethroning', as Vermeer terms it) of the ST is a general fact of both skopos and translatorial action theory" (2012:123-4). For Nord (1997:125), the needed relationship between ST and TT depends on the purpose of translation. She stresses that loyalty commits the translator bilaterally to the source and target sides: "the translator's decisions are no longer guided by the linguistic and stylistic characteristics of the source text but by the constellation of participants and conditions of the communicative situation for which it is produced. Instead of equivalence between source and target texts, the aim is adequacy for the translation purpose[s]" (2006:663). Holz-Manttari focuses on producing a TT that is functionally communicative for the receiver. "This means, for example, that the form and genre of the TT must be guided by what is functionally suitable in the TT culture, rather than by merely coping with the ST profile" (Munday, 2012:121). This growing interest in the TL is, however, insufficiently translated into empowering training techniques and procedures that enhance trainees' performance and develop their inter- and metalingual abilities.

Similarly, the awareness that grammar is a significant predictor of translation efficacy has received considerable attention in translation theory and training, especially in linguistics-oriented models (Catford, 1965). Yet most didactic approaches to source and target texts' grammatical problems have been largely dependent on prevalent descriptive and notional grammars which have failed to provide a satisfactory account for the working of natural languages, to an extent that the application of a grammatical rule by the learner/trainee sometimes induces ineffective if not mistranslation (Kahlaoui, 2009); the cases of the English (be+v+ing), said to convey progression of the verbal action, and the Arabic sa-/sawfa, ill-defined as temporal markers referring respectively to near and remote futurity, place students in a very difficult position when a rule, formulated by their teachers as a grammatical certainty, is invalidated by language at work:

- i. Mary is resembling her mother more and more.<sup>ii</sup>
- ii. sawfa 'antaliq fil-ḥa:li ya: mawle:y! / سوف أنطلق في الحال يا مولاي!  
(I'll set off immediately, my lord!)

The inadequacy of the traditional "durative rule" is detectable in the stative nature of the verb (*resemble*) where there is no action in progress. In the Arabic example, the presence of an explicit time marker (*fil-ḥa:li / immediately*), locating the verbal event at the time of speech,

proves that the value of *sawfa* is to be sought in a grammatical operation other than reference to time, i.e. modality. (Kahlaoui, 1992).

The continuing strong influence of descriptive<sup>iii</sup>, structural<sup>iv</sup> and normative<sup>v</sup> theoretical grammars of English and Arabic is detectable not only in pedagogical grammars but also in translation training manuals which merely perpetuate the same static, linear and atomistic conception of language. Farghal & Shunnaq (1999), Ghazala (1995), Kharma & Hajjaj (1997) are typical examples of training and didactic manuals which have only added to learner confusion in dealing with interlingual grammatical transfer. In fact, the tendency to treat grammatical pairs interchangeably has been detected not only in students' translations but also in translation training textbooks (Ghazala, 1995: 29-43).

Present-day university grammars, particularly Arabic ones, have borne heavily on cohorts of translation trainees and language students who continue to experience the consequences of descriptive, semantic and taxonomic approaches to the working of language that often disregard the context, pay no attention to the role of the speaker in processing utterances, and, most importantly, directly assign meaning to meaningless categories (Kahlaoui, 2009). This is observable in textbooks such as Quirk's *A University Grammar of English*, Leech & Svartvik's *Communicative Grammar* (2002), Steer & Carlisi's *The Advanced Grammar Book* (1997) and Al-Rajih's Practical Grammar *التطبيق النحوي* (1999), which have remained largely indifferent to the findings of linguistic research undertaken over the past twenty years by such contrastivists and discourse analysts as Hagege (1982), Adamczewski (1998 and 2002), and Culioli (1991), to name just a few. Many English grammatical pairs, such as those covered by the present study, have been effectively approached, for example by Adamczewski (2002), from a contrastive perspective which has offered original insights into the working of English, French and a few other languages. These findings are of prime importance for translation training and theory.

## The Study

### *Research questions*

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- Does the trainees' grammatical background in both languages empower them enough to detect the subtle structural differences between A- and B-source utterances?
- To what extent do trainees benefit from the textual context provided in effectively rendering each pair into the TL?
- Has the (un)availability of overt grammatical pairs in the target language been to the trainees' (dis)advantage in negotiating equivalence between the source and target utterances?
- To what extent can similar translation training tasks serve as reliable indicators of metalinguistic awareness in trainees?

### *Subjects, Materials and Procedures*

The study builds on a small-scale corpus of two sets of semantically comparable utterances, one in English and the other in Standard Arabic. Each set comprises ten pairs distinguishable most importantly by a visible grammatical marker, as can be seen in the following example:

1a. He *leaves* tomorrow.

1b. He *is leaving* tomorrow.

To ensure greater data reliability, the test was conducted in two phases throughout the same week. Phase one covered A-utterances and phase two B-utterances. Thus, being instructed to provide an appropriate interlingual transfer, the test takers could concentrate on each context

instead of negotiating a less natural end-product triggered only by the pressing need to avoid providing the same translation to two different contexts.

In order to guarantee using the test results as a basis for drawing fair inferences or making training decisions, test construction took into consideration the major principles advocated by testing experts in the didactic domain. Thus, corpus selection was based on standards of practicality and authenticity, the task did not make excessive demands on the participants since the sentences were short, lexically affordable and given in context; the content validity was detectable in the varied and quite representative sample of English and Arabic grammatical pairs with which it was meant to be concerned (adverbs, verb forms, pronouns, determiners, modal and aspectual markers, interrogation operators and negators). Finally, the use of two versions in two languages to measure the extent of agreement between their results aimed to ensure another quality principle, the one defined by Morrow as concurrent validity (1981:13).

The translation test was taken on a voluntary basis by five classes as a non-graded two-hour assignment administered in exam conditions,<sup>vi</sup> under my supervision. It was stressed that the test takers need not provide their names, though some pseudonyms were used. The process spanned four semesters, from Fall 2011 to Spring 2013, and involved 100 regular semester-seven students, 25 males and 75 females, all "native" speakers of Arabic enrolled in the B.A. Translation Program at Oman's Sultan Qaboos University. They had completed courses in English and Arabic Syntax, Contrastive Linguistics and their prerequisites.

Table 1 recapitulates the salient features of the initial corpus:

**Table 1**  
*Corpus categorization*

Scope	Small scale
Type	Bilingual
Mode of delivery	Written
Directionality	unidirectional <sup>vii</sup>
Criteria	- Utterances with real reference value - Context given to translator trainees - Apparent semantic relatedness
Domain	English and Arabic grammatical pairs
Processing technique	manually processed

### *Significance of the study*

First, it was believed that the study would contribute to research on contrastivity and theoretical linguistics as vast reservoirs of translation training and practice. Though a privileged domain of interlingual contact, translation training and practice are still under-researched and the impressive structural data provided by natural languages as different solutions to the intricacies of human language constitute an invaluable asset to Translation Studies, helping with linguists' continuing quest for an answer to the question *how does language work?* Second, it should provide translation trainers with insights into alternative approaches to rehabilitating the status of the TL in the translation process and to reconsidering a prevailing pedagogical grammar long hampered by monolingualism, insensitivity to context, descriptivism and direct assignment of meaning to meaningless categories (Adamczewski, 1982). Third, it was felt that the study would also raise metalinguistic awareness among translator trainees and language learners in general, thus enhancing motivation to improve their translation and linguistic achievement.

**Results**

*Defining and exemplifying variables*

- i. *Difference detection*<sup>viii</sup>: This variable tests whether the student's end-product shows that the main grammatical difference between A and B has been detected or not.

Example: Difference not detected:

ST	A	- What time is it, please? - Let me check... <i>It's NEARLY seven.</i>	TT	A	... إنها السابعة تقريبا.	Difference not detected
	B	- John! Get up, <i>it's ALMOST seven.</i> You're going to be late!		B	...إنها حوالي السابعة...	

Example: Difference detected:

ST	A	- What time is it please? - Let me check... <i>It's NEARLY seven.</i>	TT	A	دعيني أرى... إنها السابعة تقريبا.	Difference detected
	B	- John! Get up, <i>it's ALMOST seven.</i> You're going to be late!		B	أفق يا جون...لم يتبقى شيء عن السابعة! سوف تتأخر.	

- ii. *A and B in free variation*: this variable tests whether or not the trainee has dealt with the grammatical markers in A and B as interchangeable.

Example:

ST	A	أتتوي الرد عليه في مقالك المقبل؟	TT	A	Do you intend to react against him?	A and B treated as interchangeable
	B	أو تتوي الرد على هذه السخافات؟		B		

- iii. *Symmetrical pairs suggested*: Does the trainee's end-product suggest a grammatical pair as a translational solution to the ST pair?

Example:

ST	A	- Where is THIS stupid dog?	TT	A	أين هذا الكلب الغبي؟	This/That vs. هذا/ ذلك
	B	- Where is THAT stupid dog?		B	أين ذلك الكلب الغبي؟	

- iv. *Effective translation*: Are A or B effectively rendered into TL without addition or omission? 'Effective' here means both L2 structural well-formedness and conformity with the L1 context of production.

Example:

ST	A	هو لا يملك درهما فضلا عن دينار.	TT	A	He doesn't have a Dirham, <b>let alone</b> a Dinar.	Effective attempt
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- v. *Ineffective translation*: An attempt is considered ineffective when it is:
- structurally ill-formed and/or
  - insufficiently appropriate to the context of the ST and/or
  - an instance of under- or over-translation

Example:

ST	A	<i>Absurd!Who's been telling you that?</i>	TT	A	هذا عبث! من الذي يخبرك بذلك؟	ill-formed
					من قال لك ذلك؟	Under-translation
					يا للسخافة! من كان يحرص على إخبارك بذلك؟	Over-translation
					من يقول لك ذلك؟	Context-insensitive

- vi. *Mistranslation*: when the trainee's attempt shows that the intended meaning in the ST has been misunderstood.

Example:

ST	A	هو لا يملك درهما فضلا عن دينار.	TT	A	*He doesn't have a Dirham <b>rather than a Dinar.</b>	Mistranslation
ST	A	Is he <b>up</b> already?	TT	A	*هل صعد مسبقاً؟	Mistranslation

- vii. *Item ignored or sentence not translated:* An ST grammatical item is ignored when an avoidance strategy is engaged by the translator. S/he has attempted a translation of all the sentence units except the grammatical marker which distinguishes A from B. In a few cases, the whole sentence is left untranslated.

**Example:**

ST	A	Is he up <b>yet</b> ?	TT	A	*هل هو مستيقظ؟	Item ignored. ST mistranslated.
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**Findings:**

The analysis of interlingual transfer was governed by four questions: Has the main difference between the elements of each pair, A and B, been detected in the trainee's translation or not? If yes, how effectively was it rendered into the TL? Has an overt equivalent of the SL grammatical marker been available in the TL? If yes, to what extent were the equivalents governed by the same contextual triggers, and did they bring about the same effect as the one recovered from the ST? If not, how has the solution been negotiated by the trainee?

Tables 2 and 3 present the overall mean values for results achieved by the test takers in the translation task with regard to the seven variables defined above, i.e. difference detection, the translation solution negotiated by the trainee, conveyability of the SL pairs into TL ones, (in)effectiveness of the target A and B separately, and failure to seize the ST as detectable in mistranslation and avoidance strategies. Each variable is then illustrated on a micro chart based on data extracted from the master tables 2 and 3.

**Table 2**

**Results of the English corpus**

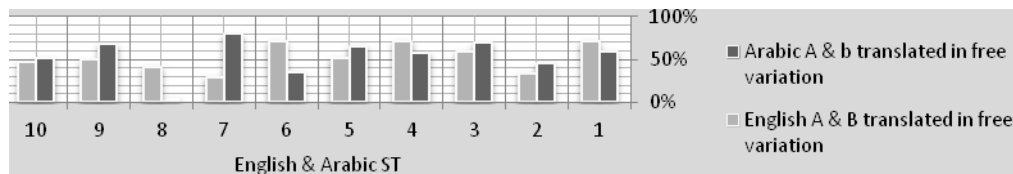
Grammatical pairs		Difference detected %		A & B in free variation %	Symmetrical pairs suggested %		Effectively translated %		Ineffectively translated (under / over) %		Utterance Mistranslated %		Item ignored %	
A	B	yes	no		yes	no	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
nearly	almost	10	90	72	6	94	92	12	4	78	2	10	2	0
already	yet	64	36	34	0	100	38	28	32	14	22	54	8	4
v-ed	v-en+ing	38	62	60	0	100	100	12	0	88	0	0	0	0
Will	shall	6	94	72	0	100	100	12	0	88	0	0	0	0
v-s	v+be+ing	26	74	52	0	100	94	14	6	86	0	0	0	0
v-ed	v-en	26	74	72	0	100	34	90	64	10	0	0	2	0
this	that	68	32	30	68	32	70	92	30	8	0	0	0	0
each	every	56	44	42	0	100	96	52	2	48	0	0	2	0
too	also	50	62	50	14	86	72	32	28	62	0	0	0	6
v1-s	v1-ing	50	50	48	0	100	92	50	4	44	4	2	0	4
Mean values		34.4	65.6	53.2	8	92	78.8	39.4	21.2	52.6	2.8	6.6	1.4	1.4

**Table 3**  
*Results of the Arabic corpus*

Grammatical pairs		Difference detected %		A & B in free variation %	Symmetrical pairs suggested %		Effectively translated %		Ineffectively translated (under / over) %		Utterance Mistranslated %		Item ignored %	
A	B	yes	no		yes	no	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
أوشك	كاد	28	72	60	4	96	62	46	38	54	0	0	0	0
فقط	فحسب	8	92	46	14	86	72	8	4	86	0	0	24	6
لقد	إنَّ	2	98	70	0	100	2	2	96	72	0	24	2	2
أ ؟	أو ؟	32	68	58	0	100	40	54	60	46	0	0	0	0
لم	ما	24	76	66	0	100	56	8	44	90	0	0	0	2
خصوصا	لاسيما	24	76	36	14	86	10	82	74	10	0	2	16	6
إنَّ	إنَّما	8	92	80	0	100	10	4	86	90	0	0	4	6
فضلا	ناهيك	31	69	04	0	100	44	38	34	32	16	2	6	28
شذًا	شذَّ	10	90	68	0	100	90	12	2	82	0	0	8	6
طيلة	طوال	24	76	52	0	100	80	10	14	80	6	2	0	8
<b>Mean values</b>		<b>19.1</b>	<b>80.9</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>96.8</b>	<b>46.6</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>64.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6.4</b>

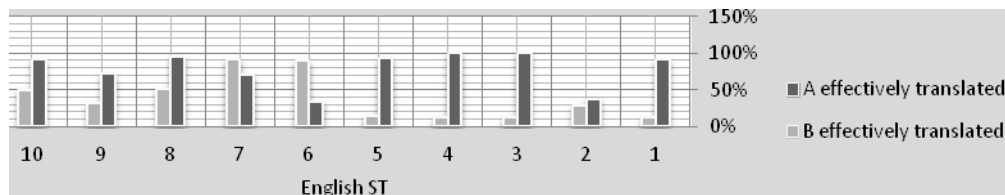
A cursory look at both tables shows a very limited translation efficacy due to non-detection of what distinguish As from Bs in both corpora. There appeared to be a strong negative correlation between difference non-detection and the treatment of A and B as interchangeable in the TL, 53.2% for the English corpus and 54% for the Arabic one, with a disturbing mean value of 53.6% for both:

**Chart 1. English vs. Arabic translation: A & B in free variation**



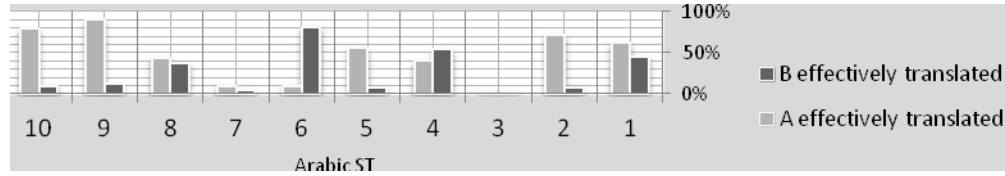
However, this does not mean that the other half (46.4%) performed efficiently. In fact, the results obtained revealed a low level of A and B being effectively rendered in the TL. The data of the English corpus showed it was often A-utterances which were markedly more effective in translation (78.8%) than B-utterances (39.4%). And almost the same difference between As and Bs was revealed in the Arabic corpus, with 46.6 % of effective As and 26.4 % of effective Bs. This is more clearly shown in charts 2 and 3 which present the mean values for each of the ten pairs in the two corpora:

**Chart 2. English A & B Effectively Translated**



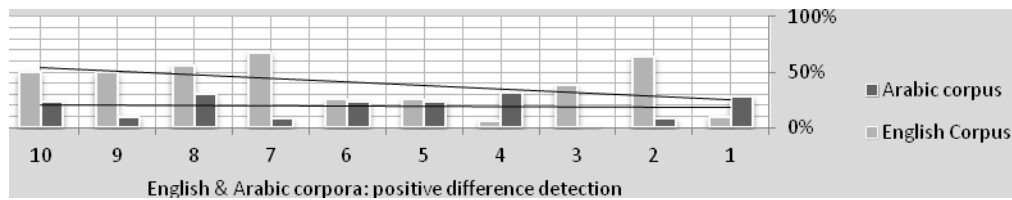


**Chart 3. Arabic A & B Effectively Translated**



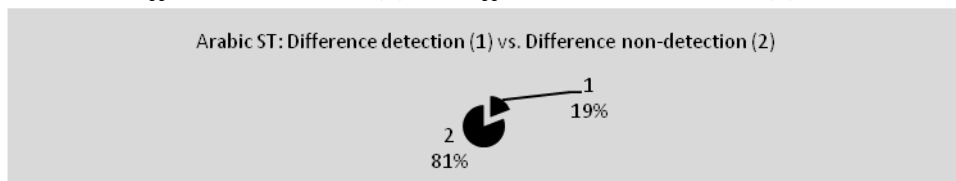
Positive detection of differences between initial As and Bs (ST) is more significant in English-into-Arabic (34.4%) than in Arabic-into-English translation (19.1%), and this is clearly shown by both trend lines:

**Chart 4. English & Arabic corpora: positive difference detection**



These discrepancies were probably attributable to non-textual factors, such as students' greater exposure to English than to the standard variety of Arabic, their first language but not their mother tongue (diglossic situation), or to the quality of the grammar course. In fact the English theoretical and pedagogical grammar courses had been more updated and oriented towards modern linguistic research than the prevailing Arabic grammar course, which dated back to the early stage of traditional grammar, an epistemic stage marked by intuition-based approaches, direct assignment of meaning to meaningless categories and insensitivity to context. In this respect, the trainees' clear tendency to confuse A and B utterances in both corpora, thereby treating them interchangeably, was strongly indicative of insensitivity to the contextual clues provided in the ST. The alarming mean value (80.9%) of responses reflecting difference non-detection in Arabic-into-English translation confirmed that students had been didactically familiar with an Arabic sentence- not discourse-grammar:

**Chart 5. Arabic ST: Difference detection (1) vs. Difference non-detection (2)**

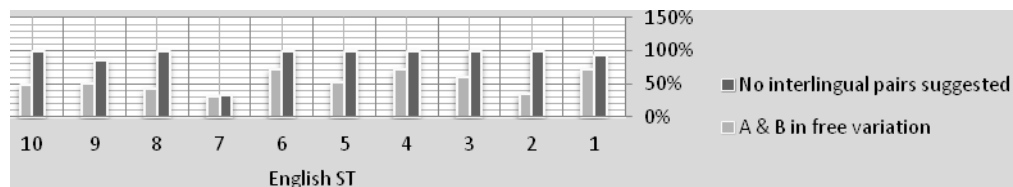


It is worth noting that positive difference detection in both corpora was at its lowest rates with the pairs *لقد/إنّ*, where it dropped to a drastic 2%, *فحسب/فقط* 8%, *shall/will* 6% and *nearly/almost*

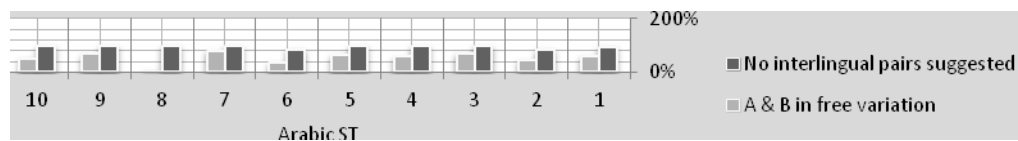
10%. Similarly, effective transfer was at its lowest once again with *لقد/إن*, 2% each, *إنما* 4%, *almost* and *shall* 12% each and (v-en+ing) 14%. This means that co-textual clues had not received the expected level of attention from the vast majority of respondents.

Another significant indicator was the absence of corresponding grammatical pairs in the resultant TT, which is not always due to their non-existence in the TL. In dealing with the ST, hardly any test takers suggested any *formal equivalents* 96.8%, for the Arabic corpus and 92% for the English one. Here is an illustration of the results for both corpora where the focus of comparison was the correlation between the absence of interlingual formal equivalents and the treatment of As and Bs as in free variation:

**Chart 6 . English ST: Interlingual Pairs vs. Interchangeability**



**Chart 7. Arabic ST: Interlingual Pairs vs. Interchangeability**



Finally, a few respondents performed rather oddly, probably because they were unable to complete the test as expected.

The following contrastive table recapitulates the overall mean values of the English and Arabic corpora and covers the seven variables mentioned above:

**Table 4**

*Corpora's mean values contrasted.*

Gr. pairs	Difference detected		A & B in free variation	Symmetrical pairs suggested		Effectively translated		Ineffectively translated (under / over)		Mistranslation		Item ignored	
	Yes	No		Yes	No	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Eng. ST	34.4	65.6	53.2	8	92	78.8	39.4	21.2	52.6	2.8	6.6	1.4	1.4
Arab. ST	19.1	80.9	54	3.2	96.8	46.6	26.4	45.2	64.2	2.2	3	6	6.4

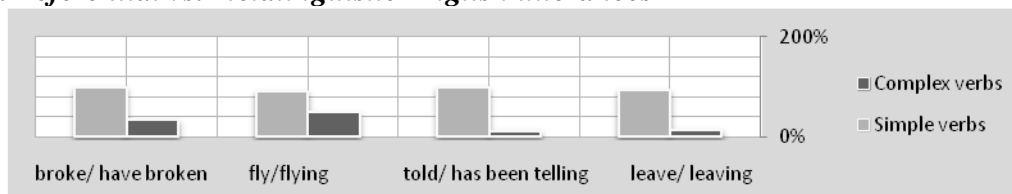
**Discussion**

The data elicited from the study confirm the importance of grammar in the construction (ST) and reconstruction (TT) of meaning. Of course, grammar alone is not the message, but the message to understand or translate cannot be effectively recovered without decoding grammar. This becomes a matter of prime consideration when the code in use by trainees is neither a native



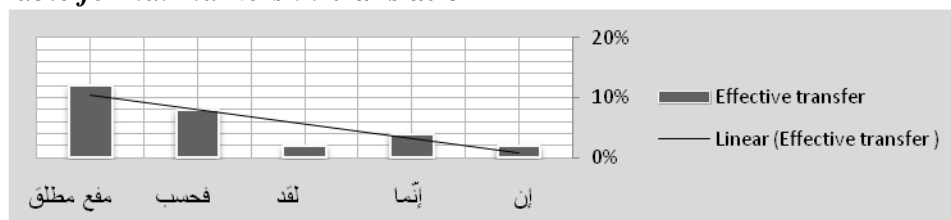
language (English) nor a mother tongue (the standard variety of Arabic), as with the subjects of this study whose grammatical knowledge of English and Standard Arabic was not intuitive but learned through instruction. Unsurprisingly, the grammar-based translation task proved to be effective in revealing the trainees' poor translational performance, as reflected in the high values of difference non-detection and the suggestion of the same meaning for two different contexts. This also suggests that grammatical pairs could serve as a point of comparison between widely different languages and be used as a valid predictor of trainees' metalinguistic and interlingual awareness, a proficiency indicator without which translation becomes a free-writing exercise. The formal status of these markers (meaningless categories) and their great interlingual variability only added to the trainees' trouble in negotiating equivalence. In their hurry to recover meaning from the ST units, trainees had to surmount the habitual difficulty of deriving meaning from meaningless categories, whose *raison d'être* in languages is to encode a processing strategy of the utterer not to stand for an extralinguistic referent, as with lexical units. There is in fact no meaning to retrieve from formal markers but a context-conditioned grammatical value which distinguishes As from Bs. In this regard, it was observed that when language works metalinguistically, i.e. stands for a processing strategy of the utterer, it exerts an inhibitory effect on trainees, thereby impeding effective interlingual transfer. However, when it works referentially it lends itself more easily to accurate translation. This is mostly detectable in the translation of English simple verbs (leave/ told/ broke/ fly) than in the complex verbal patterns (leaving/has been telling/ have broken/ flying), where the participants scored far higher effective results in the first ones:

**Chart 8. Referential vs. metalinguistic English utterances**



On the Arabic side, the formal operators *إن* / *إنما* / *لقد* / *فحسب* and the cognate object (المفعول المطلق) have proved an almost insurmountable obstacle to effective transfer and this was reflected in the sharp drop in response accuracy:

**Chart 9. Arabic formal markers in translation**



At another level, it was also observed that the availability of contextual clues in both corpora had not received the expected level of attention from test takers. This means that providing an ST of real reference value is not enough to guarantee effective response. Trainees should first be systematically trained on how to be sensitive to the ST context, a task seemingly well beyond the

manifest reductionism and artificiality of mainstream sentence-grammars which have dominated foreign language pedagogy.

Another didactic factor which may be retained in diagnosing the ineffective translation of grammatical pairs is the detrimental effect of the prevalent Communicative Approach, which has long relegated grammar to a marginal status. In fact, the dominant view has been that explicit grammar instruction offers no substantial benefits for language learners (Felix, 1981; Krashen, 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). It is assumed to lead to negative transfer from L1 and yield only temporary gains which dwindle over time. This is a view translated into two pedagogical tendencies: the adoption of teaching approaches based on fluency and communicative functions and fierce denunciation of the use of L1 in teaching and learning foreign languages, as if it were possible for learners to switch off their native language in the learning process. However, monolingual teaching and lack of exposure to explicit grammar instruction have not led to didactic empowerment over more than twenty years of communicative teaching. Field research has demonstrated that providing learners with grammar instruction and contrastive L1/L2 information contributes to L2 performance (Scheffler, 2012; Ellis & Laporte, 1997; Lightbown, 1998; Herdina & Jessner, 2000; Potowski, 2005 and Jeffries 1985), while Adamczewski (2002:55-57) and Widdowson (2003:160) have called for a revision of monolingual teaching. As a result, an alternative conception of grammar as a tool for reflection, awareness and empowerment (Potowski, 2005) has gained increasing acclaim, reinforced by empirical findings supporting the view that classroom learners acquire more grammar and perform more accurately over time than non-classroom learners do (Ellis 1986; Pavesi, 1986, Pica, 1983), and that metalinguistic instruction and the use of native languages do not damage foreign language learning as was hastily assumed by advocates of naturalistic acquisition.

### **Conclusion: Implications for Training**

Given the study's findings, translation educators are encouraged not to teach L1 and L2 grammars as mere graduation requirements. The prevailing rule-based grammatical paradigm should now give way to newer translation-oriented grammatical teaching grounded in contrastivity and tailored to the real needs of translator trainees. For such a new course to be of real service to prospective translators it should:

- address the enormous gap between theoretical grammar and translation practice which is often the origin of another gap between STs and trainees' TTs.
- start from real STs and their resultant TTs, not from intuition-based sentences produced for the sake of "explaining" a given grammatical rule or structure.
- reduce the students' memory load and activate their analytical potential by focusing on language at work in real contexts.
- raise trainees interlingual and metalinguistic awareness. And for contrastivity to be more effectively exercised it should also be conducted intralingually, where comparable grammatical markers are systematically contrasted: 'inna/laqad, lam/ma:, sa-/sawfa, too/also, nearly/almost, shall/will, as if/as though, this/that, etc.
- train students in the effective detection of ST grammatical options deployed by the writer in specific contexts, especially those with high translational value (operations, markers, categories, functions and structures) without which there will be much loss.
- rehabilitate contextual factors, namely the utterer and co-utterer, in negotiating interlingual equivalence.

- train students to detect those privileged instances where natural languages betray their secrets by displaying at their surfaces such formal markers - indicative of the processing strategy engaged at the time of speech/writing - as auxiliaries, modals, metaverbs, aspectuals, negators, relators, maximizers, intensifiers, word order, etc.)
- develop new courses and schedule training workshops in translation-oriented text analysis that focus not only on grammar and vocabulary but also on rhetorical structures which differ considerably from one language to another.

### About the Author:

A contrastivist, discourse analyst and literary translator, **Dr. Mohamed-Habib Kahlaoui** holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Theoretical and Contrastive Linguistics from the Sorbonne Nouvelle University in France. He is currently Assistant Professor of English at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman, and Kairouan Faculty of Letters and Humanities in Tunisia. He previously taught English in France and Tunisia. His main areas of teaching and research include contrastive linguistics, translation studies, text linguistics, discourse analysis and intercultural rhetoric. He is a member of several scholarly associations, has contributed to conferences in north Africa, the Middle-East and Europe, and has undertaken many academic and administrative tasks and positions, including HOD for seven years and supervisor of the SQU B.A. translation program for eight semesters. His research work has appeared in English, Arabic and French in several journals and proceedings of international conferences. His latest book in text linguistics was published in Arabic (Tunis: Miskilyani Publications): *اللغوي والميتالغوي في فتنة المتخيل: مقارنة نصية لغوية* (The Linguistic and the Metalinguistic in *fitnatu-l-mutakhaeil: A Corpus-based Approach*) and his translation of C. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* into Arabic is expected to appear in October 2014.

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## Appendix

### I. English Corpus

1. *What time is it, please?*  
*Let me check... it's **nearly** 7.*
2. *John! Get up! It's **almost** 7. You're going to be late.*
3. *No meeting tomorrow? Who **told** you that?*
4. *Absurd! Who's **been telling** you that?*
5. *What's that noise upstairs? Is he up **already**?*
6. *Is he up **yet**? The school bus arrives in a few minutes!*
7. *Is this farewell or **Will** I see you again?*
8. *A: I forgot you're on leave tomorrow!*  
*B: Why? **Shall** I see you again?*
9. *A: When do you leave for Italy?*  
*B: I **leave** tomorrow.*
10. *But Doctor, I'm **leaving** tomorrow!*
11. *I must go to the optician's. I **broke** my glasses last night.*
12. *Hell! I've **broken** my glasses!*
13. *Where's **that** stupid dog?*
14. *Where's **this** stupid dog?*
15. ***Each** boy wears a different tee-shirt.*
16. ***Every** boy wears the same school uniform.*
17. *When you **fly** Concorde, you're **flying** the fastest plane in the world.*
18. *I not only speak English, but I also speak Spanish and Russian.*
19. *My sister Speaks English. I speak English **too**.*

### Arabic Corpus

1. - كاد الرّضيع أن يخطو خطوته الأولى لولا ذلك الحادث المشؤوم.
2. - أوشك الرّضيع أن يخطو خطوته الأولى.. انظري!
3. - جنّت لأودّع أصدقائي وأصدقائي فقط.
4. - جنّت لأودّع أصدقائي فحسب .
5. - لقد كان رحمه الله من أشدّ المدافعين عن حقوق الإنسان وحوار الأديان.
6. - إنّه كان من أكبر دعاة حقوق الإنسان، فكيف تحكّم عليه بالاستبداد؟
7. - أنتوي الرّد عليه في مقالك المقبل أم ستغضّ النظر عن الأمر؟
8. - أو تنوي الرّد على هذه السّخافات؟
9. - هي: لماذا لم تتدخّل بالصّح؟
10. - هو: لم يخطر ببالي أن أصلح بينهما.
11. - هي: فاجأتني حقًا بتدخلك بينهما.
12. - هو: ما كان أبدا في البال أن أصلح بينهما، ولا حتّى كنت مُتهيباً لذلك.
13. - أنت مُطالبٌ خصوصاً بتحديد مراجعك وضبط أولوياتك البحثية.
14. - أنت مُطالبٌ بذكر المراجع، لا سيّما إذا كان البحث أكاديمياً.
15. - إنّ التسامح فضيلة كبرى، لاشكّ في ذلك أبداً.
16. - ليس التسامح قيمة كباقي القيم إنّما هو فضيلة الفضائل.
17. - أما الأخلاق (...) فقد خصها بأكثر من عشرين كتاباً مما عرفناه من كتبه المنشورة
18. - ناهيك عن المفقود وغير المنشور.
19. - هو لا يملك درهماً فضلاً عن دينار.
20. - عندما همّت بالقفز من أعلى السّور شدّها إليه بقوّة.
21. - همّت بالقفز من أعلى السّور شدّها إليه شدّاً قويّاً.
22. - وأين كنتمنا طيلة هذه الفترة؟ هل سافرتما خارج البلاد؟
23. - هم فعلوا ما بوسعهم، لم يخلوا عليها بشيء.. وأنت، أين كنت طوال هذه المدة؟

## Endnotes:

<sup>i</sup> A condensed version of this paper was presented at the ATS-BRISMES conference held at the American University of Sharjah, 14 April 2014.

<sup>ii</sup> This example was analyzed by Martin Joos (1964) and revisited by Adamczewski (2002).

<sup>iii</sup> Quirk & Greenbaum, 1973.

<sup>iv</sup> Pike (1967) and Harris (1962)

<sup>v</sup> Arabic traditional grammar

<sup>vi</sup> The task was individual and dictionaries of any kind were not allowed.

<sup>vii</sup> According to Zanettin's typology of translational corpora (2000).

<sup>viii</sup> See column 2 in tables 2 and 3.



## Relative Impact of Windows Movie Maker Journaling on Writing Proficiency and Apprehension

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### Abstract

This article reports the results of an experimental study that examined the relative effectiveness of Windows Movie Maker (WMM) as a computer-assisted language learning tool versus journal writing in improving the English as a foreign language (EFL) writing Proficiency and decreasing the levels of writing apprehension of grade eleven students in Lebanon. The study, too, looked into the perceptions of the participants of the relevance and efficacy of using Windows Movie Maker (WMM) as an instructional tool. The study is based on the assumption that the WMM computer-assisted language learning tool, unlike the traditional pen and paper journal writing, provides an excellent opportunity for students to creatively write and express themselves using music, script, pictures and visual effects that reflect learners' personal experiences. The study employed an experimental pretest- posttest control group design whereby two intact classes were randomly assigned to control and experimental conditions. Descriptive statistics were calculated and a series of independent sample t-tests were conducted in order to address the questions raised in the study. Finally, a content analysis of the qualitative data gathered from the study participants to the open ended questions in the experimental group was carried out to describe and concretize their perceptions of the WMM experience. The results of the study indicated that the WMM journaling proved to be more effective than the traditional pen and paper journaling in enhancing Proficiency and decreasing writing apprehension. In addition, the participants in the experimental group underscored both the importance and usefulness of using the WMM tool in enhancing EFL journal writing. Further research is recommended in order to determine the extent of the generalizability of the findings of the present study into other school contexts and across different grade and proficiency levels.

**Keywords:** English as a foreign language (EFL) , journal writing, journal writing Proficiency, Windows Movie Maker (WMM), writing apprehension

## Introduction

The growing availability of educational technology tools and software resources is one of the hallmarks that characterize contemporary schools all over the globe. Likewise, journal writing has become a widely-accepted practice in the English as foreign language (EFL) classroom as the process approach has gradually replaced product-oriented instruction. As such, teachers are expected to use modern technology in their teaching (Branigan, 2005; Ramos, 2007; Sweeder, 2007; Alderman & Beyers, 2009) as well as incorporate journal writing in their teaching (Huff & Kiline, 1987). This is especially the case given that the new generation of school goers is considered to be “digital-natives” and “technologically-savvy” as described by Prensky (2001).

The rationale for using technology in the English as a second/foreign language is now well-established and the paradigm shift from product to process writing instruction has been almost completed in various EFL contexts and settings all over the globe. Several researcher have advocated the role of technology in teaching the various language skills such as listening comprehension (Hoven, 1999), reading (Kasper, 2000), and Writing (Cunningham, 2000, & Kasper 2000). Likewise, Hoven (1999) have underscored the role of computers in creating learners’ autonomy. Similarly, EFL writing researchers and educators have long embraced the tenets of process writing which encourage exploration, conceptualization, multiple drafting, and revision of written products (Matsuda, 2003; Nunan, 2003; Schmitt, 2002). Consequently, the purpose of this article is to report the results of an experimental study on the effect of using the Windows Making Movie (WMM) versus journal writing on improving EFL writing Proficiency and decreasing writing apprehension.

## The Present Study

The present study is conducted in a private high-school in Lebanon where English is used as the language of instruction as well is taught as an important school subject due starting with pre-school and up to grade 12. The importance accorded to studying as English as foreign language in the context of this study is based on the perceived vitality of English as a important world language used extensively in the domains of education, communication and commerce. Presently, there no previous studies which investigated the effect of the WMM technological model in improving the writing Proficiency of grade 11 Lebanese learners of EFL and decreasing their levels of writing apprehension.

Specifically, the study addressed the following questions:

1. What is the relative effect of using the WMM journaling in comparison with traditional pen and paper journaling in improving the writing Proficiency of grade 11 learners of EFL?
2. What is the relative effect of using the WMM in comparison with traditional pen and paper journaling in decreasing the writing apprehension level of grade 11 learners of EFL?
3. What are the perceptions of the participants in the experimental group of their experience in using the WMM technological model in their writing class?

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in order to address the questions raised in the study:

Ho 1: There is no statistically significant difference in the posttest writing Proficiency scores of the experimental and control group at the  $p \leq 0.05$  alpha level.

Ho 1: There is no statistically significant difference in the posttest writing apprehension scores of the experimental and control group at the  $p \leq 0.05$  alpha level.



## Literature Review

### *The Windows Movie Maker*

The review of the literature on the development of the Windows Movie Maker (WMM) application suggests that it is a very recent innovation. Version 1.1 of WMM was only included in Windows XP in 2001 and has been installed in computers in its current edition, with music, effects and transitions, only in 2005. Quite naturally, there seems to be at present a noticeable scarcity of research related to WMM journaling and its effects on educational outcomes.

Portnoy (1985) asserts that as students take on creative roles while working on authentic and real-life themes in their video production, they will be able to practice authentic language, not only among themselves but also with other users of the language outside the classroom. Consequently, the process of language learning can be made more interesting and meaningful through video as learners are exposed to contexts outside the restrictions of the classroom (Brown & Kegan, 1986; Wagschal, 1987). Similarly, Valmont (1995), Evans (1998) and Rudkin, (2004), maintained that language teachers should be able to maneuver the equipment and software so that the learners would be enabled to utilize the vital functions of the available software applications. The research of Branigan, (2005), Ramos, (2007), Sweeder, 2007 and Alderman and Beyers, (2009) asserts that the use of video in the language classroom should not be limited to mere instructional tool. Instead, student video journals should be encouraged and given importance in order to enhance the learners' confidence and promote proficiency.

The Windows Movie Maker (WMM) is a computer-based application that can be potentially useful in promoting learners' writing skills. Specifically, the WMM tool actively engages learners in the stages of the video production thereby take ownership of their own learning and progressively develop into independent learners. As such, the WMM tool may enhance students' motivation and interest in journal writing as well as increase their proficiency and decrease their apprehension. This is because Journaling allows students to express their thoughts and feelings, thereby gaining valuable self-knowledge. It is also a good problem-solving tool. Keeping a journal and writing regularly has been proven to promote writing dexterity and fluency. The preceding review of the literature suggests while there exists a strong rationale for using technology and journals in teaching writing. However, previous research on the effectiveness of specific technological models and tools appears to be still scanty or non-existent due the recentness of this application as shown above.

### *Studies on Journaling and Writing Proficiency*

Regarding the impact of Journal writing on writing proficiency, the extant research on the subject suggests that journal writing enables students to improve their writing skills and promotes critical their thinking. (O'Connell & Dymont, 2006). In the same vein, Connor-Greene (2000) reports that, "... the students who wrote 15 journals may have received other benefits (e.g. improved writing skills, increased confidence about writing) that are not reflected in their grades on a psychology test." (p. 45). Some research also suggests that journal writing improves students' writing and enhances their learning and writing as reflected in test scores (Connor-Greene, 2000, Bartscher, Lawler, Rameriz, and Schinault, 2001). These researchers reported that the use of reflective journaling is effective, having seen gains in the writing abilities of participants in their research. Similarly, Bartscher et al., (2001) suggests that journal writing improves significantly students' writing, and students "grew into the emotional commitment of expressing their feelings" (p. 46).

However, Cisero's (2006) reported that many students did not like the journal assignment and considered journal writing as "just a nuisance," "busy work," and "tedious and unnecessary" (p.233). Cisero (2006) also noted that students' lack of interest in the journal writing activities could provide a clue to the minimal improvement attained by some students. This researcher added stated that "students' overall ability as well as motivation are factors that need to be considered in future research and effectiveness of journal writing" (p. 234).

### ***Studies on Journaling and Writing Apprehension***

Learners of English as a foreign language EFL may experience high levels of speech and writing apprehension when they produce language. However, engaging them in producing their own video projects throughout the teaching/learning process may create a stress-reduced environment which lowers the affective filter of learners and increase their self-confidence due to the interesting nature of videos (Bennette, 1988; Kinnaman, 1993; & Clovis 1997). Ullrich and Lutgendorf (2002) assert that, unlike some physical stress management techniques such as yoga or exercise, journal writing is a viable option for the people who need to express themselves. These researchers consider journaling as a great practice for overall stress reduction as well as self-knowledge and emotional healing.

Dunlap (2006) maintained that journal writing decreases writing apprehension and is an enjoyable experience for learners. Likewise, Gau, Hermanson, Logar, and Smerek (2003) reported that reflective journaling supports the educational process given that it promotes writing fluency and quality. These findings echo those reported by Gau et al., (2003) and Hubbs and Brand (2005) who established that reflective journaling could be the key to diminishing student and teachers' writing apprehension in the classroom. Hubbs and Brand (2005) state that "... anecdotal evidence suggests that the use of reflective journals can hone students' reflective skills, assist students in applying course content, help students' process learning activities, and encourage personal growth and development" (p. 65). These researchers further also report that "... reflective journaling can provide ways to illuminate automatic thinking and habits of mind, and can lead students through a transformative process, especially when the instructor engages the student in mutual dialogue" (p.63). Conversely, Reeves (1997) reports that a writer could be "... more apprehensive when writing personal narratives" and less so "... when writing argumentative or persuasive essays." (p. 39).

Because students enjoy uploading and using authentic materials including pictures and music they choose, WMM journaling may serve as a facilitator for speaking and writing. The benefits of using WMM journaling in language teaching are related to the provision of rich, authentic, and current information, exposure to colorful visual elements, enhanced flexibility of individual learning pace, reinforced learning of the subject matter, heightened motivation, and increased interest. A number of empirical studies have also indicated that students had an overall positive attitude towards learning in a computer-assisted language learning environment (Felix, 2001; Osuna & Meskill, 1998; Shen, 1999).

The preview suggests that although journal writing may have positive impact on writing development, findings of previous research are somewhat non-conclusive and perspicacious with the regard to the effects of journaling writing proficiency and apprehension.

## Methodology

The study employed a quasi-experimental pretest- posttest control design. Two intact classes were randomly assigned to control and experimental conditions and the treatment lasted for 4- weeks of instruction at the rate of 3 class periods per week to teach the language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking along with language rules and mechanics, cultural awareness, and critical thinking in an integrated manner.

### *Participants*

The study was conducted in a public high-school in Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. A convenient sample total of 24 grade 11 EFL learners participated in the study. The participants were randomly assigned to control and experimental conditions, and the sample included a total of 16 males (75 %) and 8 females (25%). All the participants are native speakers of Arabic and came from similar socio-economic backgrounds. They were studying EFL at a rate of 3 hours per week in accordance with the curriculum requirements proclaimed by the National Ministry of Education. A total of 20 students had completed their grade 10 schooling at the same school and the remaining 4 at other public schools which follow the same curriculum. Finally, there were 13 students in the control group and 11 in the experimental group, and the age of the participants ranged from 16- 19 years.

### *Research Context*

As indicated earlier, the research context of the present study is a public high-school in Lebanon. This context is characterized by enrolling students from low socio-economic background with limited opportunities to use English for communication in daily life and outside of school. However, the importance of studying English is emphasized in the context of the present study both as a language of instruction in which all other school subjects are taught with the exception of Arabic language and literature and as an independent school subject as well. This is because English is considered an important international language to be studied starting with kindergarten and up to grade 12 due to its recognized value in communication, education, and commerce. Yet, it should be noted that the majority of students in this study context, as well as in other similar public school contexts, can be considered largely as limited English proficient (LEP) learners and without much access to computers and modern technology, despite the fact that smart boards and computers are becoming more available in many public schools including the site of the present study.

### *Instruments*

Three instruments were used to collect data and measure the variables of writing Proficiency and apprehension under investigation. These included a writing apprehension scale (Appendix I), a journal rubric (Appendix II), and reflection logs. The writing apprehension and journal rubric were used as pre-test and post-test measures of writing apprehension Proficiency. The writing apprehension scale consists of a total of 26 likert-type items. Scores on the negatively worded items (Items 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 16, 18, 21, 24, 25, 26) were reversed to ensure that high scores mean higher apprehension. The participants in the study indicated their levels of agreement with the statements in the scale by circling a number on range from 1 strongly disagree -6 strongly agree. The internal consistency was moderate ( $\alpha$  .54) based on data from the

present study. On the other hand, the journal rubric was used to score the pre-writing and post-writing written products of the participants and resulted in a holistic score in the range of 3-15 and converted to a percentage score out of 100 based on the quality of ideas, focus, organization, word choice, and language mechanics shown in the written responses of the participants. Finally, a set guiding questions which focused on the participants' reaction to the writing assignment, w

hether they enjoyed their WMM experiences and the expectations and challenges they faced.

### ***Treatment***

The treatment lasted for four weeks at the rate of three contact hours of integrated instruction per week. The study participants of both the control and experimental group were asked to perform a journal writing task which required writing a journal in response to a prompt which asked them to describe an experience that touched them and taught them new values. The journal writing instructional component of the control group consisted of traditional pen and paper journal writing practices which included instruction in pre-drafting, drafting, and revision strategies. Specifically, the pre-drafting stage focused on enabling learners to explore their topics in order to generate ideas in addition to learning how to write up their ideas and revise their written products. Meanwhile, the experimental group learners practiced journal writing through using the WMM procedures which involves using computers to incorporate music, pictures, visual effects, word choice, font, design they like.

### ***Data Analysis***

Descriptive statistics (Means and Standard Deviations) were calculated on the pre-test and post-test performance scores of learners in the control and experimental groups, following which four independent sample t-tests were conducted to investigate the differences in journal writing proficiency and apprehension prior to and subsequent to the intervention between the groups of learners in the control and experimental groups. The treatment conditions (control vs experimental) were used as an independent variable and journal writing Proficiency and apprehension as dependent variables.

In addition, content analysis was used as the method of data analysis of the qualitative data gathered from learners written reflection logs about their perceptions of the WMM experience. These logs were used to write up the study results regarding learners' perceptions.

## **Results**

### ***Findings on journal writing proficiency***

We found that, prior to intervention; there was no significant difference in the writing proficiency of the participants in the control group and the experimental group. ( $M = 66.33$ ,  $SD = 5.77$ ) and the experimental group ( $M = 62.72$ ,  $SD = 4.85$ ),  $t(21) = -1.61$ ,  $P = .12$ .

Conversely, after the intervention, the experimental group outperformed the control group: Control group ( $M = 74.66$ ,  $SD = 4.86$ ) and the experimental group ( $M = 84.27$ ,  $SD = 4.81$ ),  $t(21) = 4.75$ ,  $P = .00$ . The effect size of improvement was  $d = 1.96$ , which suggests a highly significant gain in proficiency from an educational point of view. Therefore, the first null hypothesis of the study regarding difference in the posttest writing performance of the control and experimental group was rejected.

***Findings on writing apprehension***

Similarly, there was no statistically significant difference in the writing apprehension of the participants in the control group ( $M = 92.85$ ,  $SD = 9.68$ ) and the experimental group ( $M = 97.25$ ,  $SD = 42.02$ ),  $t(29) = .36$ ,  $P = .70$ .

Meanwhile, the post-test intervention difference between the two groups was statistically significant: Control group ( $M = 89.71$ ,  $SD = 11.06$ ) and the experimental group ( $M = 67.4$ ,  $SD = 31.82$ ),  $t(25) = -2.20$ ,  $P = .03$ . The effect size of improvement was  $d = 1.90$ , which also suggests a highly significant gain in decreasing writing apprehension. Therefore, the second null hypothesis of the study regarding difference in the posttest writing apprehension of the control and experimental group was rejected.

***Findings on perceptions of WMM Journaling Experience***

The results of the content analysis of qualitative data from reflective logs about learners' experience with the WMM suggest two aspects of interest: 1) the importance of using WMM in the writing process and 2) the usefulness of this educational tool in teaching EFL writing skills, in general, and journal writing in particular. Specifically, the theme of the importance of the WMM emerged from the data as many learners in the experimental group expressed their positive perception of this experience. For instance, while some learners expressed satisfaction upon the completion of the video, one learner reported that "the most interesting part was adding the pictures and the frustrating part was editing as we didn't realize that after applying the effects we need to relocate all the subtitles the second time for the whole video." Another said, "the most beautiful part was adding the music which helped me with creating a soothing impact." A third learner added, "the good part was the freedom in choosing the animations that made the script look great." Two other learners respectively asserted, the lovely part was the color and the font of the script, easily chosen. "Nothing was boring or difficult and that was the good thing." Some learners highlighted the elements that led to the success of the WMM journaling when one of the grade 11 learners wrote, "the teacher managed to give all the needed steps, and she showed us the creation of the whole process." Another learner also wrote, "all of my group members had contributed their ideas and helped me with getting my video journal done. The teamwork was practiced in my group. We managed to help each other with the making the video journals."

The majority of the learners asserted the relevance of WMM journaling to language learning when three learners respectively wrote, "I think video journaling was relevant to my study. This is because I can learn the language, express myself and use the pictures and the computer skills I want from this video."

"We learned how to use English in a meaningful way. I learned a lot on this assignment because I gained more confidence when giving ideas and thoughts."

"I learned more about the lovely effect of journaling through using the pictures that harmonize with the words used."

This positive perception was also echoed in the comments of other learners who wrote that "I learned to be more confident, and I loved the music expressing my words." "I enhanced my computer skills. I discovered the creative side of me." "I learnt not only how to write but also to express myself confidently from this assignment." "I enjoyed the Movie Maker production." "I learned a lot during the movie production because I learned how to speak fluently and write accurately."



Another student added, "I learned a lot about the movie maker software and computer skills." Along similar lines, another learner remarked, "I like how the movie tells stories related to the outer world. "After all, my movie was based on my true stories. I liked about the concept of my video because it voiced out my situation and my own dream without getting 'permission' or receive 'judgment' or 'consideration', from my parents."

These comments and remarks suggest that the MM journaling is perceived as an important teaching tool by learners. These remarks also show that the learners in the study have perceived the WMM journaling experience as very useful in employing language to freely and interestingly express their thoughts on their own.

## Discussion

The present study set to examine the relative effectiveness of the Windows Movie Maker technological tool in improving EFL Journal writing proficiency and decreasing feelings of writing apprehension. As discussed earlier, the results proved to be positive given that the learners who produced EFL journal writing using the WMM outperformed their counterparts who produced the same content according to the dynamics of traditional journal writing. These findings corroborate those of Portnoy (1985), Brown and Kegan(1986), Wagschal (1987), Valmont (1995), Evans (1998) ,Rudkin, (2004), Branigan (2005), Ramos (2007), Sweeder(2007) and Alderman and Beyers, (2009), O'Connell & Dymont(2006) ,Connor-Greene (2000) , and Bartscher, Lawler, Rameriz, and Schinault( 2001) who assert that video journals should be encouraged and given importance in order to enhance the learners' confidence and promote proficiency. Conversely, the results of the study contradict with those of Cisero's (2006) who reported that many students did not like the journal assignment and considered journal writing as "tedious and unnecessary" (p.233).

Concerning writing apprehension, the findings of the present study corroborate those of Bennette( 1988), Kinnaman (1993), Clovis (1997) , Ullrich and Lutgendorf (2002), Dunlap (2006) ,Gau, Hermanson, Logar, and Smerek (2003) , and Hubbs and Brand (2005) who report that journal writing decreases writing apprehension. The findings of the present study, however, are not in agreement with those of Reeves (1997) who maintain that a writer could be "... more apprehensive when writing personal narratives" and less so "... when writing argumentative or persuasive essays." "(p. 39).

A probable explanation of the efficacy and positive attitudes towards WMM journaling could be attributed to the provision of opportunities for students to write using a variety of pictures, visual effects, music, animations, fonts, designs and text. However, future research should be conducted involving representative samples of different EFL populations and grade levels in order to determine to what extent the findings of the present study are generalizable as well as determine the effect of context-specific factors such as gender, linguistic composition, and levels of first and foreign language proficiency on the interface of technology and language Proficiency and dispositions.

The present study revealed that the grade 11 students were generally motivated and excited about the WMM journaling although initially there were some hesitations due to lack of experience as well as skills in movie-making. Detailed process on operating the WMM software before the commencement of the project was found to be vital and necessary as some subjects disclosed their dissatisfaction mainly during the video-editing process. The WMM journaling project was able to draw out the students' creativity in integrating language with computer skills. Students also responded that the WMM project has raised their self-esteem, and they were more



willing to express themselves using EFL. Above all, student-created video is an authentic way to link language learning to the real life setting outside the language classroom. All teachers who wish to engage their students in authentic language learning should consider classroom videos.

### Limitations

The present study employed a relatively small and convenient sample size, which have negative implications for the generalizability of the findings into other contexts. Further research with a larger and more representative sample size should be conducted in order to test the generalizability of the findings as well as examine the interaction of the treatment effects of with other contextual variables such as students, level of language proficiency, gender, technology apprehension.

### Conclusion

This article reports the results of an experimental study that examined the relative effectiveness of Windows Movie Maker (WMM) as a computer-assisted language learning tool versus journal writing in improving the English as a foreign language (EFL) writing Proficiency and decreasing the levels of writing apprehension of grade eleven students in Lebanon. The findings of the study revealed that the Windows Movie Maker (WMM) is a computer- based application that can be potentially useful in promoting learners' writing skills. Therefore, the WMM tool may enhance students' motivation and interest in journal writing as well as increase their proficiency and decrease their apprehension. It is probable in the future, that WMM as a computer –assisted learning tool will continue to be an in important component in teaching writing. As such, language teachers should be fully aware of how computer-assisted language learning tools can benefit language teaching, learning and educational outcomes, more generally.

### About the Author:

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**Appendix A**

**Writing Apprehension**

Please circle the number of the alternative below the statement that best indicates your feelings about that statement.

1. I avoid writing.  
Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly agree
  
2. I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.  
Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly agree
  
3. I look forward to writing down my ideas.  
Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly agree
  
4. I am afraid of writing journals when I know they will be evaluated.  
Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly agree
  
5. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.  
Strongly disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    Strongly agree
  
6. Handing in a composition course is a very frightening experience.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

7. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a journal .

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

8. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

9. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

10. I like to write my ideas down.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

11. I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

12. I like to have my friends read what I have written.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

13. I'm nervous about writing.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

14. People seem to enjoy what I write.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

15. I enjoy writing.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

16. I never seem to enjoy what I write.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

17. Writing is a lot of fun.

Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      agree

18. I expect to do poorly in writing classes even before I enter them.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      Strongly agree

19. I like seeing my thoughts on paper.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      Strongly agree

20. Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      Strongly agree

21. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a journal writing course.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      Strongly agree

22. when I hand in a journal , I know I'm going to do poorly.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      Strongly agree

23. it's easy for me to write good journals .

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      Strongly agree

24. I don't think I write as well as most other people.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      Strongly agree

25. I don't like my journals to be evaluated.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      Strongly agree

26. I'm no good at writing.

Strongly disagree      1      2      3      4      5      6      Strongly agree

**Appendix B**

**Rubric for Journal**

1. *Adapted from Rubric for Journals and Essays.doc - BWS*  
[www.bwsd.k12.wi.us/highschool/.../Rubric%20for%20Journals%20and...](http://www.bwsd.k12.wi.us/highschool/.../Rubric%20for%20Journals%20and...)

s

Content	Voice	Rules
5 The journal is well thought out, honest, and creative.	5 The entry is engaging, honest and legible. The	5 The entry has few grammar and spelling mistakes.

The entry is emotionally deep.	questions and answers are included.	There are no fragments or run-on sentences.
3	3	3
The journal entry is honest, creative, but lacks diving deep.	The journal entry is honest and engaging. The entry includes the answers, but not the re-written questions.	The journal entry has noticeable grammar and spelling mistakes.
1	1	1
The journal entry lacks honesty and creativity. There are one word answers.	The journal entry lacks honesty, hard to read, and is rambling. The questions are not re-written and the answers are hard to follow.	The journal entry is difficult to read due to too many errors in grammar.



## Arab-American and Muslim-American Studies in Secondary Social Studies Curriculum

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### Abstract

Arabs and Muslims live within the United States surrounded by misconceptions about their culture and religion, both of which seemed foreign to most Americans. Arabs, like many immigrant groups who came to the United States, were not exempt from racist accusations. They were viewed as a backward, violent, desert-dwelling people. The media and Hollywood did their part to ensure that Arabs and Muslims on the big screen perpetuated these misconceptions through their movies, cartoons, and TV characters. After the attacks on 9/11, many Americans realized, for the first time, how little they understood Arabs and Muslims. This led many to raise questions about curricular needs concerning Arabs, Muslims, and the Middle East, as well as Arab and Muslim Americans living within U.S. borders. This article discusses the mixed methods study, which consisted of 101 surveys of secondary social studies teachers from across the U.S. and contextual analysis of five U.S. history textbooks.

**Keywords:** Arab-Americas, Muslim-Americans, stereotypes, education, social studies curriculum, multicultural education

## Introduction

The need for Arab and Muslim-American studies was never more real than after the attacks on September 11, 2001 when millions of Americans realized for the first time how little they knew of the Middle East, Arabs, and Muslims. As students tried to understand the events, they repeatedly asked questions that many adults struggled to answer. Misunderstandings about Arabs and Muslims created unwarranted attacks, both verbal and physical, against Arab and Muslim Americans living in the United States (Ibish, 2003). Muslim-American loyalty was openly challenged in the media, and a number of mosques, homes, and businesses were destroyed. The catastrophic events of September 11 had a profound impact on millions of Americans' everyday lives, and they also impacted the educational system, as educators sought to include more historical and multicultural lessons on the Middle East and Islam.

Multicultural education in its purest form is a "movement designed to empower all students to become knowledgeable, caring and active citizens in a deeply troubled and ethnically polarized nation and world" (Banks, 1993, p.23). From its inception, multicultural education has challenged teaching practices to emphasize a study of multiple perspectives; in other words, understanding that there are numerous aspects from which to study an event, concept or even a curriculum. From a social studies prospective, this requires a movement away from a one-sided version of history and towards the studying of historical events from numerous viewpoints.

For Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans, multicultural education requires the inclusion of their contributions throughout history. The social history of Arab and Muslim-Americans is important in helping students dispel the many myths, stereotypes, and biases that exist. The inclusion of Arab and Muslim-American history gives voice to the millions of Arab and Muslim-Americans who have positively contributed to the development and growth of the United States. Unfortunately, this history is often excluded from textbooks and the classroom despite the number of resources on Arab and Muslim-American contributions. However, Arab and Muslim-Americans, like their Arab and Muslim ancestors, have made and continue to make great achievements in a variety of fields, such as, medicine, science, math, sports, politics, business, education, and entertainment. Arab and Muslim-Americans have served within the military and as political servants, activists, poets, artists, Emmy award winning actors and actresses, and sports icons (Kasem, 2005). They have won Nobel Peace prizes. Their contributions to the United States are too numerous to include on a single list, and yet most of their achievements go unrecognized. The dynamic role these two groups have had in science, education, geography, history, and exploration should not be underestimated. Teaching and learning about their contributions will lead to true multicultural education, one that allows students to study and analyze historical events from multiple perspectives. Long held stereotypes that Muslims and Arabs are of a foreign religion and culture, which do not have a place within the American tapestry will be disproved. Arab and Muslim-Americans will be better understood as a people, through a truly a multicultural curriculum.

## Statement of the Problem and Significance of Study

The present work is designed with the goal of expanding multicultural and social studies education, specifically about Arab and Muslim-Americans. Multiculturalism was initially intended to reform curriculum and teacher training programs. This research focuses not on the need for multicultural education or teacher training, but on the actual inclusion of multicultural Arab and Muslim-American studies in the secondary social studies curriculum. Little has been written about the teaching of Arab and Muslim-American cultures, despite the growth of the Arab and Muslim-American populations within the United States. A plethora of resources for

teaching Middle Eastern and Muslim traditions exists, but many of these resources are designed for world or global history courses. In U.S. history courses, Arabs and Muslims are frequently referenced in very specific contexts, such as during wars and conflicts (Crusades, 1970s oil embargo, Iran Hostage Crisis, Persian Gulf, 9/11), which emphasize stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims as violent and aggressive. This further demonizes Arab and Muslim-Americans and is counterproductive. Instead, what is needed most is an adjustment to how and when Arab and Muslim-American culture, history, and traditions are included in the curriculum, as well as resources to help educators achieve those goals.

### Research Questions

The major objective of this study is to understand Arab and Muslim-American multicultural education in secondary public school social studies courses. Several questions guided this research:

1. To what extent are Arab and Muslim-American history, culture, and positive contributions included in American textbooks and school curricula?
2. How are schools addressing biases against Arabs and Muslims?
3. What difficulties do teachers experience when incorporating Arab and Muslim-Americans history, culture, and positive contributions in social studies lesson plans?
4. Do teachers demonstrate a need for additional resources when teaching about Arab and Muslim-Americans in public schools across the United States?

### Mixed Methods Research Strategy

The current study was based on mixed methods strategies. Mixed methods research, according to Creswell (2009) "is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms (Creswell, 2009, chapter one, fifth paragraph). Through mixed methods research, "the researcher converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem" (Creswell, 2009, chapter one, thirtieth paragraph). While there are multiple facets to mixed methods research, the current study utilizes a concurrent transformative approach.

First, concurrent transformative strategies utilize two concurrent data collections: qualitative and quantitative. This provides the researcher with the ability to utilize multiple sets of data, emphasizing either qualitative/quantitative data sets or both sets equally, to address the research questions. Concurrent transformative strategies also allow data sets to be "integrated during analysis or possibly during interpretation phase" (Terrell, 2012, p. 272). According to Terrell (2012), concurrent transformative strategies strengthen research by providing data from multiple perspectives, which "offsets weaknesses inherent to one design by using both" and "allows researchers to expand an understanding from one method to another or converge or confirm findings" (p. 272).

The current study used mixed methods to explore and understand the relationship between numerous variables that affect Arab-American and Muslim-American multicultural studies within the secondary social studies curriculum. These variables included stereotypes and biases towards Arab and Muslim-Americans, the inclusion of Arab and Muslim-American history, culture, authors, and positive contributions in textbooks and school curricula, as well as resources on Arab and Muslim-American studies. The examination of these variables was meant to further determine whether or not there was a lack of Arab and Muslim-American studies within the secondary social studies curriculum and the implications of students' views of Arab and Muslim-Americans.

### *Surveys*

The current study collected data through surveys. Gideon (2012) describes a survey/questionnaire as "an effective tool for obtaining information on a variety of topics such as feelings, attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, values, potential actions, decision-making processes, needs, lifestyles, sense of social belonging, consumption and shopping patterns, or even simple demographic questions" that can utilize both open and closed-response questions (p. 92).

Survey research on multicultural social studies education has focused predominately on the need for multicultural education, creating multicultural curricula, and teacher training programs and participants. However, several studies specific to multicultural social studies have used surveys as a way of collecting data from teachers. Some have utilized both open and closed-response questions based on the Likert Scale, within the same survey.

Tim Fry (2000) conducted a study of pre-service social studies teachers and their perceptions of multicultural education. Fry's (2000) research collected survey data from 101 pre-service social studies teachers from six Kansas universities. The survey comprised of 25 Likert-scale questions and collected data on pre-service teachers' perceptions of multicultural education, perceptions on the "connection between the goals of multicultural education and the social studies," as well as multicultural concepts perceived to be "essential for inclusion in social studies classrooms" (p. 8). The study, however, only utilized Likert-scale questions, which made it difficult to understand why participants answered in a particular manner.

Cathy Brant (2013) conducted a survey of 69 pre-service social studies teachers in a Midwestern university, using closed-response, open-response, and Likert-scale questions. The purpose of the qualitative study was to collect data on pre-service social studies teachers' understanding of multicultural education. Both Fry (2000) and Brant (2013) collected data from pre-service teachers, however, neither asked questions regarding how participants implemented multicultural education within social studies, nor were their surveys specific to Arab and/or Muslim-American studies.

A study of practicing social studies teachers was conducted by Charles Titus (1992), and utilized quantitative strategies to determine how teachers infused multicultural education into the social studies curriculum. Twenty-six social studies teachers were surveyed across three high schools and two junior high schools in a mostly Caucasian community in a Midwestern state. The study, however, was broad, focusing on multicultural education across the secondary social studies curriculum. It concentrated on social studies teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards multicultural education, and not on a specific group, as in the case in the current study. Finally, Titus' (1992) research was conducted through closed-response, Likert-based surveys and did not allow participants to explain or clarify their responses in detail.

Similar to Titus' (1992) study, Sunita Sharma (2005) focused on teacher perceptions of multicultural education. Sharma (2005) conducted a unique mixed methods study through pre and post surveys of 150 teachers in a Florida school district. Fifty teachers were surveyed from each educational level (elementary, middle and high school teachers). Fifteen teachers, five teachers from each level, from the 150 initially surveyed were then randomly selected to participate in interviews. Like Titus' (1992) study, Sharma focused on teacher perceptions of multicultural education. Sharma's (2005) study differs from Titus' (1992), focusing on both elementary and secondary teachers of all subjects and through mixed methods of data collection.

All of the studies are in sharp contrast to the current study that specifically examines the inclusion of Arab, Muslim, and Arab and/or Muslim-American studies with the secondary social

studies curriculum. The current study is also more specifically concerned with multicultural Arab and/or Muslim-American studies. Data for the current study was collected from surveys that utilized qualitative open-response questions and quantitative Likert scale closed-response questions. The use of both open and closed- response questions allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the research. Electronic surveys were also the most efficient way of collecting responses nationally.

## Results

The data for this study was compiled from one hundred and one surveys that were collected over the course of three months from November 2012 to January 2013. Questions one, two, and three of the survey collected data on participants' background. The following descriptive statistics provide information on each participant's home state, years of teaching experience, and years of teaching in the current subject.

### *State participation*

The purpose of question one was to determine the location of each participant. The 101 surveys collected spanned the United States, 23 states in total, and the District of Columbia. Of the 101 surveys, ten participants abstained from including their location.

**Table 1. Distribution of state participants**

State Participation			
US State:	Abbreviation:	Total Participants:	Percentage from Total Participant Responses*:
Alabama	AL	22	24%
Alaska	AK	1	1%
California	CA	8	9%
Colorado	CO	1	1%
Connecticut	CT	1	1%
Delaware	DE	1	1%
Florida	FL	6	7%
Georgia	GA	1	1%
Hawaii	HI	2	2%
Maine	ME	1	1%
Maryland	MD	2	2%
Massachusetts	MA	2	2%
Michigan	MI	6	7%
Minnesota	MN	1	1%
Missouri	MO	2	2%
New Jersey	NJ	1	1%

New Mexico	NM	1	1%
New York	NY	10	11%
North Carolina	NC	4	4%
Ohio	OH	2	2%
Pennsylvania	PA	13	14%
Texas	TX	1	1%
Virginia	VA	1	1%
District of Columbia	DC	1	1%
<b>Total Participant Responses:</b>		<b>91</b>	<b>98%</b>
<b>Skipped Question</b>		<b>10</b>	
<b>Total</b>		<b>101</b>	
* Percentages rounded to nearest whole number			

The states with the largest number of participants included Alabama with 22 responses, nearly a quarter of the overall sample, followed by Pennsylvania with thirteen responses, New York, with ten responses, and California, Michigan, and Florida with eight, six, and six responses respectively. The surveys were originally emailed to secondary social studies teachers who had participated in regional and nationwide study workshops, which included the Korean Fellowship, Fulbright-Hays Study Abroad Program in Turkey, Multicultural Classroom Research in Spain, and the Arab American National Museum professional development workshop. The surveys were further distributed by the participants in these workshops to teachers within their schools, districts, and/or to other colleagues who met the requirements for participation. It may be assumed that some participants chose to distribute the surveys further while others did not. Notably, three states with numerous participants have large Arab and Muslim-American populations: California, Michigan, and New York.

### *Years of service*

Questions two and three of the survey asked the participants to indicate their number of years of service and the number of years teaching the current subject/course. Survey questions two and three allowed teachers to select years of service from 1 to 29 years with an additional option of 30+ years. The responses were then manually categorized into sections to include 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, and 26-30+ years of service. The results from question two showed that 15% of the surveyed participants had been teaching for five years or fewer. The largest number of teachers (26%) had been teaching in the range of 6-10 years with nine participants teaching 10 years. The second largest category was the group of teachers with 11-15 years of experience and comprised 22% of the overall surveyed population. In the third largest category (18%) were teachers with 16-20 years of service, followed by teachers with 21-25 years (13%) and 26-30+ years (6%) overall. One teacher abstained from answering the question. Table 2A shows the distribution of data from question two.

The results from question three demonstrated that the teachers with 1-5 years of service in their current subject/course comprised 31% of the overall survey population, making them the largest group. The second largest category, those teaching 6-11 years within their subject/course made up 29% of the population surveyed. Thus, the majority of teachers surveyed had been



teaching their current subject/course for 10 years or fewer, and after the events of 9/11. Percentages decreased as the number of years teaching in current subject/course continued to increase. Those with 11-15 years teaching in current subject/course were 21% of the population surveyed, followed by those with 16-20 years (9%), 21-25 years (7%), and 26-30+ years (4%).

**Table 2B shows the distribution of data from question three**

Teacher Years of Service			
Years of Service	Response Percent	Response Count	Category Percentages
1	2.0%	2	1-5 Years 15%
2	1.0%	1	
3	2.0%	2	
4	2.0%	2	
5	8.0%	8	
6	3.0%	3	6-10 Years 26%
7	3.0%	3	
8	3.0%	3	
9	8.0%	8	
10	9.0%	9	
11	6.0%	6	11-15 Years 22%
12	4.0%	4	
13	2.0%	2	
14	1.0%	1	
15	9.0%	9	
16	4.0%	4	16-20 Years 18%
17	4.0%	4	
18	3.0%	3	
19	4.0%	4	
20	3.0%	3	
21	3.0%	3	21-25 Years 13%
22	5.0%	5	
23	1.0%	1	
24	3.0%	3	
25	1.0%	1	
26	0.0%	0	26-30+ Years 6%
27	1.0%	1	
28	1.0%	1	
29	0.0%	0	
30+	4.0%	4	
<i>Answered Question</i>		<b>100</b>	
<i>Skipped Question</i>		<b>1</b>	
<i>Total</i>		<b>101</b>	
* Percentages rounded to nearest whole number			

Years Teaching Current Subject/Course			
Years of Service	Response Percent	Response Count	Category Percentages
1	4.0%	4	1-5 Years 31%
2	5.9%	6	
3	6.9%	7	
4	4.0%	4	
5	9.9%	10	
6	8.9%	9	6-10 Years 29%
7	3.0%	3	
8	7.9%	8	
9	2.0%	2	
10	6.9%	7	
11	4.0%	4	11-15 Years 21%
12	3.0%	3	
13	6.9%	7	
14	3.0%	3	
15	4.0%	4	
16	4.0%	4	16-20 Years 9%
17	2.0%	2	
18	1.0%	1	
19	0.0%	0	
20	2.0%	2	
21	2.0%	2	21-25 Years 7%
22	2.0%	2	
23	1.0%	1	
24	2.0%	2	
25	0.0%	0	
26	1.0%	1	26-30+ Years 4%
27	1.0%	1	
28	0.0%	0	
29	0.0%	0	
30+	2.0%	2	
<i>Answered Question</i>		<b>101</b>	
<i>Skipped Question</i>		<b>0</b>	
<i>Total</i>		<b>101</b>	
* Percentages rounded to nearest whole number			

**Islamophobia, Biases, and Stereotypes (Questions 5 and 8)**

Issues of biases and stereotypes have continued to be prevalent in the media and politics and have influenced how many Americans view Arab and Muslim-Americans (Saliba, 1999; Suleiman, 1999; Naber, 2000; Wingfield, 2006). Stereotypes and biases have also become a major concern in public schools and the curriculum as teachers struggle to address these issues within their classes. Within this study, questions five and eight of the survey were specific to these issues. Question five asked participants if their individual schools took time to discuss biases towards Arabs and/or Muslims with an option for open commenting. Question eight was an open-ended question that asked participants if they had observed biases against Arabs and/or Muslims among students and how they believed their students' views developed. Of the 88 responses to question five, nearly 49% agreed or strongly agreed that, their schools took time to discuss biases towards Arab and/or Muslims, 28.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 22% remained neutral.

**Table 3A. Discussing biases against Arabs and/or Muslims**

<b>Question 5</b>		
<b>5. Your school takes the time to discuss biases against Arabs and/or Muslims.</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	11.4%	10
<b>Agree</b>	<b>37.5%</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Neutral</b>	22.7%	20
<b>Disagree</b>	20.5%	18
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	8.0%	7
<b>Comments:</b>		33
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>88</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>13</b>

The participants' responses on the Likert scale indicated that the majority of schools were addressing biases towards Arabs and/or Muslims, however, their comments suggest otherwise. The open responses to question five were hand coded according to the four themes that emerged from the data. The thirty-three open responses were sorted into the following categories: yes, the whole school took time to discuss biases against Arabs and/or Muslims and as a part of school policy; yes, teachers individually took time to discuss biases against Arabs and/or Muslims, and as a part of school policy; yes, teachers individually took time to discuss biases against Arabs and/or Muslims, but not as a whole school or as a part of school policy; no, the school does not take time to discuss biases against Arabs and/or Muslims and it is not a part of school policy.

In the open response section of question five, only three participants acknowledged that their schools took time to discuss biases against Arabs/or Muslims. "We do not use a standard curriculum for addressing these issues, but we are sensitive to the biases and engage students in conversations about prejudice as it is relevant." However, an overwhelming 29 responses (88%) indicated that they individually took time to discuss biases against Arabs and/or Muslims, but not as a part of school policy. "Unfortunately, racism, bigotry, and misogyny are endemic in my

student body. I have made it a personal quest of mine to rectify this.” Another teacher recognized that “as a school it is not a priority, but individual teachers do make a point, especially in social studies to integrate this into the curriculum.” Only one teacher admitted that neither they nor their school took time to discuss biases against Arab and/or Muslims. “I have never heard a discuss[ion] related to this issue as a school or even department.”

The results show that any discussion regarding biases or stereotypes was more closely tied to each teacher’s pedagogy and varied “teacher-by-teacher” according to one participant. “This discussion is not school drive[en]. It is initiated if it happens at all, by the teacher,” wrote another educator. These comments represent teachers’ efforts to include multicultural education by emphasizing diversity and challenging stereotypes and biases within their curriculum, even if only on a limited basis. At the same time, multicultural education requires incorporating diversity and challenging stereotypes and biases as a part of the school culture. This provides teachers with support in the classroom and aligns teacher goals with that of the school. Based on the results of the survey, including diversity and challenging stereotypes and biases does not appear to be a part of school policy or culture.

Question eight, similarly, asked if teachers had observed biases against Arabs and/or Muslims, and how they believed those views developed. The 74 responses in question eight were hand coded according to the eight main categories that emerged, one of which was a combination of categories that included five subcategories.

**Table 3B. Biases against Arab and/or Muslims among students**

<b>Question 8</b>		
<b>8. If you have observed biases against Arab and/or Muslims among your students, how do you think your students’ views developed?</b>		
<b>Coded Categories</b>	<b>Response Percent*</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>9/11 and Terrorism</b>	12%	9
<b>Media (TV shows, movies, newspapers, news programs, internet, and social media)</b>	12%	9
<b>Parents</b>	14%	10
<b>Community/Religious institutions</b>	4%	3
<b>Anti-Americanism</b>	1%	1
<b>Lack of Exposure/Interactions with Arabs and/or Muslims</b>	4%	3
<b>Multiple Factors:</b>		
<b>A. Media and Parents</b>	22%	16
<b>B. Media and Community/Religious Institutions/Lack of Exposure to</b>	1%	1
<b>C. 9/11 and Media</b>	7%	5
<b>D. 9/11 and Lack of Exposure</b>	1%	1
<b>E. Parents and Lack of Exposure</b>	1%	1
<b>None</b>	20%	15
<b>Comments Submitted:</b>		74

\*Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number

From the 74 responses, the largest category was that comprising a combination of all categories. Approximately 32% of all participants believed that student biases towards Arabs and/or Muslims developed through some combination of the media, parents, the community, the aftermath of 9/11, or the lack of exposure and interactions with Arabs and/or Muslims. Within this category, 22% believed the media and parents had the largest impact on shaping student views of Arabs and Muslims. "Yes, first of all my students pronounce the word Arab as A-rab, I correct them but they continue to use the term. Bias such as they own all the corner stores, they are crazy, terrorist. They develop these biases through misconceptions of what they see on T.V., video games (Arabs are usually the bad guys) [and] family biases."

The media's role in projecting biases against Arabs and/or Muslims was a significant factor, according to eleven percent of those surveyed. "The news is the news. Arab and/or Muslim followers are seen in various ways on the world stage. Their words and actions (whether positive or negative) speak volumes. Arab/Muslim silence toward radicals in their own groups gives the (perhaps not accurate view) of support for these radicals." Several participants cited students "listening to right wing Republican religious bigots on Fox News" and repeating the "misinformation they've heard from talking heads on Fox News and the like."

Only 12% of the participants referenced 9/11 and terrorism as a factor in the development of biases amongst their students. Overall, however, 26% of the participants made reference to 9/11 or terrorism in their comments. "First and foremost due to 9/11," stated one teacher, "students only have heard of the negatives associate with Arabs and/or Muslims." Another teacher commented, "Views have become more progressive since Sept. 11, though some still express uninformed views and biases." These comments demonstrate that stereotypes and biases towards Arabs, Muslims, and Arab and Muslim-Americans continued more than twelve years after the events of 9/11. Approximately 14% of the comments attributed biases to the influence of parents on students. One participant responded that, "most students' biases derive from parents' misconceptions of Islam," while a second teacher reported that "students tend to emulate what they see and hear from adults."

In total, approximately 79% of those who responded to question eight observed some form of bias towards Arabs and/or Muslims, while 20% argued against the presence of biases. Fifteen teachers maintained that they had not observed student biases towards Arabs and/or Muslims, with one teacher stating that they had "not observed any, although I would say that many of my students are able to recite negative stereotypes, but don't seem to put much stock in them." Other comments by teachers included not having witnessed biases among their students or in their school, not having Arab-American students, or having Arab students, but not witnessing biases towards them. One participant did mention "a tendency of my Muslim-Arab students to downplay their religious and cultural background."

The responses of the teachers to question eight correlate with the research on stereotypes and discrimination against Arabs and/or Muslims and Arab and/or Muslim-Americans. The findings of this study suggest that the media, parents, the community, the events of 9/11, and lack of exposure to or interaction with Arabs and/or Muslims influence students in the United States heavily. Student biases towards Arabs and Muslims have developed through multiple means and are being reinforced by a curriculum that has excluded this minority. To that end, students continue, more than twelve years after 9/11, to view Arabs and Muslims in a negative light.

**Discussion of Positive Contributions by Arabs and Muslims (Question 6)**

The portrayal of Arabs and Muslims within the curriculum reflects the prevalent stereotypes of these groups. The results of questions five and eight indicate that stereotypes and biases about Arabs and Muslims are well established among students by the secondary level. However, are students being exposed to positive Arab and Muslim contributions and achievements? The argument is that without positive images in the media, as well as positive reinforcement of Arab and Muslim history and experience through multicultural education, stereotypes and biases against these groups will continue. By providing students with information about the positive contributions of Arabs and Muslims, they will gain a more balanced portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in the curriculum, and be able to challenge the negative stereotypes and biases prevalent in the media. The purpose of question six is to determine if positive Arab and/or Muslim contributions are included in the current curriculum.

There were 87 responses to the close-ended portion of question six. Of the responses, the majority, nearly 52% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that students discussed positive contributions by Arabs and/or Muslims in class. Almost 22% of the participants were neutral and comprised the second largest category. Only 26% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

**Table 4. Discussion of positive contributions by Arabs and/or Muslims**

<b>Question 6</b>		
<b>6. Students at your school discuss positive contributions Arabs and/or Muslims have made in class.</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	10.3%	9
<b>Agree</b>	<b>41.4%</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Neutral</b>	21.8%	19
<b>Disagree</b>	18.4%	16
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	8.0%	7
<b>Comments:</b>		87
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>87</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>14</b>

There were 21 responses to the open-ended question. All of the responses were hand coded according to the four themes that materialized from the data. The overwhelming majority (81%) agreed with the statement that students at their schools discussed positive contributions by Arabs and/or Muslims in class. Only one participant reported discussing positive contributions when the opportunity presented itself in response to current events, such as stereotypes and the media. One teacher did not discuss positive contributions by Arabs and/or Muslims and two responses were unclear and did not specifically answer the question. Of the educators who said yes, most cited including positive contributions in ancient, global, and world history courses as a part of historical achievements and contributions, but not specific to Arab-Americans. "Within the World History classroom, we discuss Al-Kwarizmi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Battuta, Abu al-Qasim, Salah al-Din and al-Kindi," and another participant responded, "In world history this is certainly true – although less emphasis is placed on Arabs/Muslims than on Christians/Europeans." One

teacher reported, “Most of these discussions are centered around Arab inventions, contributions to math, etc and less on Arab-American contributions.” Not all teachers who participated in the survey agreed that the inclusion of Arab and/or Muslims was necessary. “America as a country and culture should and must be the emphasis in American public schools. Citizens and taxpayers need informed citizens of America and need not be acculturated to Arab and/or Muslim cultures.”

The responses from question six suggest that while there is some inclusion of positive contributions by Arabs and/or Muslims, the majority of it is included in ancient, global, and world history. Teachers who include Arab and/or Muslim contributions concentrate on historic achievements. There seems to be little incorporation of contemporary Arab and/or Muslim history in other social studies courses.

### Lessons on Arab and Muslim-Americans (Question 4 and 9)

Questions four and nine of the survey focus specifically on the inclusion of Arab-American history, culture, and authors in textbooks and teacher lessons. Question four of the survey asked teachers to consider whether or not books and textbooks in their schools included Arab-American history, culture, and authors. Their responses were categorized according to a Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. An open comment section allowed participants to expand on their selections on their Likert scale. Question nine remained open ended for comments only.

Overall, the 88 teachers who responded to question four disagreed (46.6%) or strongly disagreed (12.5%) with the statement that books and textbooks included Arab-American history, culture, and authors. Slightly more than nineteen percent agreed that books and textbooks included Arab-American history, culture, and authors, with almost seven percent strongly agreeing. Nearly 15% of the participants remained neutral.

**Table 5. Inclusion of Arab-American history in textbooks**

<b>Question 4</b>		
<b>4. Books and textbooks in your school include Arab-American history, culture and authors.</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	6.8%	6
<b>Agree</b>	19.3%	17
<b>Neutral</b>	14.8%	13
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>46.6%</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	12.5%	11
<b>Comments:</b>		25
	<i>answered question</i>	<b>88</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>	<b>13</b>

\* Percentages rounded to nearest whole number

Of the 101 people surveyed, 25 commented on question four. The comments were then hand coded according to themes that emerged from the data. The themes were compiled into



five main categories; yes, Arab-American history is present in books and textbooks; yes, Arab-American history is present in books and textbooks, but only in global, world, or ancient texts; yes, Arab history is present in books and textbooks, but not specifically on Arab-Americans; no Arab-American history is not present in books and textbooks; and maybe. Of the 25 responses, eight responded that Arab-Americans were included in books and texts, while four responded that Arab-American history was included in world history texts only. One teacher stated that the inclusion of Arab history was “almost exclusively from the Golden Age of the Abbasid Caliphate. Arab history is discussed in World War I, II and in reference to the 70’s oil crisis. The latter chapters are from a distinct Americentric view.” An additional four responded that Arabs and Muslims were included in books and texts, but not Arab and Muslim-Americans specifically, whereas three did not agree that Arab-Americans were included in texts and six were unsure. “My World Culture textbook discusses Arab history, but not Arab-American history. I don’t currently teach American History, but when I did, I don’t recall any information regarding Arab-Americans.” Another teacher responded, “some AP World History books, like Bentley, include info[rmation] on Arabs, but not Arab-Americans.”

Their responses demonstrate the confusion that exists over the inclusion of Arab-American studies in books and textbooks used in public schools. Some teachers admitted that Arab and Muslim studies were included, but their responses suggest that this inclusion is limited to ancient, world, and global history studies. While one teacher recognized that more contemporary Arab studies were included in American history texts, such as the 1970s oil crisis, it is still not an inclusion of Arab-American history. The responses from question four also coincide with the results of question six and suggest that there is a lack of contemporary Arab-American inclusion.

To question nine, a total of 75 participants responded. The question was “Do you currently teach lessons on Arab-American or Muslim-American studies? Please explain.” The answers demonstrated that 24 respondents, who comprised 32% of the overall population, claimed to teach about Arab and/or Muslim-American studies in their classes. The majority, 51 participants, said that they did not. Responses varied from, “Not currently, not Arab-American or Muslim-American,” to more detailed responses for example, “No. I teach lessons on America’s relationship with the Muslim world, but very little of that focuses on Arab-Americans or Muslim-Americans.” Of those that said yes, answers were mixed. Teachers who did include Arab and/or Muslim-American studies in their classes did so as a part of lessons on discrimination and stereotypes, current events, contributions, culture and traditions, Islam in America, and community and diversity. Several responses included, “I teach a unit on Islam, which included some discussion about Arab-American and Muslim-American. But it mostly focuses on the historical aspect of the region,” “In our discussion of Islamic civilization we talk about stereotypes and current events as well as watch a 30 Days video on Muslims in America,” and “I teach American History so at times, the topic comes up, for example when teaching about 9-11, the Patriot Act, current events that relate to this topic, etc.”

Some of the responses led to concerns about the interpretation of state and national benchmarks and standards. Several comments cited that Arab and/or Muslim-American studies were not included as a part of the curriculum or that teachers lacked the time to include extra topics that were not required by the standards. One teacher commented, “...it's not a part of our curriculum.” Another teacher commented, “...even though I teach American history, this group does not seem to be large enough to warrant extra attention. We don’t cover Swedish Americans, either.” These comments bring to light some of the deeper challenges when it comes

to including Arab and/or Muslim-Americans in the curriculum. Upon closer examination of the curriculum, however, it can be inferred that Arab and/or Muslim-Americans, and Swedish Americans for that matter, are included. The state of Michigan social studies High School Content Expectations, for example, does mention the study of ethnic groups, although not specifically Arab and/or Muslim-Americans. Standards and benchmarks are written openly to allow for their inclusion and they align with the National Geography Standards (Appendix B). It is, therefore, a part of the curriculum to teach diversity and culture. Additionally, culture and teaching about culture comprise one of the ten themes of social studies, as determined by the National Council for the Social Studies (2013). In other words, the inclusion of groups, like Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans, are a required part of the curriculum.

The information from the survey suggests that teachers struggle to realize not only that Arab and/or Muslim-Americans are already a part of the curriculum, but also the various ways in which they can be incorporated. This is not only evident from the responses in question nine, but also in question ten.

### **Resources on Arab and Muslim-American Studies (Questions 10 and 7)**

One major research question in this study was to determine whether or not teachers faced any challenges when including Arab and Muslim-American studies into the current curriculum and whether or not there was a need for additional resources on teaching Arab and Muslim-American studies. Question ten asked participants to comment on difficulties experienced in incorporating multicultural education on Arab-Americans or Muslim-Americans in lesson plans (e.g., resources, lessons, activities, and/or basic information). Responses were gathered from 68 participants. The largest responses (28%) cited resources (literature, books, and texts) as the most difficult factor in incorporating Arab and/or Muslim-American studies. According to the experiences of one teacher, “Topics, such as history, beliefs, and culture seem readily available. However, resources related directly to Muslim-Americans experiences and challenges in the US would be valuable. It is also challenging to find good young adult literature about Arab-Americans/Muslim-Americans.” The second largest factors cited by participants were time and interpretation of the curriculum and/or standards, each with 15% and 13% respectively. Other factors cited were teachers’ lack of knowledge (6%), student/parent resistance, and a combination of a lack of knowledge and resources (4.5% each), time and resources, and time and curriculum (3% each), followed by resistance and time (1%). Six percent of participants had not tried to incorporate Arab and/or Muslim-Americans studies into their lessons and 16% claimed to have no difficulty incorporating them at all.

The second largest factors, time and the interpretation of the curriculum/standards, are again of major concern. Teachers comments included “lack of time to teach it – it is not a part of my curriculum and while I would like to insert it, I have too much to cover,” “it’s not in our state standards,” and “there’s no time to teach all the standards, let alone things outside of the standards.” According to one teacher, there is “not enough time, or flexibility given to the teacher to do so...we are in lock step with our teaching requirements.” These comments represent not only the frustrations that teachers face in trying to uphold state standards and benchmarks, but also their difficulties in understanding individual state and national benchmarks. While resources were also listed as a challenge to including Arab and/or Muslim-American studies, the interpretation of state and national benchmarks proves to be just as challenging.

The results from the data in question ten suggest that even with specific resources on Arab and Muslim-Americans it is unlikely that teachers would incorporate such resources with the existing state and national standards. The result is a paradigm where teachers are incorrectly

interpreting the curriculum and standards. Resources alone will not solve this issue. Instead, teachers will need resources that can be blended within their existing lessons that are already aligned with their state and national standards.

The responses in question ten correlated to those in question seven, which allowed teachers to comment specifically about what resources on Arab-American histories and cultures they would prefer to have. The comments were then categorized by hand according to the major commonalities that appeared in the data. Table 6 shows the distribution of responses to question seven where seven main categories emerged. Here, the responses were mixed. Of the 65 responses, the largest response (29%) came from 19 teachers interested in texts (informational, historical, current events, as well as contributions by Arab-Americans). One respondent commented, “I teach Civics, helpful information would include current Arab-Am[erican] politicians and activists, voting patterns, voting power, [and] interest groups.” Another teacher included in their response a request for “sidebars in U.S. history books.”

Within the data were nine requests (14%) for multi-media resources such as videos, movies, DVDs, interactive activities, and websites. An additional seven teachers commented on the need for primary and secondary resources on Arab-American cultures, differences within Arab cultures, and Arab-American perspectives and biographies. “For U.S. history teachers, primary documents that discuss Arab-American contributions similar to those contributions made by [N]ative Americans, African Americans and Asian Americans.” One teacher commented, “1) not all Arabs are alike, I would like to have different narratives from Arabs from all different countries so strong comparisons can be made. 2) info[rmation] on immigration and reasons for the exodus, 3) difficulties with immigration.” Another teacher commented specifically on Islam, stating, “We need more understanding of the overwhelming numbers of moderate Muslims. Muslims who embrace the teachings of peace in the Koran and more information concerning what efforts the Muslim religious community is doing to reach out to and reform the Islamist.” Finally, one teacher responded, “Primary source materials that are accessible for students. Secondary materials that discuss the achievements of Arab civilization in the centuries between the Golden Age and the rise of Arab nationalism. When we discuss the region (which is rare) we are focused on European imperialism, or the Turks.”

**Table 6. Resources on Arab-American histories and culture**

<b>Question 7</b>		
<b>7. What resources on Arab-American histories and cultures would you like to have?</b>		
<b>Categories Generated from Responses</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Texts (Informational, historical, current events, contributions)</b>	29%	19
<b>Multimedia (videos, movies, DVDs, activities, websites)</b>	14%	9
<b>Primary and Secondary Resources</b>	11%	7
<b>Curricular Packets/Lessons</b>	6%	4
<b>Combination of Categories</b>	17%	11
<b>Anything</b>	14%	9
<b>Nothing</b>	9%	6

<i>answered question</i>	<b>65</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>36</b>

\* Percentages rounded to nearest whole number

The second largest category (17%) of the surveyed population included 11 teachers who requested some combination of the above categories including guest speakers, field trips and graduate courses and workshops. Nine teachers were open to any materials, with one commenting, "Anything! Our textbooks are not very focused on diverse perspectives of history, so teachers have to put together supplemental sources." Seven teachers requested primary and secondary resources and only four teachers requested curriculum packets or lessons. Six teachers commented that no additional resources were needed. One teacher in this category commented, "The internet is enough," while another made specific reference to the curriculum. "The issue is not resources; it is making sure that attention is paid to the issue in curriculum."

The responses to question seven suggest that teachers are not as interested in lessons or curricular guides as in supplemental resources and materials that cover vast topics from history, cultures, biographies, multimedia materials, guest speakers, and interactive activities. A possible justification is that supplemental resources and materials provide teachers with the flexibility to include certain items that fit the needs of their students, lessons, and units. Teachers have the option to include as much or as little as they choose in order to achieve their objectives, whereas lesson plans can be more rigid and difficult to implement without multiple alterations.

After closely examining the state curriculum, it is recognized that Arab and Islamic history were included frequently, and they will play an increasing role in the curriculum in years to come. Islamic history and religion have already been incorporated in the Michigan state curriculum as early as middle school and well into high school (Michigan Social Studies Grade Level Content Expectations, 2012; Michigan Social Studies High School Content Expectations, 2012). Students study basic Islamic beliefs, holidays, and customs. The high school curriculum also includes Middle Eastern and Arab Studies in regards to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Camp David Accords, the Persian Gulf War, Iraq War, the Iranian hostage crisis, 9/11 and Afghanistan.

This would lead many to believe that Arabs and Islam play an influential role in the curriculum, and indeed, they do. It is clear that, in most cases, when students study Arabs, the Middle East, or Muslims, it is usually within a violent context. For example, students will most often study Arabs or Muslims while studying the Crusades, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iranian Hostage Crisis, 1970s oil embargo, Iran-Iraq War, Operation Desert Storm and 9/11. Students are rarely taught about positive contributions made by the Arab and Muslim community around the world and within the U.S.

The media's portrayal of Arabs and Muslims only intensifies this, which makes it easy to understand why so many students and even adults have difficulty separating violence from Arabs and Muslims. The use of certain curriculum materials, such as the *Kite Runner*, in English classes, again, only reiterates the stereotypes that students already have about Muslims. This perpetrates the image that Arabs and Muslims are angry and violent aggressors who oftentimes direct their anger at the United States and Americans at large. At the same time, teachers can help address these stereotypes, maybe even reverse their effects, thereby altering the resources they utilize within the curriculum in a way that allows for the positive inclusion of multicultural Arab and Muslim-American studies.

## Conclusion

The current study addressed biases and stereotypes, positive Arab and Muslim contributions, lessons on Arab and Muslim-Americans, and secondary social studies resources, each of which was concerned with critical multicultural education as a form of social justice education. The first of the four research questions was to determine if teachers observed stereotypes or biases about Arabs, Muslims, and Arab and Muslim-Americans amongst their students and if schools took time to address these biases and stereotypes. It was clear from the data in the study that stereotypes and biases towards Arabs and Muslims continue more than ten years after 9/11. It is also clear that teachers believe these stereotypes develop outside the walls of the classroom and school. Unfortunately, none of the teachers surveyed drew a connection between stereotypes, biases, and the lack of positive Arab, Muslim, and Arab and Muslim-American inclusion in the curriculum.

The inclusion of Arabs, Muslims, and Arab and Muslim-Americans in the curriculum was also a major research question. While it is important to recognize that teachers are including ancient Arab and Muslim contributions, it is equally important to note that contemporary Arab, Muslim, and Arab and Muslim-American achievements continue to go unnoticed in schools.

The third research focus of the study was to determine if Arab and Muslim-American history, culture, and authors were included in textbooks and school curricula. The results from question four of the study indicate that more than half of the teachers (58.9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that textbooks include Arab-American history, culture and authors. Some teachers agreed that Arab and Muslim-Americans were included in textbooks, however, only in reference to Middle Eastern conflicts, terrorism, or conflicts between the United States and the Middle East, for example the 1970s oil embargo. Similarly, the results from question nine show that most teachers (51%) do not specifically include Arab and Muslim-American studies in their classes and those who do, focus primarily on Middle Eastern conflicts or terrorism.

The fourth major research question focused on resources. Analysis from the data in question seven suggest that teachers are not interested in lesson plans and packets, but instead in supplemental material that can be adapted to meet the needs of their classes and individual students. Question seven did not determine if teachers struggled to collect or incorporate instructional materials about Arab and Muslim-Americans in their lesson plans. Question ten was designed to determine what difficulties teachers experienced incorporating multicultural education on Arab and Muslim-Americans in their lesson plans. It was in the open-responses of question ten that the data began to correlate with that in question seven. In this section, 29% of participants cited resources as the most difficult factor when it came to including Arab and/or Muslim-American studies. When combined with the information in question seven, it suggested that the lack of available resources correlates to the lack of Arab and Muslim-American studies in secondary social studies education.

Social studies teachers must find new ways, not new benchmarks, standards or curricula, to incorporate Arab and Muslim-American studies in a manner that challenges the stereotypes and misconceptions that currently exist. It is not simply the addition of the Arab and Muslim-American narrative to the curriculum; rather it is analyzing the same historical contexts from their position. In other words, teachers will need to look at the curriculum from a critical multicultural standpoint. It is the hope of the researcher to develop and provide such materials to teachers in the future.



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**Appendix A. Survey**

**Arab and Muslim-American Survey  
 University of Michigan – Dearborn**

*This survey is part of a doctoral study on multicultural education in high school social studies class. Please be sure that as a participant in this survey you are a secondary public school social studies teacher.*

1. In what state do you currently teach?
2. How many years have you been a teacher?
3. How many years have you spent teaching the current subject/course?

Please indicate on the Likert scales the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements below.

4. Books and textbooks in your school include Arab-American history, culture and authors.

Strongly Agree    Agree                      Neutral                      DisagreeStrongly Disagree  
 Comments:

5. Your school takes the time to discuss biases against Arabs and/or Muslims.

Strongly Agree    Agree                      Neutral                      DisagreeStrongly Disagree  
 Comments:

6. Students at your school discuss positive contributions Arabs and/or Muslims have made in class.

Strongly Agree    Agree                      Neutral                      DisagreeStrongly Disagree  
 Comments:

7. What resources on Arab-American histories and cultures would you like to have?
8. If you have observed biases against Arab and/or Muslims among your students, how do you think your students' views developed?
9. Do you currently teach lessons on Arab-American or Muslim-American studies? Please explain.
10. What difficulties have you experienced to incorporating multicultural education on Arab-Americans or Muslim-Americans in your lesson plans (e.g., resources, lessons, activities, basic information on Arab-Americans/Muslim-Americans)?
11. Is there any other information that you would like to include?

Thank you for your participation!

**Appendix A. Michigan Social Studies High School Content Expectations**

The Foundations in U.S. History and Geography Strand: F2 Geographic, Economic, Social, and Demographic Trends in America to 1877, which is meant to serve as a review of material covered in the eighth grade, includes:

- regional economic differences and similarities, including goods produced and the nature of the labor force (National Geography Standard 11, p. 206)
- changes in the size, location, and composition of the population (National Geography Standard 9, p. 201)
- patterns of immigration and migration (National Geography Standard 9, p. 201)
- development of cities (National Geography Standard 12, p. 208) (Michigan Social Studies High School Content Expectations, 2012)

Written as such, the strands allow for the inclusion and study of Arab and/or Muslim-American immigration, their contribution as a part of the labor force and the development of ethnic neighborhoods and cities. These same concepts are echoed in other strands:

- 6.1.1 Factors in the American Industrial Revolution
  - increase in labor through immigration and migration (National Geography Standard 9, p. 201)
- 6.1.2 Labor's Response to Industrial Growth – Evaluate the different responses of labor to industrial change including
- 6.1.3 Urbanization – Analyze the changing urban and rural landscape by examining
  - the location and expansion of major urban centers (National Geography Standard 12, p. 208)
  - the growth of cities linked by industry and trade (National Geography Standard 11, p. 206)
  - the development of cities divided by race, ethnicity, and class (National Geography Standard 10, p. 203)
    - resulting tensions among and within groups (National Geography Standard 13, p. 210)
    - different perspectives about immigrant experiences in the urban setting (National Geography Standards 9 and 12, pp. 201 and 208)
- 6.1.4 Population Changes – Use census data from 1790-1940 to describe changes in the composition, distribution, and density of the American population and analyze their causes, including immigration, the Great Migration, and urbanization. (National Geography Standard 9 and 12, pp. 201 and 208)
- 6.1.5 A Case Study of American Industrialism – Using the automobile industry as a case study, analyze the causes and consequences of this major industrial transformation by explaining
  - domestic and international migrations (National Geography Standard 9, p. 201)
  - the development of an industrial work force
  - the impact on Michigan
  - the impact on American society (Michigan Social Studies High School Content Expectations, 2012)

The inclusion of Arab and/or Muslim-Americans can also be incorporated in other strands:

- 8.1.2 Foreign Policy during the Cold War – Evaluate the origins, setbacks, and successes of the American policy of “containing” the Soviet Union, including
  - the armed struggle with Communism, including the Korean conflict (National Geography Standard 13, p. 210)
  - indirect (or proxy) confrontations within specific world regions (e.g., Chile, Angola, Iran, Guatemala) (National Geography Standards 5 and 13; pp. 192 and 210)
- 8.3.4 Civil Rights Expanded – Evaluate the major accomplishments and setbacks in civil rights and liberties for American minorities over the 20th century including American Indians, Latinos/Latinas, new immigrants, people with disabilities, and gays and lesbians. (National Geography Standard 10, p. 203)
- 9.2.1 U.S. in the Post-Cold War World – Explain the role of the United States as a super-power in the post-Cold War world, including advantages, disadvantages, and new challenges (e.g., military missions in Lebanon, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Gulf War). (National Geography Standard 13, p. 210)
- 9.2.2 9/11 and Responses to Terrorism – Analyze how the attacks on 9/11 and the response to terrorism have altered American domestic and international policies (including e.g., the Office of Homeland Security, Patriot Act, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, role of the United States in the United Nations, NATO). (National Geography Standard 13, p. 210) (Michigan Social Studies High School Content Expectations, 2012)

## Significance of Colors in the Noble Quran and the Ethics of Translating Them into English: An Empirical Study on Some Verses

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### Abstract

The Noble Quran has highly sophisticated and rhetorical language in treating the topics, issues and ideas of all aspects of human life and life after death. The use of colors in the Quran are of two types; either color is explicitly mentioned as (white, black, red and green) or implicitly refer to the color and could be inferred through verses while remembering words (day and night, darken, the light and the fire). The colors in the noble Quran carry symbolic connotations, aesthetic or moral objectives and the use of colors in the Quran have critical connotations. Most known colors are mentioned in verses (Ayat) , as the colors have multi-faceted roles in both sensual or moral purposes. They have many implications that affect the audience's cognitive reception. This research, however, aims to clarify the significance and uses of colors in the Quran in terms of their diversity, origin, source, and their ability to influence the human cognitions, which is usually called the drama of color. It will also describe how translator renders these verses which include the colors from Arabic into English. Therefore, Domestication and Foreignization strategies of translation have been applied to the extracted verses to investigate whether Arabic-English translators tend to domesticate these verses or foreignize them. The results show that the translator employs nearly equally both the Domestication and Foreignization strategy to translate the ST into TT. They also reveal that the translation of the Holy Quran could not be accurate, expressive and deep as required because of the eloquent language used in it.

**Keywords:** color, Quran, Domestication, Foreignisation, verses (Ayat), Source Text (ST), and Target Text (TT)

### 1.1 Introduction

Before revising the related aspects and the dimensions given by the contemporary specialists, the history of translating the Quran will be traced back in the history to learn more about earlier translations of the Noble Quran and some related matters. Hammad (2008) has pointed in his lecture entitled *translation Quran: assets and rules*, that the translation of the Holy Quran has appeared for the first time in the era of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), when some verses had been translated throughout his letters to the foreign kings and rulers. He also pointed out that the efforts of the Orientalists in the translation of the Quran began in the twelfth century, by Robert von Ketton (Robertus Ketenensis) who completed in 1143 a first Latin translation of the Qur'an. Although it was full of misunderstandings and intended as a wicked tool for converting Muslims to Christianity but it is considered as the basis of many other translations that appeared after that (Hammad, 2008).

Islamic Encyclopedia (2010), mentions that the Holy Quran has been translated into most European languages, Asian and African countries. The Iranians and Persians have had a head start in the translation of the Quran into Persian language. However, the European translations of the Holy Quran have passed four overlapped phases; the first is the process of translation from Arabic into Latin, which has extended this stage from the eleventh century to the twelfth century. The second stage is the translation from Latin to European languages and the third stage is the translation directly from Arabic into European languages by the Orientalists. While the fourth stage started with the entry of Muslims to the field of translation from Arabic into European languages that began late in 1905, whose purpose was to give a true and pure picture of Islam to non-Arabic speakers contrary to that bad and distorted image given by the West to Islam.

This long history of translations has presented a number of thoughtful problems of translating Quranic text. However, The Holy Quran highlights the fact that colors are one of the attributes of beauty when used to give detailed description of any entity with its colors. Moreover, colors are one of the most outstanding evidences of Allah creativity, as well as the means to explain and differentiate amongst things.

The word *color* and its derivatives, however, have been mentioned nine times in seven verses to show the uses of these colors. Sometimes, the word *difference* or *different* is associated with the pronunciation of color to mean; first: the absolute divine power and secondly: what it is called human thought and insight into the facts of the universe. Whereas, the word colors, number of words (color), has been mentioned in the Quran in seven positions, but in the six verses, as a sign from Allah to the seven known spectral color, which is made of white light (Ibin Kathir, 1999).

### 2. The problem

There is no doubt that the articulatory foundations of the Quran have silenced all rhetoricians for the magnificence of the vocabulary and their beautiful and accurate images. The phenomenon of color has been employed as the technical picture in the Quran to play an essential role in the Quranic connotations.

Hence, this study will essentially focus on the different senses of the colors mentioned in the Quran, and the problem of translating the expression of color or aesthetic images and its rhetoric connotation in the Quranic text especially the boundaries that must not be bypassed by the interpreter to translate the text of the Qur'an which revealed in specific events through different periods of time.

### 3. Research Question

The following questions are raised to be examined in this study:

1. Which approach is more applicable for translating the expressions of color into English the Domestication or Forienization?
2. What is the solution for translating the meaning of color into English in Nobel Quran?

### 4. The Methodology

The methodology adopted in this study is designed to describe comprehensively the extracted verses containing colors. Therefore, the present methodology is first, collecting certain verses of the colors and second examines the approach that the translator implements to translate the related verses. This study will consider Al-Hilali (1983) translation. Finally, the significance of the colors in the Nobel Quran has been analyzed and discussed in terms of Domestication and Forienization.

### 5. Literature Review.

In this section, the early literature about colors in Nobel Quran is presented along with the introduction on Domestication and Forienization approaches.

#### 5.1 The Colors in the Quran

The colors in the Quran carry symbolic connotations, aesthetic areas and ethical issues. The use of colors' connotations in the Quran is of great importance. There are the most known colors mentioned in the verses and play crucial role as they have sensory and moral function which their connotations have an effect on the human soul. That the use of colors in the Quran responded to two types, sometimes the color is mentioned explicit, such as white, black, red and green and sometimes it does not say the word directly, but rather inferred the existence of color through the while employing words (al-subih (the day light), night, darkness, light of paradise and fire). The implications of the colors that are mentioned in the Quran is presented are reviewed next.

#### 5.1.1 The Yellow Color

The first color mentioned in the Quran is the yellow and it is mentioned five times in five different verses. This study, however, will focus on three verses which have different collocations as mentioned below:

1. To bring happiness to those who have seen this color in animals.

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاءُ فَاقِعٌ لَوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ النَّاطِرِينَ {البقرة 69}

Al-Baqarah surah, (the Cow) 69 (He said, "He says. 'It is a yellow cow, bright in its color, pleasing the beholders.)

2. Corruption and destruction if it is in the wind.

وَلَئِنْ أَرْسَلْنَا رِيحًا فَرَأَوْهُ مُصْفَرًّا لَظَلُّوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ يَكْفُرُونَ {سورة الروم 51}

Al-Rum surah 51 (And if we send a wind [which would spoil the green growth (tilt) bring up by the previous rain], and they see (their tilt) turn yellow- behold, they then (after their being glad,) would become unthankful (to their Lord Allah as) disbelievers (Hilali, 1983)

3. Yard and stiffness and crush in plants.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنَابِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ يَهْبِجُ فَتَرَاهُ مِصْفَرًا ثُمَّ يُجْعَلُهُ حُطَامًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرًا لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ {الحديد 20}

Al-Hadeed surah, 20 (See you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and causes it to penetrate the earth, (and then makes it to spring up) as water-springs, and afterward thereby produces crops of different colors, and afterward they wither and you see them dry and broken pieces. Verily, in this is a Reminder for men of understanding.)

### 5.1.2 The White Color

White is a distinguished color from the rest of the colors in its function, nature, features and significance. There is a network of relationships between color and human behavior and it is often used in our daily lives, such as white hands, white face, and white flag. White is mentioned in many locations in the Quran as independent color and in combination with the black color as these two colors have solid association with each other. It is stated White solely in the context of the challenge of Moses to Pharaoh, in more than one place, where he is asked to enter his hand in his pocket and come out white and safe which is considered as one of the miracles. In the Arab culture, the white color is a symbol of purity, vitality and innocence. However it has positive effects and associated with the peacefulness and is used to strengthen the human organs and especially the immune system. White, still, is the second stated color in the Quran where it is mentioned twelve times;

The connotations of white color are:

1. The light, sunshine, time of dawn and the morning.

(حَتَّىٰ يَبْيُنِّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ

And eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of light), then complete your Saum (fast) till the nightfall).

2. The color of the faces of the Paradise's people. In Al Imran surah, Ayah

107 (وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعَتْ فَوَجَّهَهُمُ فِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ) أ ل عمران

Aal- Imran107 (And for those whose faces will become white, they will be in Alla's Mercy (Paradise), therein they shall dwell forever).

3. Some diseases, such as *the eye goes dark because of grief*.

(وَتَوَلَّىٰ عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسْفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَأَبْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ)

يوسف 84

84 (And he turned away from them and said: "Alas, my grief for Yusuf (Joseph)!" And he lost his sight because of the sorrow that he was suppressing).

4. The miracle of Moses.

(وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَإِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنَّاظِرِينَ)

الاعراف 108

Al-Araf Surah )108 And he drew out his hand, and behold! It was white (with radiance) for the beholders).

The color of the roads between the mountains .

(وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيْضٌ) فاطر 27

Surah Fatir, Aya 27 ( and among the mountains are streaks white ---)

5. The color of the of drink in the Paradise.

(بَيْضَاءَ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ) الصافات 46

46 Al-Safat (white, delicious to the drinkers).

### 5.1.3 Black Color

The third color mentioned in the Quran 8 times in 7 verses, is the black color and it has the following connotations:



1. The darkness of the night .

حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ (البقرة 187)

187until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night).

2. The color of the faces of people in the fire.

وَتَسْوَدُ وُجُوهُ قَوْمًا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ

آل عمران 106

106. (on the Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) when some faces will Become white and some faces will become black; as for those whose faces will be said): “Did you reject Faith after accepting it? Then taste the torment (in Hell) for rejecting Faith”.

3. Anguish, worry and sadness..

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُم بِالْأُنثَىٰ ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ (النحل 58)

A-Nahal Surah 58(And when the news of (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief !)

4. The dryness and destruction.

( فَجَعَلَهُ عَنَاءً أَحْوَىٰ.. ) الأعلى 5

Al-Ala, 5 (And then makes it dark stubble).

5. The Color of some mountains

(..وَعَرَابِيْبُ سُودٌ) فاطر 27

Fatir Surah, 27(and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colors and (others) very black).

#### 5.1.4 The Green Color

The green is the fourth mentioned color in the Quran and it is eight times mentioned. Its connotations are;

1. The color of the plants, trees and earth after raining.

(وَسَبْعَ سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ) يوسف 43

Yusuf Surah, 43 (and seven green ears of corn, and (seven) others dry.)

2. The people's clothes in the paradise.

(عَالِيَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٌ خُضْرٌ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٌ) الانسان 21

Al-Insan Surah, 21 (Their garments will be of fine green silk and gold embroider).

3. The color of cushions' covers in paradise...

(مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَىٰ رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ) الرحمن 76

Al-Rahman Surah, 76 (Reclining on green cushions and rich beautiful mattresses).

#### 5.1.5 The Blue Color

The blue is the fifth mentioned color in Quran, and its connotation is :

The color of infidels' faces when they have been gathered because of the severity of the horrors, fear and dread of the Day.

(يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ وَنَحْشُرُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ زُرْقًا) طه 102

Taha Surah, 102 (The Day when the Trumpet will be blown (the second blowing): that criminals, polytheists, sinners, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) blue or blind-eyed with thirst).

#### 5.1.6 The Red Color

The red is the sixth mentioned color in the Quran, and its connotation is:

- 1.The color of the roads between the mountains and the colors of the fruits on the trees.

(وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ) فاطر ٢٧

Fatir Surah, 27 , ( See you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and We produce therewith fruits of various colors, and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colors and (others) very black .)

**5.1.7 The Pink Color**

The pink is the seventh mentioned color in Quran and it is mentioned only one time. Its connotation is that the color of the sky when the partition and rending Doomsday.

(فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ) الرحمن 37

Al-Rahman Surah, 37 (Then when the heaven is rent asunder, and it becomes rosy or red-oil, or red hide).

**5.1.8 The Dark Green Color**

It is the eighth mentioned color in the Quran. It is mentioned once and its connotation is the color of the condensed trees in as paradise in

{مُدْهَامَاتَانِ} الرحمن 64

((Dark green [in color]) (Amjad , 2012:12) .

However, Table (I) gives a brief illustration for the order of the colors as mentioned in the Quran, the frequency of their occurrences, the number of verses they appear in and the significance of each color.

**Table. The significances of colors in Nobel Quran**

No.	The order of colors as mentioned in the Quran	The number of times the colors mentioned in the Quran	In how many ayah the color has mentioned	The significance of the color
1	The First: the yellow	5	In 5 Ayahs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The light, sunshine, time of dawn and the morning</li> <li>2. The color of the faces of the Paradise's people.</li> <li>3. The miracle of Moses.</li> <li>4. The color of the roads between the mountains</li> </ol>
2	The Second: white	12	In 12 Ayahs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To bring happiness to those who have seen this color in animals .</li> <li>2. Corruption and destruction if it is in the wind .</li> <li>3. Yard and stiffness and crush in plants.</li> </ol>

3	The third: The black	8	In 7 Ayahs	1. The darkness of the night . 2. The color of the faces of the fire people. 3. Anguish, worry and sadness... 4.The dryness and destruction 4. The Color of some mountains.
4	The fourth: The green	8	8 Ayahs	1. The color of the plants, trees and earth after the rain. 2. The Color of cushions' covers in paradise. 3. The clothes of paradise's people.
5	The fifth: The blue	1	One Ayah	The color of infidels' faces when they have been gathered because of the severity of the horrors, fear and dread of the Day.
6	the sixth: the red	1	One Ayah	The color of the roads between the mountains and the colors of the fruits on the trees.
7	The seventh: The pink	1	One Ayah	The color of the sky when the partition and rending Doomsday
8	The eighth: The dark green	1	One Ayah	The color of the condensed trees in paradise.

### 5.2 Domesticating Translation vs Foreignizing Translation

Domestication and Foreignization “are two translation strategies invented by Lawrence Venuti in 1995 based on his investigation of western translation history and theories. The origins of the two terms go back to the German philosopher Friedrich who believes that there are only two different methods of translation,” either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him.” Venuti (1995:78).

Domestication, however, describes the translation strategy in which a clear and fluent method is adopted to lessen the strangeness of the foreign text for target language (TL) reader”, i.e., to minimize the SL foreign elements to the TL cultural values (Munday 2001). On the other hand, Venuti recommends utilizing Foreignization to avoid the cultural clashes in translation which is introduced by Schleimacher who described it as “the translator...moves the reader towards the writer” (Hatim, 2001:46). If Foreignization is applied to a translation, the TL readers will feel that the translator is ‘visible’ and they will tell ‘they are reading a translation’ (Hatim & Munday, 2004:147). Thus, the translator would recover his reputation.

### 6. The Analysis of the Translations of the Verses

The translation of verses is very hard for many considerations including, dealing with religious texts related to the principles, worship, morals, linguistic or cultural values contained in the religion. Thus, it is not easy to transfer these meanings into other languages as they related to the awareness of rights and their daily practices, and the beliefs which are difficult to transfer to another language. Furthermore, the translator of religious text should be familiar with its terminology and expressions. Although the dominant translators of the Holy Quran are Muslims yet they encounter some problems. The translation of religious texts is very difficult task because the translator may face, for example, one word implies many meanings, and the task of the translator, is to know what is signified by a specific word, thorough understanding it and then infer the right meaning in the verse. The translation, however, must be graduated according to the following conditions:

1. The English to be used should be easy and fluent and lack of errors .
2. To move away from the literal translation that may fail in the transfer of meaning
3. To give the reader information about the context, the time and this historical background to bring the reader to understand the message lies behind the words of the verses.
4. To clarify the Quranic terms, idioms and in accurate and short phrases.
5. The footnotes should be limited to a few important explanations, because plentiful deviates the reader's mind away from of the important part of the text.
6. To spare no effort to make the translation as simple as possible without giving up the beauty of the style. In addition, and in order to make the TT readable for the target readers, a translator should avoid presenting any strange words (Bin Sulaiman, 2013: p.1).
7. The Noble Quran has distinctive style, so what are going to be translated are either its implicit meanings or the literal meanings. Al- Nadawi 1996 (in Al-Bunyan: 2014, p.10) maintains that the most important problem facing the translator is the problem of the transfer of the full meaning of the Quranic verses into English for different reasons. Therefore, translators utilize different procedures to overcome these problems and render the verses accurately into English. For example, the lack of equivalent English words to the meaning of the Arabic words which forces the translator to more information to make the translator clearer. Some translators choose changing the source text values and making them legible for the target text audience. This is called Domestication as in the examples below.

### The Yellow Color

#### Example 1 :

(وَلَيْنُ أَرْسَلْنَا رِيحًا فَرَأَوْهُ مُصْفَرًّا لَّظَلُّوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ يَكْفُرُونَ) سورة الروم 51

Al-Rum surah 51 (And if We send a wind [which would spoil the green growth (tilt) brought up by the previous rain], and they see (their tilt) turn yellow- behold, they then (after their being glad,) would become unthankful (to their Lord Allah as) disbelievers).

This translation is foreignized because the back translation of this verse reads as:

(While we sent a wind and they saw it yellowish so they kept disbelieve after him).

The translator foreignizes the target text by using the word (*tilt*), adding explanation, illustration and enclosing it with brackets [*which would spoil the green growth (tilt) brought up by the previous rain*] for making the target text more readable and comprehensible by the target audience.

#### Example 2:

( أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنَابِيعٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعاً مُخْتَلِفاً أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرّاً ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَاماً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرَى لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ) الحديد 21

Al-Hadeed surah, 20(See you not that Allah **sends** down water (rain) from the sky, and causes it to penetrate the earth, (and then makes it to spring up) as water-springs, and afterward thereby produces crops of different colors, and afterward they wither and you see them *dry and broken pieces*. Verily, in this is a Reminder for men of understanding.)

The translator of example (2) translates مصفرا (Yellowish) into *dry and broken pieces*, i.e., he transfers the message (the intended meaning) into the target language. Accordingly, he foreignizes it by providing a clear and understandable message to the English readers.

### The White Color

#### Example 3:

( حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ )سورة البقرة 187

Al-Baqarah Surah, 187(And eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of light), then complete your Saum (fast) till the nightfall).

The verse 187 in Al-Baqarah Surah is another example for Foreignization when the translator adds (light) to *white thread* to make it more understandable by the target reader.

#### Example 4:

( وَتَوَلَّىٰ عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا أَسْفَىٰ عَلَىٰ يُوسُفَ وَابْيَضَّتْ عَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْحُزْنِ فَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ) يوسف 84

Yusuf 84 (And he turned away from them and said: “Alas, my grief for Yusuf (Joseph)!” And he lost his sight because of the sorrow that he was suppressing).

In the rest of this verse (*The dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of light), then complete your Saum till the nightfall*) the translator tries to foreignizes this text for the target reader by adding additional information. Regarding the white color the translator adds (Joseph) to refer to the name of the prophet Yusuf as it is more familiar to the target religious culture. Thus, the translator foreignizes the source text in the TT.

#### Example 5:

( وَنَزَعَ يَدَهُ فَادَّا هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ لِلنَّاطِرِينَ ) الأعراف 108

A-araf Surah 108 (And he drew out his hand, and behold! It was white (with radiance) for the beholders).

The translator of the above verse uses the statement *and be hold!* to indicate the Mosa's miracle. Moreover, he adds *with radiance* to give bright image about this miracle in which Mosa's hand became very white color when he pulls it out because of Al Mighty Allah's will to change ebony (dark) color into the very white to appear as a miracle . Accordingly, the translator foreignizes هِيَ بَيْضَاءُ in the TT.

Example 6:

وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيَضٌ) فاطر 27

Surah Fatir, 27 (and among the mountains are streaks white ---)

The translator chooses preserving the values of the SL and exposing audience to them. This is termed Domestication in which the translator seems invisible in the TT.

Example 7:

بَيِّضَاءَ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ) الصافات 46

Al-Safat 46 (white, delicious to the drinkers).

This translation is an instance of Domestication in the target language.

**The Black Color**Example 8:

حَتَّىٰ يَبْيَيِّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ) البقرة 187

Al-Baqarah 187 (until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night)).

It can be considered as an example of Domestication in the target language.

Example 9:

وَتَسْوَدُ وُجُوهُ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ) آل عمران 106

Aal Omran 106 (on the Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) when some faces will become white **and some faces will become black**; as): “Did you reject Faith after accepting it? Then taste the torment (in Hell) for rejecting Faith”).

The translator in example (8) adds *darkness of night* for “the black thread” to make it comprehensible by the target readers. Accordingly, he foreignizes the TT while translating the ST. When the translator uses Foreignization, he keeps the SL values and makes them noticeable in the TL. It is noticed that the translator, in example (9), encloses two explanations in the target text to clarify in the first the judgment day and in second the place for torching the disbelievers.

The translator implements the direct translation to transfer the statement ( وَتَسْوَدُ وُجُوهُ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ ( وَجُوهُهُمْ ), i.e., it is translated unchanged as *and some faces will become black for those whose faces will be said their faces became black*. So, it can be considered as a Domestication way of translation. The translator, however, follows the same way with examples (10a) and (10b) below.

Example 10:

فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَىٰ) الأعلى 5

(a) Al-Ala Surah, 5 (And then makes it dark stubble).

وَعَرَابِيبٌ سُودٌ) فاطر 27

(b) Fatir Surah, 27 (and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colors and (others) very black).

**The Green Color**Example 11:

وَسَبْعَ سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ وَأُخَرَ يَابِسَاتٍ) يوسف 43

Yusuf Surah, 43 (and seven green ears of corn, and (seven) others dry).

In the example (11) above, the phrase وَسَبْعَ سُنْبُلَاتٍ خُضْرٍ is rendered into English as *and seven green ears of corn*, i.e., directly (word for word) translation. Thus, it can be considered as Domestication.

Example 12:

عَالِيَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٌ خُضْرٌ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٌ) الانسان 21



Al-Insan Surah, 21 (Their garments will be of fine green silk and gold embroider).

The translator replaces *إِسْتَبْرَقَ* (brocade) by *gold embroider* because he tries to make the TT more readable and explicable by the target audience for such a word, as I believe the word 'brocade' is not too much experienced in the target culture and it is Foreignization translation.

On the other side, the translator follows Domestication strategy to render example (13) into English, as shown below.

Example 13:

76 *مُتَّكِنِينَ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَعَبَقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ* (الرحمن)

Al-Rahman Surah, 76 (Reclining on green cushions and rich beautiful mattresses)

### The Blue Color

Example 14:

102 *(يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ وَنَحْشُرُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ زُرْقًا)* طه

Taha Surah, 102 (The Day when the Trumpet will be blown (the second blowing): that criminals, polytheists, sinners, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) blue or blind-eyed with thirst).

In a simple arithmetic for the source and target text of example (14) it appears that the translator adds much information and explanation in the TT when he translates the ST into English. Consequently, he prefers changing the SL values and making them clear and plausible for the TL audience. This translation can be labeled as Foreignization.

### The Red Color

Example 15:

27 *(وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهَا فَاطِرٌ)* فاطر

Fatir Surah, 27 ( See you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and We produce therewith fruits of **various colors**, and among the mountains are **streaks white and red**, of varying colors and (others) very black).

The translator translates the ST unchanged into the TT. This translation can be categorized as Foreignization.

### The Pink Color

Example 16:

37 *(فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ)* الرحمن

Al-Rahman Surah, 37 (Then when the heaven is rent asunder, and it becomes rosy or red-oil, or red hide).

The translator adds *red hide* to give a clear picture about the degree of the color.

Therefore, it can be considered as Domestication.

Nevertheless, if you look at the translations of the verses in previous examples (1-16) you find that they do not measure up in any way to the expression of the Quranic text, but there is alteration in their translation.

## 7. Conclusions

As a translation is a simultaneous theory and practice therefore the translators must think about the rhetoric, artistic features of the verses, its exquisiteness as well as the used strategies (Domestication or Foreignization). The above analyses, show that nine verses have been foreignized by the translator while eight items show the utilizing of domestication translation strategy. Both examined strategies in this study play an important and remarkable role in

rendering the Qura'nic verses containing colors into English. It is obvious that the complete transfer of all the Qura'nic messages of the original text (Arabic) into the target text (English) is not possible because they are of two different cultures. Therefore, it is essential to reconsider the whole verse while translating it into English. Translation, however, is not only rendering the words, the meaning, the syntactic rules and the arrangement of words, but it is also rendering the behavior of the society and cultural customs. This study is an attempt to understand the translating approaches used to translate color expressions in Noble Quran. Consequently, a translator should first be aware of the Islamic culture then interpret the Quranic verses to the receiver language and render them to a precise TT as much as possible.

The results of this study answer the first research question arose in section three which show that the translator utilizes the Forienization and Domestecation strategy almost equally to present comprehensible and readable translated contexts for the target readers .

In conclusion, to avoid transferring false information about Islam, its rulings and tarnish its image, the translator should be fluent in English language, professional, and knowledgeable enough in the Arabic language as well as all aspects of the Islamic religion and that implies the answer to the second research question in this study.

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## Reconceptualizing the Writing Center in the Wake of Local Admissions: Redefining Writing Centers in Qatar

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### Abstract

The Open Admissions phenomenon in the 1970s at the City University of New York (CUNY) provides a historical example of how higher education institutions may handle vast numbers of underprepared students. This scenario is currently being replayed in the Middle East, specifically in Qatar, where elite American higher education institutions are flooded with underprepared students. The result is similar to what occurred at CUNY – students are directed to writing and academic support centers for remedial instruction, while both students and faculty at these institutions experience frustration. This article stems from a larger research project that took a sociocultural approach to exploring English faculty perceptions of a writing center at an American higher education institution in Qatar; this article examines the historical background of Open Admissions in the United States and the implications for language learners in Qatar and other international contexts.

**Keywords:** writing centers, ESL, international education, admissions, writing

## Introduction

During the last decade or two, the Middle East, in particular the Gulf States, have witnessed a huge expansion of American higher education institutions. With these institutions has typically come some form of a writing, learning, or academic resource center. Research has shown that ESL students are often a high percentage of writing center clients and also most likely to receive a significant benefit from such utilization (Bruce, 2009; Bruce and Rafoth, 2009). English is not the first language for the majority of the students enrolled in these Western universities in the Middle East. With this in mind, one would expect the writing centers to be flooded with clients. Surprisingly, however, this has not always been the case; there appears to be little or no motivation for students, despite their language and writing needs, to visit writing centers.

This paper aims to achieve two goals: first, it will draw a parallel of the Open Admissions phenomenon at the City University of New York (CUNY) in the 1970s in the United States and how this is being replayed in the Middle East; second, drawing on this notion of Open Admissions challenges, it will explore the complex nature of motivation for linguistically diverse students to visit writing centers in American higher education institutions in Qatar.

## Social Context & Background

In order to fully appreciate the role motivation plays in the Gulf States and why it is comparable to the Open Admissions era, it is necessary to understand the complexity of the educational arrangement in Qatar. Education City was established in Qatar in 1995 by an official decree of the Emir of the State of Qatar. Since its establishment, Education City has been chaired by the Emir's wife, Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned (Qatar Foundation, 2009). Sheikha Mozah has been responsible for the vision and entire implementation of this wide scale educational endeavor. To date, six universities have established branch campuses from the United States by importing their educational systems to Doha. A significant part of the rationale behind this project was to benefit women – due to cultural norms and local laws, women are not allowed to freely travel abroad without a male chaperone. This has resulted in limited educational opportunities for females. Consequently, the importation of Western institutions allows for greater access to higher education regardless of gender. Sheikha Mozah is well-respected and simultaneously often criticized for her views and actions toward gender equality. Nonetheless, she has so far successfully chaired Education City and overseen the growth of the universities and other institutions within its bounds.

One of the recently established universities in Education City is Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar (SFS-Q); this is where the author's initial experience was situated. She moved to Doha in August 2005, the same time SFS-Q was welcoming its first class of students. Georgetown was the fifth American university to establish itself in Education City (preceded by Virginia Commonwealth University, Cornell, Texas A&M, and Carnegie Mellon). It is notable that each of these institutions was selected to import only one school from its larger home campus university. For example, VCUQatar only brought the School of the Arts, Texas A&M carried over the School of Engineering, and Cornell brought over its medical school. This specificity of selection aimed to achieve Her Highness's goal of bringing only "world-renowned universities" (Qatar Foundation, 2009).

Each institution has negotiated a lengthy and detailed contract with Qatar Foundation, the main administrative unit for schools in Education City. While each contract is unique, there is a common underlying principle for all agreements: institutions from abroad must not relax their

standards or vary their curricula in any way. The admissions process and subsequent education in Qatar must directly mirror the processes in the home campuses. In fact, students who graduate from these branch campuses in Qatar are awarded degrees with identical wording to those of their main campus counterparts. In other words, unless the student specifically discloses the information, it would appear to any reader that the student attended the institution in the United States.

While the agreement to maintain identical standards across campuses sounds reasonable on the surface, it is clouded by another particularly challenging mandate – to accept a quota of local Qatari students. Qatar Foundation itself cites that “roughly half of university students are Qatari”(Qatar Foundation, 2009). In a country with a relatively low percentage of Qatari nationals (figures vary but it is generally estimated that no more than 20% of the population in Qatar actually possesses Qatari citizenship), coupled with the fact that the system of education is relatively new and continuously developing, finding qualified applicants for so many elite institutions can be a significant challenge (Mills, February 2009; Mills, July 2009; Wasserman, 2009). The result of these contractual quotas has led to a new phenomenon of Open Admissions in the Middle East, where underprepared students dominate the system.

### Open Admissions

As previously noted, Open Admissions was a politically and socially motivated change to higher education institutions in the United States during the 1970s, with the most striking example of open admissions and its challenges at CUNY. After years of discussion and debate about how to use the increase in government funds to aid underprepared students, as well as increase minority representation in the system of higher education, “CUNY’s community colleges began to admit any student with a high school diploma” (Renfro and Armour-Garb, 1999, p. 6). The primary aim was to minimize the gap between educational achievement for learners from different social and economic backgrounds, while maintaining CUNY’s overall mission of excellence and access. However, as an official report from New York in 1999 explains, “over the past 30 years, the ‘access’ portion of the mission has overwhelmed the university at the expense of excellence”(Renfro and Armour-Garb, 1999, p. 6). This is a scenario that is being replayed in Education City universities now as they are required to fulfill quotas for local students. As the above-mentioned report states, “CUNY has essentially delegated its admissions standards to the New York City public school system” (Renfro and Armour-Garb, 1999, p. 118). The American higher education institutions in Education City are similarly reliant on Qatar’s relatively new and developing K-12 system. The Qatari government itself acknowledges that “Overall, 2008 performance levels are generally low. Some students perform at the very highest levels, but the majority are performing at moderate levels, at best.” (Institute, 2008, slide 7).

One of the greatest challenges resulting from the Open Admissions program in the U.S. presented itself in writing centers across the country. How could institutions effectively handle the significant number of underprepared students in the classroom? This is when and where writing centers became an even more notorious hub for remedial writing instruction. The Open Admissions phenomenon at CUNY is typically associated with Mina Shaughnessy’s name in the field of writing and composition studies. Her research, most prominently displayed in *Errors and Expectations*, focused on the challenge of working with underprepared students and what she defined as Basic Writers (BW). Through her research, writing, and teaching, Shaughnessy’s mission was not only to educate and empower students, but to develop and provide useful



teaching tools for the overwhelmed faculty at these institutions. She also emphasized the useful traits and skills that students already enter into the classroom with and tried to cast a more positive light on their abilities.

I have reached the persuasion that underlies this book – namely, that BW students write the way they do, not because they are slow or non-verbal, indifferent or incapable of academic excellence, but because they are beginners and must, like all beginners, learn by making mistakes. (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 5)

While Shaughnessy's work was groundbreaking and informative for the field in general, it was primarily aimed at working with native speakers from underprivileged backgrounds. Her work offered limited insight into work with non-native speaking students, which is one of the key differences between open admissions at CUNY and the nature of admissions in Education City. Qatari students fall on the opposite end of the spectrum with regard to wealth and privileges that are bestowed upon them by the government. Regardless, both environments share a commonality of students enrolled at institutions where they are not academically prepared to be successful without appropriate support.

As Williams (2002) suggests in her article "Undergraduate Second Language Writers in the Writing Center.", when students require individualized and remedial support, this burden and responsibility fall on the writing center. This is precisely the dilemma played out in American institutions in Qatar. Faculty are brought over from the home campuses and instructed that students in Qatar should follow and maintain standards as they would in the U.S. One English professor<sup>1</sup> who had been teaching at one of the American universities in Qatar for over eight years, talked about the importance of writing centers in helping students:

...helping them build those critical skills...um...dealing with the ESL mechanical grammar issues...that's the biggest help to us because we don't have the ability or the time or both to do that as much as we can, and there's really no room in the curriculum for teaching grammar...all the [course] outcomes are based on other things that assume that those elements are already in place...

Another faculty member noted the following:

The student should be...I think it's something that should be headed off at the pass in Admissions if that's an issue. And I think that we really haven't addressed it enough here, but... if a student's not capable of writing at the university standards coming in, then...they should probably not have been admitted to the school...if there's a student who's being told they must always ...they should not ever turn anything in before going to the writing center, they probably...I don't think that's fair to the student...and not that I don't think it's fair for them to seek help from the writing center but I don't think that it should.... it should be voluntary and something that works to...develop their writing not teach them [basic English] ....like teach them the most, the basics, the basics that they should have known coming in. So maybe that means a readjustment of expectations from the university and a changing of the curriculum of the lower level classes, or...um...restricting admission for students who aren't prepared...

Although many of these faculty have experience with international students or non-native speakers, rarely have they encountered a classroom full of ESL students. This often results in bafflement, frustration, and a suggestion to students to take their writing and "go to the writing center and get this fixed". The complexity is further enhanced in Qatar because of cultural topics associated with writing. For example, writing centers may also be the site for offering advice on



citation and plagiarism. Effectively teaching a student about all the complexities surrounding cultural notions of academic integrity and appropriate citation are more complex than a 30-minute tutorial session can achieve<sup>ii</sup>.

Although the situations in the U.S. and the Middle East are very similar – large numbers of underprepared students are accepted into institutions and need significant academic guidance in order to succeed – one of the critical distinctions is with regard to awareness and motivational levels of the students. During Open Admissions in the United States, institutions often faced challenges of obtaining resources. Faculty were (and continue to be) typically overworked and underpaid, and the availability of staff to address students' needs was limited. In Qatar, and in the Gulf in general, this is not the norm – quite the opposite, in fact. One of the reasons so many Western institutions accept offers to expand in the Gulf is precisely because of the financial benefits of these contracts. Faculty pay and benefits are significantly higher. Classes are often capped at 10 or 15 students – in comparison to 40 or 50 students on the home campuses. While this lower faculty-student ratio allows for more individual attention within the classroom, most faculty are not trained in identifying and assisting with the needs of these language learners. Therefore, just as in the Open Admissions phase in the United States, students are referred to the writing center to get specialized assistance. In Qatar, however, the resources and staff are available. Perhaps the biggest challenge, then, is how to get these students into the writing center. From over eight years of working in Doha, it is my experience that despite almost endless resources, the majority of these underprepared students are still unlikely to visit the writing center and take advantage of the support systems available. What is the reason behind this, and how can students be propelled into the writing center to enhance their educational and learning experiences as undergraduates? It is unclear what causes students to visit and utilize academic support services like the writing center, but a variety of motivational factors seem to be at work. The next sections will begin an exploration of motivational factors and the linguistic uniqueness of students in the Gulf that contribute to use of the writing center.

### **Who are these students? Generation 1.5? ESL? EFL? Basic Writers?**

Perhaps the most unique yet salient challenge of the undergraduate student population in Education City is its linguistic diversity. While Georgetown SFS-Q cites thirty-six of its fifty-four incoming students using a language other than English at home (Hussein, 2010), these statistics are not quite as simple as they seem on paper. Because of the varied linguistic backgrounds of the students, and the linguistic nature of Doha, it is particularly challenging to classify these learners into simply “native” or “nonnative” speaker categories.

First, it is critical to consider the context in which these students are situated. Qatar is a particularly unique linguistic environment. Arabic is the country's official language, yet English is the *lingua franca*. In fact, locals *must* learn English in order to facilitate basic transactions in their native country. The vast majority of laborers and employees in local shops do not speak Arabic; most speak English as their second or even third language. Additionally, the K-12 education system is undergoing vast reform; Arabic-medium instruction dominated the curriculum until sweeping changes came through in the past ten years and transitioned to English-medium schools. This language diversity in the local community clearly has significant ramifications on the classroom in Qatar.

Leki (2009) further highlights the challenges in categorizing students from different linguistic backgrounds in the United States. For example, many immigrant students are able to adopt native-like oral proficiency rather quickly, but their writing remains abysmal. Current

pedagogical practices, particularly within writing centers, typically aim for a focus on higher order (content) concerns rather than lower-order (grammar) changes. This can result in a distinct disadvantage for the students, as Leki notes:

While many would applaud this focus, not all accept the potential results. In one such case, the student arrives in college confident of his good writing skills because of the encouragement that he had received from his high school teachers' feedback on his writing. Unfortunately, he found that his new writing environment in college was not as willing as his high school to accept the errors in his writing, resulting in his not passing out of the ESL track after a term of work there. (Leki, 2009, p. 4)

While classifying students as native, nonnative, ESL, or other can be useful at times, these terms should also be used with caution. For example, Friedrich uses the term "linguistically diverse" to be inclusive of the wide variety of students in the classroom and writing centers (Friedrich 15). She rejects Harklau, Siegal, and Losey's (1999) use of the term Generation 1.5 because she says that these students are often:

Born to immigrant parents, who more often than not use a language other than English in the home, many such students are highly fluent and even native-like in oral English. They may be more acculturated than are internationally-based visa students – who have traditionally dominated the ESL student population – and consequently identify more with the United States than with any other nation. (Friedrich, 2006, p. 15)

What does this mean for our students in Qatar? How can we categorize them? And is it fair to categorize them at all? On a superficial level, it seems that some students can be directly boxed into one neat category – for example, the American student who was born, raised, and educated in the United States. Yet from my own experience in the writing center and as a professor, this type of student is rarely found in the Qatari context. More frequently, students had non-English-speaking parents and were akin to our Generation 1.5 learners. Thonus defines Generation 1.5 writers as those "who are long-term U.S. residents and English learners fluent in spoken English" (Thonus, 2003, p. 17). Matsuda elaborated on the development of Generation 1.5 students as they relate to international ESL students. Historically, immigrant ESL students were expected to achieve the same level of English as their native speaker counterparts. Although there were initial efforts to distinguish between immigrant ESL students and international students in pedagogical matters, little was done to effectively address the concerns. The result was:

some institutions had already enrolled a large number of immigrant ESL students by the mid 1950s, other institutions did not begin to admit immigrant students with severe language difficulties until much later. (Matsuda, 2003, p. 71)

It is clear from subsequent research and findings, however, that immigrant ESL students did and do require specialized attention and support. These Generation 1.5 students have a similar profile to those seen in American higher education institutions in the Middle East. Instructors are often struck with wonder and awe at their native oral skills, but shocked and disheartened when they read students' writing. It is critical to seek trained writing professionals to effectively address these learners' needs both in the classroom and in writing centers.

### Discussion & Implications

As research has demonstrated, language learners in the United States are likely to utilize writing centers for assistance with their work in higher education institutions and benefit from these instructional sessions (Williams, 2002). Surprisingly, this has not been the case in American higher education institutions in Qatar. Many of the students admitted to these elite universities, particularly those who have been educated in very different educational environments and contexts are in need of extra academic support<sup>iii</sup>. This replication of underprepared students being admitted to universities is reflective of the Open Admissions phenomenon in the U.S. in the 1970s. One of the crucial distinctions, however, is that students in the Middle East seem relatively unaware of their weaker skills or unwilling to avail themselves of support services. Admitted students are proudly congratulated and honored for achieving the level necessary to gain admittance. When these students enter the classroom and are told to get assistance at the Writing Center, there is confusion and frustration by both the student and the professor. The student is left wondering *What's wrong with my English? I got all A's in high school*, while the professor is left wondering *How did this student ever get admitted?* Subsequently, writing center staff are left to resolve these discrepancies and this disconnect in an atmosphere of low motivation.

One pedagogical implication of the research available is that tutors in a writing center must approach each case with a highly individualized and nuanced perspective. For example, an American English-speaking student born and raised in the U.S. educational system who visits a writing center in Qatar is much more likely to benefit from the non-directive methods prescribed in current writing center pedagogy. However, an Egyptian student who was born and raised in an Arabic-medium school in Doha, who learned fluent spoken English from television and the local community and considers himself “fluent” in English, may need much more assistance with inspiring basic confidence in academics while simultaneously progressing toward remedial writing instruction.

Writing teachers and tutors must understand and appreciate the ultimate complexity of students and take each individual case as such. One might look to Carino's cultural model of a writing center:

A cultural model might begin to elaborate, more than previous models have, a history accounting for the multiple forces at play at various moments and demonstrating that writing centers and those who work in them are always imbricated in the history of the writing programs, higher education, and public debate, as well as in local and even personal imperatives. (Carino, 1996, p. 39)

Carino provides a useful theoretical framework for situating writing centers and their role in history. Pragmatically speaking, this cultural model means work. Professors and tutors must work toward getting to know students. They must work toward getting to know and understanding the English language in all of its complexity. They must work toward developing the skills of each student through motivational techniques that will accommodate that student's needs. Faculty must understand the role of the writing center as staff who support and guide writers – not as proofreaders, editors, and language repairmen. This may come as a disappointment for many expatriate instructors in the Middle East, who have become accustomed to a comfortable and less demanding teaching lifestyle. The payoff of such dedication and commitment, however, will be deeply rewarding and beneficial for both the students and faculty.

### Conclusion and Future Research

This paper has drawn a parallel between the Open Admissions phenomenon in the U.S. in the 1970s and the expansion of American institutions in the Middle East in recent years. This historical parallel is one that should be carefully considered by all stakeholders in the search to find successful solutions and approaches to academic challenges. Writing research in Qatar should continue where Mina Shaughnessey left off, with an explicit focus on English language learners and the role of motivation in students' use of writing centers.

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<sup>i</sup> All identifying information has been removed. See McHarg reference for full details of study.

<sup>ii</sup> For more detailed explanation of the cultural complexity of these topics, see *Writing across Borders*, dir. Wayne Robertson, 2005. and Bouman (Kurt William Bouman, "A Phenomenological Investigation of College Students' Construction and Representation of Plagiarism," Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2009.).

<sup>iii</sup> This need for academic support covers a wide range of skills – everything from simple orientation to American academic expectations to research and writing skills and more.

## **The Causes of Primary School Dropout among Rural Girls in Morocco: a Case Study of Sidi Smail District**

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### **Abstract**

The present study reflects on the causes of primary school dropout among rural girls in Morocco. It takes Sidi Smail, a rural area in El Jadida province as a case study. The main goal of this study is to find out and discuss the root causes contributing to the problem and provide some recommendations in an attempt to fight the female dropout plight. The study opts for a qualitative research method, using a semi-structured interviewing technique. The causes of female dropout found in this study are related to financial circumstances, health problems, child labour, remote school, school related issues, girls' lack of motivation, parents' negative perception of female education, and early marriage.

**Key words:** Causes - dropout - Morocco - primary school - rural girls



**Introduction**

It is undisputable that education is one of the most critical areas of women's empowerment. The education of women is, indeed, an area that reveals some of the clearest examples of discrimination against women, particularly across the third world. According to a UNICEF report (1996), among children not attending school, there are twice as many women as men. Thus, offering girls basic education is one effective way of giving them much greater power by enabling them to make genuine choices over the kinds of lives they wish to lead.

The World Bank declares that education is a fundamental human right as well as a catalyst for economic growth and human development (World Bank, 2005). According to a 1996 UNICEF report, there are preponderant benefits to society as a whole as from women's education. The report stresses that an educated woman has the skills, information and self-confidence she needs to be a better parent, worker and citizen. An educated woman adds the report, is likely to marry at a late age and have fewer children. In this context, cross-country studies show that an extra year of schooling for girls reduces fertility rates by 5 to 10 per cent and that children of educated mothers are more likely to live a better life. More importantly, an educated woman will be more productive at work and better paid (UNICEF, 1996).

Former UN Secretary- General Kofi Annan declared during the Global Action Week of the Global Campaign for Education in April 2003 that "to educate girls is to reduce poverty". He stressed that there was no other policy more effective than the education of girls to raise economic growth, lower infant and maternal mortality, promote health and improve nutrition, prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, and increase the chances of education for the next generation (UN, 2003).

International conferences and declarations recognize the value of female's literacy and access to school. At the world forum (2000) in Dakar, 164 governments identified six goals to achieve Education for All (EFA). The fifth EFA goal concludes gender disparities in primary and secondary school should be eliminated by 2015. The focus is to give girls full and equal basic education. Likewise, the third UN Millennium Development Goal aims to promote gender disparity on all levels no later than 2015. This goal is one step out of eight to halve extreme by 2015. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that girls' access to school, like that of boys, is a fundamental human right. Thus according to article 26, everyone has the right to education (UN, 2012).

Being aware of the importance of girls' education and the obstacles that hinder the process of this education, this study tends to explore the root causes behind the girls' dropping out of primary school in rural areas in Morocco. The choice of rural areas is not random but relates to the high rate of female dropouts in these areas. This study takes Sidi Smail district in the province of El Jadida as a case study and relies mainly upon qualitative data. We hope that the findings of this study will help formulate policies at the macro and micro levels to streamline gender into primary education. We also hope that this study will provide a basis for policy intervention for the government, the private sector, NGOs working on women's education, and human rights activists.

**The Review of Literature**

Unfortunately, girls' right to education has been breached in a number of developing countries all over the world. Morocco is no exception, especially in rural areas where the rate of dropouts is high. The existing literature on girls' dropout of primary school highlights a number of reasons on top of which research studies underline financial circumstances (Birdsall, Levine

and Ibrahim, 2005; Boyle, Brock, Mace and Sibbons, 2002; Brown and Park, 2002; Bruneforth, 2006; Cardoso and Verner, 2007; Dachi and Garrett, 2003; Hunter and May, 2003; Ranasinghwe and Hartog, 2002; Vavrus, 2002; Hirakawa, 2012).

Another major cause of girls' dropout of primary school is related to school environment and safety issues. There are a number of studies which highlight issues of safety and dropping out of school, particularly within the context of teacher/student relationship. These studies make direct links between students' corporal punishment by teachers and dropping out, showing that such phenomenon continues to blight children's desire for school (Boyle et al., 2002; Hunt, 2007; Humphrey, 2006; The Probe Team, 1999).

The existing literature also depicts a link between girls' dropout and low achievement. Children with low achievement are more likely to drop out than those with higher achievement (Boyle et al., 2002; Hunter and May, 2003). Such low performance is related to a range of factors, including students' absenteeism, quality issues, household context, demands on children's time and so on. Low achievement at primary school has also been found to be a result of some school related issues such as teachers' absenteeism, large classes, the amount of schooling hours, pedagogical and didactic skills (Colclough and Tembon, 2000; Hunt 2008; Ghuman and Lloyd, 2007).

Gender related issues are perceived to be another root cause behind girls' quitting primary school. According to a survey conducted in Pakistan in 2001, one of the explanations for a higher dropout rate for girls is related to the parents' lack of education and interest in girls' education. For these parents, investing in the education of girls is a waste of money and resources as there is a common view that boys will earn and therefore support the parents financially after they get a job. By contrast, parents, especially those with low or no education do not see their girls working or bringing home any income when they leave home. They believe that once their girls get married, they will contribute to their husbands' income rather than to their parents'. This assumption among families perpetrates a cycle of discrimination against girls in terms of schooling. However, generally when either of the parents is schooled or when the mother is literate, there is a higher chance that parents would want to send their daughters to school (Khan, Azhar and Shah, 2001).

Another main cause of dropout is ascribed to the location of schools at long distance (Hunt, 2008; Hunt, 2012; Mernissi and Azziman, 1999). In the context of Morocco, although the government has made a concerted effort to build more primary schools in rural areas, there is a lot of work to be done, mainly in the remote mountainous areas where dwellings are scattered, which makes the problem even worse. In such areas, schools and hospitals are scarce and the existing ones are located at long distance. The absence of roads in these areas adds insult to injury. Thus, in such rural places where schools are at long distance and infrastructure is weak, children's motivation to continue schooling dwindles dramatically.

Lack of motivation is, indeed, another major cause behind the problem of girls' dropout. Given the high rate of unemployment among graduates, some parents feel less motivated to continue sending their daughters to school. Instead, they prefer to engage them in agricultural activities. There is, in fact, a substantial research literature on various aspects of child labour and educational access, including the relationship between child labour and poverty, the types of work children are carrying out, household structure and its impact on child performance at school. The literature depicts that there is a link between child labour and weak performance at school, and therefore a relationship between weak performance and children's dropout (Hunt, 2008).

Hunt concludes that there are often gender dimensions to vulnerability of schooling after parental bereavement. Girls often drop out of school to be caregivers to siblings. Research suggests that girls who lost mothers may be especially vulnerable with respect to schooling. Within a Moroccan context, a recent study by Christie J. Edwards (2010) finds out that many girls drop out of primary school as a result of child labour. The latter ranks as one of the highest child labour rates in the Middle East and North Africa. The study demonstrates that girls are frequently sent from rural areas to be domestic workers in urban areas. According to a governmental survey conducted on domestic workers in Morocco in 2001, 83.3 per cent of these domestic workers were illiterate, and only 0.6 per cent had ever reached secondary school (Royame du Maroc, Haute Commissariat au Plan, 2001).

The review of the literature also highlights early marriage as a root cause of girls' dropout of primary school. Hunt (2008) concludes that in certain communities, girls in particular are encouraged to marry as they reach puberty and become sexually mature. This finding is also confirmed by Boyle et al., 2002; Brock and Cammish, 1997; Colclough et al., 2000; Fentiman, Hall and Bundy, 1999 ; Rose and Al Samarrai, 2001; Syongho, 1998 cited in Archers et al., 2001).

### Methodology

This study opts for a qualitative research method in collecting data. It particularly uses a semi-structured interviewing technique and a purposive sampling method. A total number of 35 in-depth interviews were conducted; 20 interviews with primary school female dropouts, 10 interviews with parents of primary school female dropouts, and 5 interviews with primary school teachers. My choice of interviewing female dropouts, their parents, and primary school teachers is justified by the reason that the problem should be dealt with from different perceptions. The girls are the concerned segment, parents (especially the father) are the ones who are responsible for taking the decision, and teachers constitute the sample category that provides data on research questions related to the primary school environment and girls' performance before they leave school. Teachers also constitute the connecting thread between the girls and their parents, and hence can explain the causes behind the girls' decision to quit school because teachers have a close interaction with their students at school.

All the respondents belong to Ben Ajem, a village located in Sidi Smail district. Sidi Smail is a rural area in the province of El-Jadida. The main source of its inhabitants' living is agriculture. I chose to conduct interviews in this area because it is my homeland and most of the informants know me in person. This fact helped facilitating contact and establishing trust with them. I started interviewing the dropouts I know. Most of them were so enthusiastic in accepting to be interviewed. They even suggested some names of old dropouts who also accepted to be interviewed. This allowed the study to formulate sort of a snowball sampling method. The same technique was used in interviewing the parents of dropouts. As for interviewing teachers, I went to Ben Ajem primary school where it was easy to meet teachers. The latter showed considerable cooperation for two main reasons. One reason was related to the importance of the topic under study, and the second was connected with my being an acquaintance to them.

The interviews lasted between 30 to 90 minutes. Some were recorded by using a tape recorder. Others were written down when the respondents did not give their consent to tape recording. While interviewing, I let them recount their stories freely. I asked questions only when they would stop recounting, or when I wanted to direct the interview to a certain research question. I started with the informants with whom I had a relation of some kind like relatives

and neighbors. My niece who is also a dropout played a very important role in inviting her old classmates and friends to cooperate. She particularly helped me in explaining to them the nature of my work and the importance of their cooperation. After the interviewing task, I began to translate the recorded data from Moroccan vernacular into English. I had to be selective in order not to include irrelevant data. I did not have to stick to verbatim transcription. That is to say, I did not have to transcribe all the speech on the audio tapes, but only the parts of speech which are pertinent to the research questions. This method is quite widely adopted by social science researchers like Judith C. Lepadat who maintains that “the researcher chooses what talk to write down, and how to present it...the researcher’s challenge is to reduce the data selectively while still preserving the potential for ‘rich interpretations’” (Lepadat, 2000, p.205).

### Findings and Discussion

The root causes of primary school dropout among girls in Sidi Smail found in this study are related to financial circumstances, health problems, child labour, school at long distance, school related issues, girls’ lack of motivation, parents’ lack of interest in educating their daughters, and early marriage.

### Financial Circumstances

Ten interviewees stated hard financial circumstances as the main cause of their dropping out of primary school. These girls explained that they found themselves unable to continue schooling because their parents could not go on providing for school necessities such as textbooks, schoolbags and clothes, or because their parents wanted the girls to contribute to the family’s income by working as domestic workers. In this regard, Fatima (consent was taken from the respondents to use their real first names) who quitted school two years ago said:

I left school because my father was very poor. He couldn’t provide for my education. I needed books, new clothes and other things like my peers. My father couldn’t even provide for the necessary staples like sugar, oil, flour, etc. I thought asking him for new clothes would be an added burden

Hanane, a 13 year-old girl who has dropped out of school recently recounted that her shabby clothes were the cause behind her failure to continue schooling:

I felt embarrassed among my friends at school in the same shabby clothes; I had to wear the same clothes, the same shoes, the same schoolbag. My friends laughed at me. They poked fun at my clothes in the classroom and outside; I couldn’t bear it and decided to leave school.

Samira, a 14- years- old domestic worker in Casablanca, told me when I interviewed her during her 3 days break in Ben Ajem on the occasion of a religious feast that she dropped out of school (level 6) when her parents forced her to work as a domestic worker for a rich family in the city:

I wanted to continue my education to the end, but my parents were so poor; they wanted me to help them by contributing to the family’s income. I was brilliant at school. My Arabic teacher, upon hearing about my dropout, came to speak with my father, trying to convince him to let

me go back to school, but his attempts went in vain. What else could I do? My parents needed my help. They couldn't wait for years to reap the fruits of my schooling.

I had the opportunity to interview Samira's father. He related the story of his daughter's dropout and the plight of impoverishment. He concluded with tears in his eyes that "no father would want to see his daughter work as a maid (sakhara) in other people's houses, but what a poor man like me shall do. I have seven mouths to feed. May Allah curse poverty ( qabaha Allaho alfaqr)."

Kabour, another poor father of six children recounted that both his daughters left primary school to be domestic workers in Casablanca. Naima quitted from level 4 and Souad from level 5. When I asked him about the reason which made him deprive his daughters of their right to education, he responded thus:

I'm old as you see (he is about 70 years old). I can't work as a field labourer anymore. My health deteriorated (saha mshat). I have no state salary, no free health care service, no retirement pension. Yet, I have to feed my children, and I have to buy medicine for my wife Halima who is suffering from a chronic illness.

The issue of taking girls out of school and sending them to work as domestic workers remains a serious problem in rural areas though the Moroccan government is striving hard to uproot it through taking some measures as providing lunch meals for students coming from far areas, transport services, distributing free school bags with textbooks annually and a sum of 100 dh monthly to certain needy families. However, some of these measures are not applied to certain areas. For example, in Ben Ajem school, the free lunch meals and the sum of 100 dh are not applied. This will lead us to recommend the urgent application of such measures in all rural areas. On another note, we suggest increasing the distributed sum of money because in a country like Morocco where a kilo of meat costs 70 DH, the distributed 100 DH is but a tiny sum.

### Health Problems

Five of the respondents had reasons to drop out of primary school related to health issues. Karima suffered from a stomach-related illness and claimed it to be the main cause for dropping out of school. She said that she did not go to see a doctor because her father couldn't afford it. Her mother took her to a nearby saint's shrine called Sidi Ajem, but this did not cure the illness. Her health state became worse. Consequently, she had to leave school:

One day I couldn't stand on my feet; the pain was like fire inside me. I stayed at home for two weeks, then when I became better, I wanted to go to school, but motivation was too low because I felt that I wouldn't be able to catch up with my peers.

Had the school offered medical treatment, would you have stayed at school?

Yes of course. You know good health means good education.

This leads us to suggest that all primary schools in rural areas must be well-equipped to provide the necessary medical care for students. Daoui, a primary school teacher with 28 years of working experience, told me that the annual medical visit to primary schools scheduled by the Ministry of Health in cooperation with the Ministry of Education must be reconsidered. For Daoui and other teachers, there must be frequent medical visits and adequate free medicine must be available at school.



Meriam also had health problems. She suffered from vomiting and diarrhea, which made her completely miss out on classes for a month. After she had felt better, she wanted to go back to school. Unfortunately, she found out that she had missed a lot and could not catch up with her classmates, and hence decided to quit:

My illness was the reason why I left school. I was very ill and my father didn't take me to the doctor. I went on wringing in pain for a month.

When I asked this respondent whether she sought the public doctor through the school, she responded with an emphatic 'no' and explained that her parents said the doctor would only prescribe some expensive medicine they would not be able to afford.

Amina missed out school due to pain when having her period. The pain usually endured for three days at a time when she was at home recovering. When she went back to school, still having her period, she was worried somebody would see on her clothes she had a period. Amina related:

My periods were longer. Sometimes it took me more than 6 days to recover...the idea of fear that somebody would see it on my clothes didn't encourage me to go to school on such difficult days ( liyam saaiba)...; I missed out a lot on my school. I was lagging behind, and finally I decided to quit.

Amina's case is indeed a convincing reason to push Moroccan educators and decision makers, especially within the Ministry of Education to consider the introduction of sex education in primary school curricular. This will make girls aware of their biological transformations and enable them to cope with these transformations in a healthy manner. Some girls, I was told, would even run to hide in empty corners at home for fear that they should be seen by their fathers or brothers. To alleviate the effects of such problems, I suggest that the Ministry of Education should take charge of distributing a number of sanitary towels annually to teenage girls. This will encourage these girls to go to school even during their period days. Also, they will stop using unhealthy traditional alternatives to clean themselves.

Zahra described her shortsightedness as affecting the decision to drop out. She found it difficult to see what was written on the blackboard. This made her write words incorrectly:

I suffered from bad eyesight; I couldn't see clearly what was written on the blackboard. I made a lot of spelling mistakes on my notebooks because of my shortsightedness...

I asked Zahra why she did not wear glasses. She replied that her father was very poor. Khadija, a 14 year-old- dropout, recounted that she had strabismus and that was the reason why she left school at level 6:

I didn't like the way my peers looked at me. They called me names because of my eye illness. They called me cross-eyed (lhawla). I couldn't bear it, and that's why I decided to stop going to school. My father wanted me to continue schooling, but I cried and begged him not to urge me.



### School at Long Distance

For Hakima and Samira, one reason to drop out of school was the long distance they had to walk every day. They did not like school because of the long daily walks. They said they had to walk about 30 and 60 minutes respectively to school one way. Hakima explained she had to wake up very early in the morning and when she sometimes arrived late, she was punished by the teacher. She thought the morning walk to school was the toughest one. Samira, however, found the return harder because of being tired after a long day in school. Some days she had to stay at home to avoid the long tiring walk to school.

Bouchaib, a father of a primary school dropout, recounted that his daughter had to walk a long distance to school. When she reached level 6, he decided to put an end to her education though, he admitted, she was brilliant.

Why didn't you let her continue her studies?

The school was too far from home; Kenza (daughter's name) had to walk for about 3 kilometers four times a day because the school provided no free lunch meals.

Another reason that made this father hasten his daughter's dropout is related to his fear that someday some of the village's bad boys would sexually harass Kenza or even rape her on her way to or from school. This father's fear is, to my mind, reasonable and justified given that nowadays our media, print and audio-visual, are writing and airing shocking stories about school girls being abducted and raped heinously. A case in point is a 13-year-old school girl who was deflowered and murdered in a cold manner in the region of Fes on her way back from school. The news was aired on 2M channel in December, 2013.

Malika recounted that she experienced sexual harassment many times while walking to or returning from school. For her, this was the prime reason why she had to leave school:

More often than not I was harassed by the village boys, especially in winter when 6 pm was the beginning of dark fall. Bad boys would lurk in the bush, behind walls, or in the ruins of old houses... they would try to flirt with us, lay their hands on us, and run after us. I couldn't bear it and decided to quit school to put an end to this oppression.

### School Related Issues

There are a number of issues which were perceived by the respondents as contributing causes to their dropout. Some respondents like Latifa, Zineb and Tamou said that they had to leave school because of weak performance:

- I was doing very bad at school and saw there was no need to continue.
- My grades were very weak though I repeated level 5.
- I was lagging behind, my marks were below the average and I couldn't

understand what the teacher of French said, that's why I left school.

Other dropouts like Zahra, Habiba and Khadija related their dropout to the repeated beatings they used to face from the teacher of Arabic. They recounted that the teacher punished them severely by beating them on their hands and feet with a thorny stick. Zahra told me that one day the teacher beat her till her hands bled. To get more insights into the relationship between

children's dropout and teachers' use of violence, I asked Mohammed, a teacher informant, whether he and/or his colleagues used violence, and this is what he said:

To tell you the truth, I sometimes use violence. Most teachers here use the stick. We know it's illegal; we know it's anti-pedagogical to beat pupils...but what shall we do when all peaceful means fail to, for example, make a student do his homework?

But some teachers torture their students physically to the extent that they begin to hate school. Is it true?

Yes, this is quite true. These teachers need to reconsider their methods. I mean they need to mark the difference between slight and severe severe corporal punishment.

Some respondents mentioned the lack of some school facilities such as toilets. "How can a girl continue going to a school where there is only one toilet and this one toilet is out of service?" Souad asked rhetorically. In the same vein, Samira said: "boys could piss behind the school walls, but girls couldn't do such a thing... very few girls would dare to do so..."

Other respondents connected their lack of interest to continue schooling to their teachers' misconduct. As this dropout respondent recounted:

The teacher of French was a naughty person. All my friends hated him because he was unkind to us; for instance, he called us names when we performed badly in class...sometimes he didn't hesitate to call a girl 'a bitch!'

I asked this respondent to state other things she did not like in her ex-teacher, and she replied thus:

He smoked in class, and this made me and other students cough. He kept saying to me 'you are beautiful!', 'you have become a woman...!'

This respondent made it clear that sexual harassment at school was a serious problem which drove many girls out of school. Moroccan media have reported countless cases of such a problem occurring across the country, especially sexual harassment incidents perpetrated by young male teachers. Brahim, a father of a girl dropout, told me that the main reason which pushed him to put an end to his daughter's education was fear from some teachers' pervert conduct.

### **Lack of Motivation**

Some interviewees ascribed their dropout to lack of motivation. Their accounts showed that their lack of motivation came as a result of a variety of social, cultural, educational and familial reasons. Zahra explained her case:

I had less motivation from level 1. My two sisters had dropped out before because there wasn't an educated family member who would help us with home assignments and encourage us to continue our education. While at school, I knew that someday I would quit.

In the same vein, Kenza recounted:

I repeated twice and my fellow girls reached the preparatory school (from level 7 to 9). I was still in primary school... I was the oldest and the tallest in class; I remember I fasted Ramadan (meaning she reached puberty). I felt I became a woman and couldn't make friends with my peers who looked much younger than I...; my motivation was very low, and finally I decided to quit school.

Halima told me that she had no role model in the village that would encourage, support and motivate her to go on.

In the village, there wasn't an educated woman who would serve as a role model. If there was one like a teacher, a doctor or an engineer, I would be motivated to continue and study hard... Besides, my parents were illiterate and showed no interest in my schooling.

As for Fatima, she said that she had a role model in her family. It was her elder brother Aziz who had obtained his B.A in 2001. Since then, he had been applying for a job, but all his efforts went in vain. This did not encourage Fatima to continue her classes. She asked rhetorically: "why shall I continue if unemployment is all what is awaiting me?" Souad had a similar view to that of Fatima. She stated, "many graduate young boys in our village couldn't find a job; this is really discouraging and motivation killing." Besides this bleak view to the future, Souad attributed her weak motivation to her bad French. She concluded that after 3 years learning French, she could not utter a single correct sentence in this language which is the first foreign language in Morocco.

### **Early Marriage**

The link between girls' early marriage and dropping out of school is amply documented, particularly within the context of developing countries (Boyle et al 2002; Brock and Cammish 1997; Colclough et al 2000; Fentiman et al 1999; Rose and Al Samarrai 2001; Syongho 1998; Ackers et al. 2001). Early marriage or what is also referred to as child marriage is deemed a serious form of violence against women because it puts women and girls at risk of sexual, physical and psychological violence through their lives. In many cases, however, parents believe that it is in their daughters' interests to marry at an early age. They think that early marriage will protect them from spinsterhood and honour defilement.

The Moroccan context is no exception. Indeed, parents, especially uneducated ones, prefer to have their daughters get married at an early age, particularly when they are at the height of their beauty. At this age (usually in adolescence), a girl is supposed to have a greater chance to get married, and this chance is believed to dwindle as the girl advances in age. In this sense, many parents prefer to arrange their daughters' marriages as early as possible, because, as the Moroccan popular proverb puts it, "a woman is like an apricot, eighteen days and she is out of season." Such a proverb and other similar stereotypical sayings are still powerful in the Moroccan traditional mind. They construct a sort of misogynist discourse which needs to be eradicated, since it is pejoratively biased and it gives a patchy picture about women (Derdar, 2005).

According to field data, all the respondents who dropped out explained they had stopped going to school immediately after they got engaged:

- When I got engaged, I stopped going to school.
- I was 14 when they came to ask my hand; I told my father that I was not ready for marriage; he told me that they would wait for 2 years. I got married at 16, but quitted school at 14.
- I wanted to keep going to school even after my engagement, but my father suggested I should forget about it.
- My groom didn't approve of my continuing to go to school. I asked him about the reason and he said that the appropriate place for an engaged girl is the home.

Mohammed, a teacher in Ben Ajem School, confirmed to me the strong connection between early marriage and girls' dropout in the village. He stressed that it became a normal thing to see a girl quitting school just after her engagement. "Many girls left my class once they got engaged," he told me. He added, "one day I asked 'where is Fatima?' And a voice from the back of the room answered, 'she got engaged sir, she won't come to school anymore.'"

I had the chance to interview the father of Fatima. I asked him about the reason he married her off at an early age and whether he regretted ending her education. This is what he said:

I chose marring my daughter off rather than keeping her at school for years without good results ( bla tayel)...I saw she would rather marry and make a family under the shelter of a man rather than to end up as a spinster in my house...

This father's view seems to be shared by a number of people in Sidi Smail where popular culture still keeps a tight grip on ordinary minds. For example, folk proverbs which extol girls' early marriage are rife. Thus, it is worth noting that any attempt made to fight the plight of girls' dropout should consider eradicating all stereotypes and negative images which debilitate women's right to education.

### Conclusion

To conclude, the findings of this research study reveal that the causes of females' dropout of primary school are mostly similar to those presented in the literature review section. What is really specific about this study is the vocal stories of victimized girls who were forced out of school under the whip of hard circumstances, namely neediness and ignorance. It is also made clear that no single factor can completely account for dropout. There are various reasons which interact and make the problem a process rather than a single event. Indeed, there are a number of factors related to families, schools, and communities that affect whether a female student is likely to drop out or continue.

This study has shed some light on the root causes behind females' dropout of primary school in Sidi Smail. It is of vital importance to say that the findings of this study may not apply to other places in Morocco. What has been found is applicable to Ben Ajem, a small village in Sidi Smail where girls' dropping out of primary school is mainly due to poverty, health issues,

child labour, remote school, lack of motivation and interest, and early marriage. Of course there might be other causes behind the problem, but, according to the data collected, it seems these are the most preponderant causes at least in the village of Ben Ajem.

To fight the problem of females' dropout, the present study highlights the following recommendations:

- building more primary schools in rural areas;
- creating more boarding schools for girls;
- helping poor families financially provided that they continue sending their daughters to school;
- sensitizing rural parents about the importance of women's education;
- sensitizing rural parents about the dangers of child marriage;
- giving retarded students reinforcement courses;
- implementing severe penalties against misbehaving teachers;
- introducing sex education to help girls better understand their boy changes and deal with them in a healthy manner;
- implementing free lunch programmes at all primary schools in rural areas;
- implementing severe punishment vis-à-vis rape and/or sexual harassment perpetrators;
- the victims of sexual violence should be rehabilitated and given a chance to get back to school;
- laws banning child labour must be reinforced;
- teachers should work to create inclusive learning friendly environments and to encourage and guide learners on how to go about the difficulties they experience;
- primary school teachers need to keep getting in-service training to be updated as regards educational psychology and other pedagogical requirements;

The respondents believe that if these guidelines are taken into real practice, they will at least help reducing the number of females' dropouts. The teachers informants in particular lay emphasis on the role of the media, the educational system and the civil society in sensitizing citizens about the importance of women's education. This seems to be a long-term project because it is a hard thing to change people's mentalities, yet the fruits of this project are not far from being up for grabs.

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## **Integrating Reading into Writing Instruction in the EFL Programs at Saudi Universities.**

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### **Abstract**

Several studies have shown that integrating reading into writing instruction improves writing skills (e.g., Alqadi & Alqadi, 2013; Almansour & Alshorman, 2014; Elley & Mangubhai 1983; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Iwahori, 2008; Janopoulos, 1986, 2009; Saleem, 2010; Tsang, 1996). Some researchers suggested that reading is the basis for writing (Carson & Leki, 1993) and consider it as an important resource for writing instruction (Hirvela, 2004; Watson, 1982). Theoretically, the reading-writing connection can be viewed throughout three hypotheses, or models: (1) directional hypothesis, (2) non-directional hypothesis, and (3) bidirectional hypothesis. Since reading-writing relationship is mostly discussed in terms of the impact of reading on writing (directional model), this paper attempts to discuss the relationship from 'reading-to- write' perspective and addresses the issue of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) reading-writing connection at the college level in Saudi Arabia. It argues that reading and writing must be taught together and calls for integrating reading into writing instruction as a solution for the problem of the lack of emphasis on reading-writing connection. It also suggests that extensive reading and using models in a second language (L2) enhances L2 writing. Lastly, the paper discusses some pedagogical concerns associated with reading-writing connection and provides some recommendations for successful reading-writing instruction. (Note: in this paper, when I refer to EFL programs at the Saudi universities I mean the EFL programs that are designed for the EFL Saudi college students majoring in English).

**Keywords:** EFL, English Saudi Arabia, extensive reading, L2 writing, reading-writing connection.

## Introduction

One of the reasons for the weakness of writing in English among Saudi EFL learners at college level is the lack of emphasis on reading-writing connection in the language classroom (Fageeh, 2003). The division between teaching reading and writing in the EFL classroom, which entails a considerable lack of emphasis on the reading-writing connection, is a major cause of the weakness in the students' writing ability. Hao & Sivell (2002) argued that teaching writing in isolation of reading probably hinders the development of writing skills. They added that when reading is not integrated into writing instruction, "the knowledge and skills students have acquired in reading cannot be transferred to writing" (p. 1). Therefore, the division could lead the EFL students to experience much difficulty in both language and rhetoric when they start a writing assignment.

From a personal experience as a learner of English, integrating reading into writing instruction had a positive effects on my writing performance. I took an advanced reading/writing course in a mid-west American university. It was the first time to take an EFL course in this name. At the beginning, I was confused how such two skills were taught together. As time went by, I started realizing that teaching the two skills in a connected way had a beneficial influence on my writing skills. The extensive reading assignments improved my grammar accuracy, vocabulary use, ideas development and the ideal use of rhetorical patterns and complex structures. Moreover, using models as resources for writing helped me gain more knowledge on text structure, punctuation, transition words and phrases, cohesion and coherence.

From a teaching experience, reading-writing integration can be maintained in certain ways. For example, the two skills can be collectively taught, i.e. in an integrated lesson way, by one teacher in one class. However, there are alternative ways in which reading-writing integration can be further maintained. For example, the same teacher can teach the two skills separately, i.e. in two separate class sessions, but keeps in mind the reading-writing connection. That is, the reading materials used in the reading class should be related to writing tasks involved in the writing class sessions. In another example, where the two skills are taught by two teachers, the reading-writing integration can still be maintained if the two teachers coordinate their efforts. These two examples show that the integration between reading and writing takes place sometimes without combining the two skills in one class. Thus, the division between teaching reading and writing does not only happen when these two skills are taught separately by one teacher who does not maintain the reading-writing connection or by two teachers who do not coordinate their efforts. The division could also happen when the two skills are taught in the absence of the concept that 'integrating reading into writing instruction is important for achieving writing tasks'.

Although the reading-writing relationship includes the possibility that students write in order to read, this relationship is an area that has more typically focused on the writing side of the relationship (Grabe, 2003). That is, it is mostly discussed in terms of the impact of reading on writing. Additionally, Carson & Leki (1993) asserted that "reading can be the basis for writing" (p. 1). Thus, this paper attempts to discuss the relationship from 'reading-to- write' perspective.

Several studies have shown that extensive reading in L2 leads learners to improve their L2 writing (e.g., Alqadi & Alqadi, 2013; Almansour & Alshorman, 2014; Chuenchaichon, 2011; Elley & Mangubhai 1983; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Iwahori, 2008; Janopoulos, 1986, 2009; Saleem, 2010; Tsang, 1996). (some of these studies will be explained in details later on in the section: *The Impact of L2 Extensive Reading on L2 Writing*). Thus, when I refer to reading in the phrase 'reading-writing connection', I do not merely mean *reading* but also *extensive reading*

because the studies mentioned above have indicated that "extensive reading", not just "reading", has positive influence on L2 writing. Extensive reading refers to reading large amounts with the goal of "getting an overall understanding of the material" (Day & Bamford (1998) as cited by Al-Rajhi (2004) p. 4). Additionally, Alshamrani (2003) defines extensive reading as follows:

Extensive reading is individual and silent independent reading of self-selected materials according to both the interest and level of a language learner, in an environment which is neither threatening nor evaluative, where the focus is on obtaining pleasure and information and achieving a general understanding of content rather than concentrating on surface details, such as grammatical or lexical points, or specific facts. (p. 22-23)

Regarding using models in the language classroom, Watson (1982) stated that models are "indispensable resource" in ESL and EFL writing instruction. Chen (2002) believed that EFL writing teachers can use models that contain various rhetorical patterns in their EFL writing classes to cope with their learners' writing problems because they provide various types of input to the EFL writers. These types of input range from lexical, syntactic, rhetorical, to cultural ones. Moreover, Macbeth (2010) found that using models eases some of the apprehension associated with writing a new genre.

The distinction between extensive reading and reading models can be made as follows: extensive reading can be described as pleasant reading where the reader's goals might not be necessarily associated with writing improvement; for example, reading for fun or gathering information. In contrast, reading models are used, in most cases, as a source for improving writing abilities such as the reading models that help readers know how rhetorical patterns are used. Therefore, one case that reading models can fit extensive reading is when the reader reads a lot of models.

In what follows, the concept 'reading-writing connection' is discussed. Then, there will be a review of some studies which have shown that extensive reading enhances writing. This will be followed by a discussion about the advantages of using models, defined in this paper as the writing pieces of those who write well or those who are regarded as successful writers (Watson, 1982) in L2 writing. Finally, some pedagogical concerns and instructional recommendations for making the EFL reading-writing connection in Saudi universities are provided.

### **The Reading/Writing Connection: What Does It Mean?**

According to Grabe (2001), "reading-to-write" is a notion which implies that writers go back to resources and read them in different ways as they search for specific information and apply reading strategies "to match task expectations for the writing" (p. 22). Additionally, Carson (1993) defined the reading-to-write notion as follows:

The phrase *reading for writing* can be understood as referring most specifically to the literacy event in which readers/writers use text(s) that they read, or have read, as a basis for text(s) that they write. .... Reading for writing can also be understood as acknowledging that writing is often the resultant physical artifact of reading/writing encounters. (p. 85)

Theoretically, the reading-writing connection can be viewed throughout three hypotheses, or models: (1) directional hypothesis, (2) nondirectional hypothesis, and (3) bidirectional hypothesis (Eisterhold, 1990). The directional hypothesis supports a reading-to-write model, that is, reading enhances writing. Within this model, reading and writing share 'structural components'. This reading-to-write model assumes that the transfer of information proceeds in

one direction only. For example, readers, after getting to know patterns such as comparison in their reading, would be able to reproduce these patterns. According to Eisterhold (1990), the directional model is the most salient model from a teaching perspective.

The non-directional hypothesis assumes that reading and writing derive from a 'single underlying proficiency' (Eisterhold, 1990). Within this model, the transfer of information can occur in either direction: from reading to writing or from writing to reading. Based on this model, Eisterhold (1990) believed that "the cognitive process of constructing meaning" (p. 90) is what links reading to writing. According to him, explicit instruction is indispensable in order for the non-directional model to occur.

The third hypothesis, bidirectional, posits that reading and writing are both interactive and interdependent. Eisterhold (1990) stated that within this model, which is the most complex and comprehensive model, there are multiple processes and relations between reading and writing that might change as learners' language ability develops. Therefore, any change in reading would result in change in writing and vice versa.

The reading-writing connection concept, in this paper, will be viewed from the reading-to-writing directional model point of view since this model suggests the important role that reading must play as information source in the writing class and, moreover, is the model typical of many instructional programs (Eisterhold, 1990). Furthermore, research has shown that instruction in reading can be effective in improving writing (Eckhoff, 1983; Taylor and Beach, 1984). Having this model in mind, I support the notion that adopting extensive reading and using models in teaching EFL writing can help Saudi EFL college students to overcome many of the problems they face in writing and result in improved writing skills.

### **The Impact of L2 Extensive Reading on L2 Writing**

According to Krashen (1993), learners do not learn to write by writing; instead they develop writing style through reading. Krashen (1984) theorized that a person's "writing competence comes only from large amounts of self-motivated reading for interest and/or pleasure" and added that "it is reading that gives the writer the 'feel' for the look and texture of reader-based prose" (p. 20). Non-proficient readers, who are exposed to limited opportunities to read extensively in English, are unlikely to be proficient writers (Kroll, 2001).

Various studies have shown that extensive reading in L2 yields positive effects on L2 writing. Janopoulos' (1986) study demonstrated that graduate students in a US university who maintained more pleasure reading tended to be proficient writers. In another study, Hafiz and Todur (1989) studied the effects of extensive reading on the writing of 16 Pakistani-born ESL students aged 10-11. They found that the students who participated in a daily reading program held after school for one hour, five days a week, for twelve weeks showed quantitative syntactic and semantic improvement in their writing. The study indicated that reading the books offered in the program extensively and using them as models affected the students' writing positively.

Additionally, Carson, Carrell, Silberstein, Kroll & Kuhn (1990) investigated the L2 reading-writing relationship for Chinese ESL students in academic settings in the United States. In this study, the subjects were asked to write essays and then complete a cloze passage (reading task). An evaluation by native speakers of English for both L2 essays and cloze passage indicated that the advanced Chinese students wrote very good L2 essays and got high scores in the L2 reading task. These findings indicated that the advanced Chinese students in this study are better writers because they are better readers. Based on this finding, the researchers suggest that extensive reading in L2 is a significant source for developing L2 writing skills. Although this



quantitative study does not investigate the role of integrating reading into writing instruction, it suggests a pedagogical implication that calls for considering extensive reading as an effective factor for L2 writing development.

Within the EFL context, A few studies demonstrated that extensive reading in L2 had positive effects on L2 writing. Elley and Mangubhai's (1983) longitudinal study, though dated, provided provides a limited amount of evidence that L2 extensive reading promotes L2 writing development. The study showed that 380 Fijian children, aged 9-11, who participated in a 20-month EFL extensive reading program where they were assigned to read 250 high-interest story books, were reported to have developed much more language proficiency in different areas including writing. Tsang's (1996) study supported the claim that extensive reading contributes to better writing abilities. This EFL-context study showed that Hong Kong secondary school students who received regular instruction plus extensive reading wrote significantly better essays than their counterparts who received instruction without extensive reading. Additionally, Alqadi and Alqadi's (2013) study examined the development of paragraph-writing grammatical accuracy in 30 EFL university learners in Jordan through using a reading-into-writing method via exposure to extracurricular extensive reading. The learners were exposed to extensive reading in which assignments were read and then summarized. The results of this study showed that exposure to extensive reading had a positive effect on learners' paragraph-level writing development and grammar accuracy. According to the researchers, the positive effect was attributed to the chance the learners had to read and work with texts of various structures, word forms, and referential words.

Within the Saudi context, a recent study indicated that an extensive reading program had a beneficial influence on students' writing performance. Almansour and Alshorman (2014) conducted a study to investigate the effect of a two-month extensive reading program on the writing performance of 48 Saudi EFL college students. The students were divided into two groups: experimental and controlled. The researchers found that the program had a significant positive effect on writing performance of the students in the experimental group. In details, the researchers found that reading many different texts and doing many reading and writing activities helped the students in the experimental group develop healthy reading and writing habits. Also, they found that the program encouraged that students to use the skills they learned when writing essays. Moreover, the researchers noticed that the program motivated students to read a wide variety of texts, on different genres, and to write a great number of essays in different topics.

### ***Limits of Extensive Reading***

Although L2 research in extensive reading has shown that this type of reading affects writing positively, extensive reading may not enhance L2 writing development. That is, heavy L2 readers sometimes have modest L2 writing abilities. In academic settings, this might take place when reading/writing classes do not include instruction based on form and content analysis of reading materials. In this regard, Hao & Sivell (2002) commented that "some students, even with lots of reading experience, continue to have difficulty in writing; they need instruction based on form and content analysis of the reading passages, so as to approach writing more effectively" (p. 2).

Two studies conducted by Flahive and Bailey (1993) and Hedgcock and Atkinson (1993) demonstrated that pleasure reading, which was regarded as a type of extensive reading, also has no significant impact on writing. This might imply that connecting reading and writing in L2



writing instruction is necessary. Thus, when I say that L2 extensive reading is not enough for improving L2 writing abilities, I do not deny Krashen's (1984) hypothesis which stated that the only source of "writing competence" is the large quantities of pleasure and interest reading, yet I emphasize the role of integrating reading into writing instruction. In this regard, Smagorinsky (1992) suggested that reliance on reading models without instructing the linguistic and rhetorical patterns is insufficient to improve writing. Moreover, Morrow (1997) added that "the act of reading itself will not improve [the] student's writing abilities unless the connections between reading and writing are made explicit" (p. 455).

According to the previous studies that show the positive impact of reading on L2 writing development, and away from the limits of extensive reading, I believe that extensive reading, regardless of its limits, is an indispensable resource for L2 students to become better writers. By reviewing these studies, I would like to draw the EFL writing teachers' attention to the role played by extensive reading in improving L2 students' writing. However, EFL teachers and researchers should be aware that differences in contexts and L2 students' characteristics may yield different results (Grabe, 2001).

### **The Use of Models in EFL Writing**

I have shown earlier in this paper that using models can promote the writing proficiency of the Saudi EFL college students. Although Hirvela (2004) claimed that there is no definitive research that supports the belief that reading improves students' writing by exposure to target language writing, he assumed that L2 students can learn about writing through reading, and that reading empowers L2 students with knowledge of writing. Moreover, Hirvela claimed that the use of models plants in L2 students "a sense of the value of connecting reading and writing" (p. 128). In fact, models can facilitate L2 writing (Macbeth, 2010; Tardy, 2009). Hirvela (2004) explained that "models expose language learners to target language conventions and practices that they otherwise might have a difficult time understanding" (p. 128).

There are two major significant advantages of models for L2 students: (1) they provide L2 students with the information they need, and (2) they provide L2 students with effective written samples of proficient writers so that they can look at these samples and identify the good ways of writing. In this regard, Watson (1982) and Eschholz (1980) stated that one good way to learn how to write well is to follow the writing pieces of those who write well or those who are regarded successful writers. Smagorinsky (1992) added that using models in writing instruction show students how good writers organize, develop, and express their ideas. Moreover, models can help the EFL writing teachers to show their students how the good writers develop a sense of audience. This could be a great advantage of using models in teaching writing to Saudi EFL students since most of them fail to consider the audience in their writing.

In addition, using reading in writing instruction provides three stylistic choices (Kroll, 2001). Models can provide the L2 students' with knowledge about cohesion and coherence, methods of development, and grammatical features. Also, models can show L2 students how the vocabulary, sentence structure, rhetorical modes such as comparison, and discourse units such as essay introduction and conclusion are used (Cambell, 1998).

Although using models in L2 writing instruction has been found to be useful, some researchers, Watson (1982) & Hirvela (2004), expressed their worries that the use of models promotes the product-oriented approach to teaching writing rather than the process-oriented approach. According to Watson (1982), the product-oriented approach in teaching L2 writing can be avoided if the model is used as a resource and not as an ideal. Also, in order to avoid the

product-oriented approach, EFL writing teachers are encouraged to use multiple and various models. In this case, models can fit extensive reading as I mentioned earlier.

### **Pedagogical Concerns**

Researchers (e.g., De Morgado 2009, Fenton-Smith, 2008; Grabe, 2001; Green, 2005; Hirvela, 2004; Phillips 2005) claimed that connecting reading and writing in second language writing instruction enhances not only the writing abilities but also L2 learning generally. In this section of the paper, I discuss the influence of integrating reading into writing instruction on reading development, critical literacy, and process-oriented approach to writing.

#### ***Reading Development***

Connecting reading and writing in second language instruction does not only improve L2 writing but also develops the L2 reading skills especially in the academic settings. Grabe (2001) commented that "writing about what is to be read or has been read is also a very good way to develop advanced academic reading abilities" (p. 19). For example, L2 students can improve their reading skills when they summarize an article, for instance, to support their ideas in the writing assignments. That is, when the L2 students are required to write about what they read, they develop their reading abilities.

Therefore, EFL teachers' focus in writing instruction should also be on enhancing reading skills. Kroll (1993) warned that "teaching writing without teaching reading is not teaching writing at all" (p. 75). Hirvela (2001) argued that students who have writing problems may experience reading problems. He added that difficulties in reading sources impact on writing about them. Grabe (2003) claimed that teaching reading strategies and preparing students to become good readers are essential procedures toward making L2 students better writers. Hirvela (2004) added that in order for L2 students to benefit from the readings, they should be taught how to read first. For example, the skill of synthesizing information is a reading skill that should be enhanced in order to help L2 students write better writing samples. However, when reading is integrated in writing instruction, L2 writing teachers should be aware not to concentrate too much on developing reading skills and leave the writing skills unemphasized (Morrow, 1997). They should also concentrate on teaching how the vocabulary, structures, and rhetorical patterns are used. Therefore, EFL writing teachers are encouraged to increase their students' awareness of the importance of reading for accomplishing writing tasks. They also should teach their students that better writing is preceded by good deal of reading and that reading is the basis for writing. More importantly, they should realize that one of the best ways to improve writing is to improve reading, and vice versa. Additionally, they should concentrate on developing the students' reading skills and critical literacy by, for example, adopting the reader-response approach (discussed later).

Hirvela (2004) claimed that ESL/EFL writing teachers need to understand their students as readers in order to make the reading-writing connection works better. Their understanding of their students as readers involves identifying "their notions of reading (especially 'good reading'), how they were taught to read their native language and/or the L2 their approaches to reading, their problems and fears as readers, and so forth" (Hirvela, 2004, p. 44). Therefore, Hirvela argued that adopting the *Reader-Response Approach*, which focuses on readers and how they read texts, as basis for teaching writing classes can help us to understand "why [our students] read and write as they do" (p. 55).

### ***Critical Literacy Development***

Critical literacy, which refers to the ability to understand "the connections between social conditions and the reading and writing practices" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 134), can be developed when integrating reading into writing tasks (Carson, 1993), EFL writing teachers are encouraged to promote it in the writing instruction. It has been argued that without promoting critical literacy in writing instruction, L2 students will not benefit from the models, but rather they will replicate them (Carson, 1993). Adopting the reader-response approach, which can lead the students to treat reading as an active skill rather than a passive skill, in the reading/writing classes also develop "critical literacy" because it focuses on the reader more than the text or the author. Therefore, adopting such an approach can help the EFL students to generate their ideas, analyze them, and then consider these ideas when they write. Moreover, familiarizing the EFL students with the approach would lead them to avoid copying and plagiarism.

### ***Process-oriented Approach to Writing***

Integrating reading into writing instruction can enhance process-oriented approach to writing (Hao & Sivell, 2002). This teaching approach, which considers editing as a final stage in text creation, rather than an initial one as in a product-oriented approach, focuses on a process where a writer constructs meaning. The writer within the process-oriented approach goes through a series of steps or stages: prewriting, planning and drafting, rewriting and revising, feedback, incubation, and revision, editing and polishing, publishing (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). By adopting the process-oriented approach in the L2 writing instruction, I believe that integrating reading into writing is necessary especially in the stage of planning and drafting where writers are supplied with "content- and theme-based input in the way of readings, discussions, and so forth ..." (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005, p. 94) to develop their ideas and plans. Moreover, applying this approach in a class where reading is integrated into writing helps EFL writing teachers to look deeply at the students' problems of writing.

### **EFL Reading and Writing Classes in the Saudi Universities**

Since it was mentioned earlier that the absence of reading-writing connection is one reason for the weakness of writing in English among Saudi EFL college students, it can be inferred that reading is currently not well-integrated into writing instruction in the EFL programs at Saudi universities. Two Saudi researchers (Almansour & Alshorman, 2014) have noticed that most Saudi English-major students are not aware of the role that reading plays in developing writing skills.

In Saudi universities, English-major students study language skills in the first two years of the English BA program. However, according to the plans of study of the English departments in Saudi universities, the four language skills are taught separately. In an analysis of the English department's plans of study at King Saud University, King Khalid University, and Imam University, one cannot find a course entitled 'reading/writing'. Unexpectedly, the focus on research or academic writing is minimal although the students in the BA English program in the last two terms of the program are required to write academic papers. This minimal focus on research and academic writing in the EFL writing classes might further indicate that reading-writing connection, or integrating reading into writing instruction, is not addressed. Therefore, I believe that the reading-writing integration in the EFL programs at the Saudi universities is an important issue that needs to be dealt with since such integration can enhance writing development.

### **Recommendations for Successful Reading/Writing Instruction**

In this section of the paper, I would like to provide recommendations that might be effective for improving writing development. Firstly, EFL writing teachers should consider the proficiency levels of their students when choosing reading materials. For example, beginning students should not be given advanced reading passages which contain complicated rhetorical patterns and language structures. In this regard, we can refer to the input hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982) which stated that students understand language that is slightly beyond their current level of language proficiency.

Secondly, in relation to using models in L2 reading/writing classes, according to Hirvela (2004), reading a text rhetorically promotes the integration of reading and writing. He suggested "the Modeling Approach" – an approach to using reading for learning about writing - as a direct model of reading for writing. Regarding the texts that are used as models, Watson (1982) warned that authentic texts should be avoided because they are difficult to serve as intake. Although this view is against the view held today, that authentic texts are to be used in teaching languages, I believe that exposing EFL students to texts that are developed especially to serve as models in L2 writing instruction can help the EFL writing teachers who cannot find appropriate models.

Thirdly, one of the pedagogical implications that can integrate reading, writing, and technology is to use the internet in reading/writing classes. EFL students can be asked to surf the internet and read online texts to use them as resources for their writing assignments. Al-Rajhi (2004) found that a group of Saudi EFL learners developed their writing styles through extensive internet reading. Specifically, he noticed that extensive internet reading helped the learners to add more details and description to support their views while writing. From the teacher's side, EFL writing teachers should help their students in selecting on-line texts that are linguistically and rhetorically appropriate.

Fourthly, since EFL college students in the English departments of Saudi universities are required to write academic-oriented papers for academic courses during the last two semester of the bachelor's program, it is important to integrate reading into writing instruction in the first two years of the program where the focus is on the language development. Campbell (1998) asserted that integrating reading into writing instruction improves academic writing. Hirvela (2001) suggested that using various resources in the reading/writing courses is one effective pedagogical implication that promotes the reading-writing integration in academic writing instruction. He explained that "the best way to incorporate reading into EAP [English for Academic Purposes] writing courses is by using various kinds of texts as source texts that students can respond to in a variety of writing formats" (p. 346). Regarding this point, since most of the BA students work as EFL teachers when they graduate, I would recommend that EFL advanced writing teachers in Saudi Arabian English departments connect their EFL methodology courses to the EFL advanced writing courses by asking the students to write academic papers based on their readings in the EFL methodology courses.

Fifthly, regarding the textbooks that should be used in EFL reading/writing classes, I think that EFL writing teachers should adopt EFL textbooks that are designed to integrate reading and writing. For example, EFL textbooks that provide step-by-step instruction for EFL learners with reading portions that illustrate specific rhetorical structures are highly recommended. In contrast, EFL writing teachers should avoid using traditional EFL textbooks that treat reading and writing as separate skills.

Sixthly, it is very important that EFL writing teachers take into consideration that reading-writing connection does not lead the EFL learners to plagiarism. The over-emphasis on reading-writing connection may very well lead weak EFL learners to complete their writing tasks by copying some portions of the reading materials they read into their writing. Therefore, L2 writing teachers should know what their students read when reading is integrated into writing instruction. In this case, the students will be enforced to avoid plagiarism.

Seventhly, among the pedagogical implications that addressed the issue of integrating reading into writing instruction is one discussed by Hirvela (2004): the direct and indirect models of reading for writing. These implications can be adopted to solve the problem of the lack of emphasis on reading-writing connection in the EFL programs at Saudi universities. In chapter four of his text "Connecting Reading and Writing in Second Language Writing Instruction", Hirvela discussed two questions: "what kind of input should teachers provide students, and in what form should that input appear and be treated?" (p. 113). To answer these two questions, Hirvela proposed two models of reading for writing: the direct model of reading for writing and the indirect model of reading for writing. In terms of the direct model, he proposed two ways; *mining*, where learners use reading to gain knowledge about writing, and *writerly reading*, where learners act as writerly readers who are "constantly making predictions about what comes next in a text" (p. 118). Hirvela believed that integrating reading into writing instruction strengthens the direct model. Regarding the indirect model, Hirvela also proposed two ways; *extensive reading*, where learners ideally read large quantities of books on a variety of topics and of different genres, and *free/voluntary reading*, where learners choose their own reading materials according to their own interests.

Finally, when L2 students read before they write, their anxiety levels may decrease. In this case, and according to Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (1982), the "affective filter" is low which enhances the learning process. In this regard, Alqadi and Alqadi (2013) state that "exposing EFL learners to a quantity of reading texts of different structures may contribute in reducing the anxiety of confronting the task of writing, which is considered as the most difficult experience in producing L2" (p. 110).

## Conclusion

According to Grabe (2001; 2003), there is a need for further research in L2 reading-writing connection. The studies conducted in this specific area are limited and few researchers have conducted studies in the EFL context. In the Saudi context, Almansour and Alshorman's (2014) study (mentioned earlier) is the only study conducted to address reading/writing connection at college-EFL context in Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, it is recommended that researchers conduct more research on the effects of integrating reading into EFL college writing instruction for Saudi EFL university students.

Pedagogically speaking, EFL writing teachers in the EFL programs at Saudi universities should be aware that reading and writing should be taught together. In this regard, Grabe (2001) explained that "one of the most consistent implications of two decades of research on reading and writing relations is that they should be taught together and the combination of both literacy skills enhances learning in all areas" (p. 25). Therefore, EFL teachers should direct their students' attention to the importance of reading for accomplishing writing tasks. More broadly, the educational authorities in Saudi Arabia are extremely urged to instill the importance of reading for developing writing skills into Saudi students of all educational stages.



By considering what Fageeh (2003) mentioned that the lack of emphasis on reading-writing connection in the language classroom in EFL college writing classes in the Saudi universities is one reason for the weakness in the students' writing abilities, and by looking at the plans of study in the BA English programs in these universities, it seems clear that the reading-writing connection as a pedagogical phenomenon should be given more attention by Saudi EFL teachers, educators and researchers. This paper clearly stated that integrating reading into L2 instruction is necessary. Extensive reading and using models, which are two models of reading for writing (Hirvela, 2004), can be combined as input in L2 writing courses. Extensive reading can serve as an indirect model of reading for writing, while models can serve as direct model of reading for writing. Finally, my advice to EFL writing teachers is that reading is not secondary to writing; these two literacy skills work parallel toward one end: literacy development.

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## Arabic Language in a Globalized World: Observations from the United Arab Emirates

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### **Abstract**

This paper has four objectives. First, it explores the effect of globalization on the Arabic language and shows its influence on various domains such as culture and values. Second, the paper examines the importance of languages in sustaining the cultural identity of peoples, and shows how globalization can be a threat to a particular society. Third, the paper discusses the concept of globalization as a new form of colonization, and examines the rise of the English language as lingua franca. Fourth, the paper explores the impact of globalization and English on world languages in general and the Arabic language in particular with specific observations from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The paper concludes by proposing some recommendations to improve the current status of classical Arabic in the UAE. The UAE government's efforts to promote the Arabic Language will also be highlighted.

**Keywords:** Globalization, Arabic, English, Lingua Franca,

**Introduction**

Many definitions given to the term ‘globalization’ vary from one discipline to the other (Riggs, 1998); nevertheless, they mostly describe globalization in economic, political and cultural terms (Waters, 1995). MacBride & Wiseman (2000, p. 9) refer to globalization as “the unfolding resolution of the contradiction between ever expanding capital and its national political and social formations”, which is relevant to the theme of this paper due to the effect of such aspects on language.

The technological advancements and the extensive use of the internet in daily life and business transactions have been some of the most prevailing characteristics of globalization. Due to these developments, numerous changes have taken place in various walks of life such as “the nature of learning, work, thought, entertainment, and the interpersonal patterning of social relations” (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004, p. 17). In this light, globalization has had its greatest influence on human communications which is naturally accompanied by certain effects on language (Ostler, 2008). Moreover, globalization has had major impact on societies all around the globe (Crystal, 2003); consequently, “social change always has a linguistic sequel” (Crystal, 2004, p. 3).

**Language as an Identity**

Language has long been viewed as a manifestation of a nation’s strength. A nation’s language is an integral part of that nation’s culture (Bassnett, 1998). Often, language is referred to as a ‘national treasure’ (Crystal, 1997). From another perspective, it is the medium by which culture and knowledge are conveyed to younger generations. In fact, language is one of the important devices by which culture, traditions and norms are communicated to future generations; it is also a reflection of an individual’s background and education. In the process of language acquisition, an individual does not only acquire linguistic and scientific knowledge, s/he also tends to be influenced by the culture and traditions this language conveys (Trudgill, 2000).

In other instances, language can be more than just an expression of national and cultural identity; it may have a religious identity such as the case with Arabic language as Arabic is regarded as the language of the Holy Quran and Islamic faith (Morrow & Castleton, 2007). Morrow & Castleton assert that “[i]n the Arab-Islamic world, both Arabic language and the Muslim faith are often viewed as inseparable parts of the same Muslim Identity” (2007, p. 202).

**Colonization and Globalization**

Due to the importance of language and its strong ties to culture and national identity, it was inevitable that the first victim of any colonization is the language of the colonized. In order to subdue a nation, colonizers throughout history resolved to diminish the identity of the colonized (Shiyab, 2013). In other words, to ensure that the national identity is demolished, the first thing to be destroyed is its language and the frequency with which it is used. There are many cases throughout history that attest to this fact such as the French colonization of Algeria and Nigeria (Hassan, 2011) among many other examples.

Currently, a supreme power need not colonize a weaker country in order to subdue it. Globalization and its political agendas can achieve such a goal without the need to deploy armies and use weapons. Globalization has made the possibility of invading an entire nation possible without the need to occupy its land (Olssen, O’Neill, & Codd, 2004). In other words,

colonization today has taken a more subtle and discreet form; globalization, westernization and secularization have been viewed as synonyms to the new colonization concept. For instance, the effect of mass media and popular culture have targeted the young generations worldwide, altering their views and beliefs, the manner with which they speak and dress, as well as weakening their cultural diversity (Morrow & Castleton, 2007). The technological advancements have made communications among countries much faster regardless of the distance (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). Thanks to the internet, correspondence and news about global events are available to everyone at the press of a button (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard). This factor has facilitated interaction and the reciprocal sharing of views, trends, tastes and interest among the youths all over the world (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard).

The author thinks that the intellectual occupation of a nation has proven to be much more efficient than the use of force. She does not think that there is a pressing need for a super power to occupy any country if the targeted country buys in to what the superior country is promoting through homogenous education and culture. The author believes that the most critical influence of globalization is that it is targeting the younger generations. The youths are not only more receptive to the globalized acculturation due to their extensive use of technology, but are also the future leaders of their countries' various cultural, economic, political, and social institutions.

In his book, *Globalization and the Nation-State*, Holton (1998, p. 163) argues that globalization is a threat to cultural diversity; globalization is perceived as "cultural dominance and cultural homogenization". In order to achieve such homogenization, the entire process of global communication requires a common ground or a shared medium in order to enable this acculturation to take place (Crystal, 2003). Thus, the promotion of the 'global language' has come as a natural consequence.

### **English as a Lingua Franca**

There are currently several languages which have been employed in global communications such as Chinese, Spanish, and French; however, English is by far more used worldwide (Korpela, 2003). Subsequently, the emergence of English as a lingua franca was an expected outcome. Crystal (2004) argues that the primary reason for a language such as English to become international is the political power possessed by the people of the countries that speak it. Throughout history, English had politically and economically dominated the world.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, English was the language of the leading colonial nation- Britain. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was the leader of the industrial Revolution- Also Britain. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was the leading economic power- the US (Crystal, 1997, p.14).

However, a lingua franca is a language spoken out of convenience in order to communicate with other nations in order to overcome the language barrier which has been a major obstacle in international communications (Ostler, 2008). This entails that a lingua franca (English in this case) is not learned or acquired as a mother tongue; rather, it is used as a means to facilitate communication (Ostler). On the other hand, this fact also implies that the language used as a lingua franca also undergoes a certain amount of alteration. Crystal claims that if your mother tongue is English, "[y]ou may feel pride., but your pride may be tinged with concern" (2003, p. 7) because people from other countries do not use English similar to you



and they alter “it to suit themselves” (Crystal). Nevertheless, the variations with which English is spoken among different peoples have not undermined the importance of English language. Crystal points out the fact that “[a] conversation over the internet between academic physicists in Sweden, Italy and India is practicable only if a common language is available. Similarly, the technology of air transportation brings together international business contacts” (1997, P. 13).

The author believes that learning a foreign language does not necessarily mean abandoning my mother tongue. According to Islam, learning foreign languages is encouraged since this learning will provide the learner with insights as to how the other party thinks and behaves.

### **Globalization and World Languages**

As mentioned previously, English has currently taken the lead as a global language (Crystal, 2003). This has caused many countries to promote the English language instead of their mother tongues. In Wales, for instance, “less than 20 percent of the population can speak Welsh in addition to English” (Crystal, 1997, p. 40). Crystal believes that languages are endangered due to the overbearing use of global languages by the younger generations instead of using their mother tongue. He also asserts that language death occurs when the last speakers of a language die. “When the last representatives of these peoples die, they take with them their oral history and culture” (Crystal). This has been the case with regards to many languages “in parts of the world where large numbers of languages are concentrated in a few small geographical regions” (Crystal, P. 42). The 1997 article reveals that there are over 6000 languages worldwide, half of which will be extinct in the next century (Crystal).

On the other hand, the English language seems to be immune to such catastrophic ramifications since it is the most used language throughout the globe and throughout history (Crystal, 1997). English has amplified the problem for endangered languages since the younger generations who speak those languages have turned to English as an optimum means of acquiring education and securing a better future career (Crystal).

The author does not agree that globalization is the direct cause for the death of indigenous languages; diseases and other natural catastrophes have played a crucial role in eradicating many peoples. Nevertheless, the overriding spread of English language worldwide has had a huge impact on many nations. The author also shares Crystal’s opinion when he states that “if English is... the only language left to be learned, it will have been the greatest intellectual disaster that the planet has ever known” (1997, p. 16) since it will demolish the richness of cultural diversity.

### **Globalization and Arabic Language**

Due to various economic, social and political factors, many countries have opted for a globalized education with hopes of gaining better education and consequently, a more successful career (Smith, 2002). Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard (2004) describe the economy, new technologies and communication, immigration and consumerism as the most significant factors which guide education today. This move towards a globalized education also includes Arab countries. Globalization has transformed education into a reflection of the changes witnessed in our world today. Consequently, the growing technologies and the unlimited access to online knowledge and global information have become a necessity to most countries (Scholte, 2000).



In the case of Arabic language, the issue of globalization is not only a matter of free trade, economy and technological advancements. There is a more profound dimension to globalization in Arab- Muslim countries. It is almost impossible to separate the Arabic language from Islam since Arabic is the language of the Holy Quran (Morrow & Castleton, 2007). The supreme powers in the past were “aware of the influence of the Arabic language. They fought it and tried to replace it with their own languages” (Morrow & Castleton, P. 203). Therefore, in order to fulfill the colonizer’s agenda of weakening the Arabic language, it is only logical to target the Muslim faith as well (Morrow & Castleton). In fact, the first attempt to wipe out Arabic and Islam occurred in 1492 with the fall of Granada (Morrow & Castleton). The Muslims in Spain were coerced to convert to Christianity; “Among the prohibitions and bans on Islamic dress, ritual baths, prayers and fasting...” (Morrow & Castleton, p. 203) and were prohibited from speaking Arabic. People who spoke Arabic were severely punished. Eventually, Arabic language disappeared in Spain and Spanish Muslims know very little about Islam ((Morrow & Castleton).

Other countries like Turkey replaced their alphabet system, which is a derivative of the Arabic alphabet, with the Latin alphabet (Morrow & Castleton, 2007). Another similar but failed attempt to replace the Arabic alphabets with Latin alphabets also took place in Iran during the Shah of Iran’s rule; he also tried to rid the “Persian language from Arabic loan-words” (Morrow & Castleton 204), which was perceived as an attempt on Islam. Consequently, this led to overthrowing the Shah during the Islamic Revolution (Morrow & Castleton).

The colonizers have promoted the use of the vernacular and regional dialects to ensure that classical Arabic is not proficiently used by Arabic speakers. For instance, in a lecture delivered by William Wilcox in Cairo in the early 1900s attributing the Egyptian’s lack of innovation to the fact that classical Arabic is weak and should be substituted by the strong expressive colloquial Arabic which provides its speakers with a vast range of expressions (Al-Misseddi, 2012, p. 315). Wilcox described classical Arabic as rigid and immune to creativity; it hinders scientific innovation due to Arabic’s inability to coin new expressions. Moreover, the flexibility of the colloquial Egyptian allows the adaptation of foreign words and expressions (Al-Misseddi). The author thinks that the previous statement is a direct attack on the traditional teachings which took place during the 1900s. Most children were taught Arabic and Islamic studies by Imams at mosques (Al-Misseddi) which entailed a strong foundation in classical Arabic. After two centuries, the decline of the Arabic language is evident through the domination of the various Arabic dialects which vary from one part of the Arab world to another. The author also believes that colloquial Arabic has replaced classical Arabic in an alarming way; the majority of Arabic programs are presented in colloquial Arabic, except for the news bulletins. Ironically, the majority of news broadcasters and programs presenters are not proficient in standard Arabic. More often than not, these presenters commit grammatical mistakes while reading the news (Interview with Amo Baba, 2009). This shows the current decline of the Arabic language in the Arab countries today.

### **Observations of Language Endangerment in the UAE**

The large number of expatriates who reside and work in the GCC countries in general is one of the many reasons for the deterioration of the Arabic language; the UAE is no exception (Al-Dabbagh & Gargani, 2011). Most of the non-Arabic speaking nationalities use English as a means of communication; consequently, the GCC countries have turned into an

awkward linguistic amalgamation; “the risk to society is more difficult to quantify but might include a loss of culture, values, Islamic norms and the Arabic language” (Forstenlechner & Rutledge, 2011, p. 31).

In an exclusive interview with the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research Website, Mr. Najeeb Abdulla Al-Shamsi, the Director of Studies and Research unit at the GCC General Secretariat, stated that

I am particularly worried about our language, which safeguards national culture. The Arabic language loses its importance and status as the number of expatriates grows. Moreover, the wide use of English in most private education institutions has also weakened the Arabic language. The strong connection between the job market, and technology and foreign languages, is among other reasons that have contributed to the decline of Arabic (Al-Shamsi, 2009, p. 2).

In light of the above, the seclusion of Arabic speakers is quite evident, an attempt to speak proper Arabic is futile since most of the workers who work in the various stores and companies and the domestic workers either speak English or flawed Arabic (Al-Shamsi, 2009). Unfortunately, in order for those workers to understand what is required of them, the Arabs who deal with them use flawed Arabic as well. Morrow and Castleton state that it has become less and less impossible to envision an Arab World without Arabic (2007, p. 210).

Another phenomenon these days is that English has been included in the curricula of private schools from an early age (K.A., 2013). Children are obliged to speak in English as long as they are in the school premises. The author believes that this fact has a negative impact on the degree of Arabic language acquisition they receive at school. The schools are the only outlet where Standard Arabic is introduced to children through Arabic and Islamic Studies classes. However according to some parents, the level of Arabic language taught at schools is unimpressive (Issa, 2013). Moreover, Arab children speak with their families using the colloquial Arabic. In the case where the caretakers of these children are nannies, the situation is even worse since most of the nannies are from non-Arabic speaking countries (Roumani, 2005). Consequently, the children grow up without being fully proficient in their mother tongue.

In 2009, Abu Dhabi Education Council published an online document entitled ‘Licensing and Accreditation Guidelines for New Non-Government Schools’. The document is comprised of 37 pages with nothing mentioned about Arabic except one line indicating that the aim of licensing and accreditation is to develop an understanding of UAE history, culture and language (ADEC, 2009).

One of the requirements of accreditation for higher education is that educational institutions conduct their teaching in English (Longden, 2011). The United Arab Emirates Universities and other educational institutions in the country conduct their teaching in English in order to be internationally recognized (Longden). In addition, a number of international educational institutions have established campuses in the United Arab Emirates as well as other Arab countries such as University of Sorbonne, the American University, and New York University. Al-Shamsi, however, objects to the establishment of such educational institutions due to their grave impact on culture:

I am opposed to some new educational trends in the UAE and the GCC countries that seek to establish foreign universities and schools in their

regions. For one thing, these universities and schools are profit-seeking. Second, the kind of education—especially in the field of social sciences—they introduce to our students may not suit our culture and traditions. Third, these schools alienate nationals; mainly recruit foreigners from their countries of origin (Al-Shamsi, 2009, p. 3).

According to the UAE University website, the Arabic Department

aims at preserving and enriching Arabic Language as a written text and spoken discourse capable of reflecting the diversity and complexity of the Arabic/Islamic culture and civilization. The Department is also determined to enhance and develop Arabic language teaching and pedagogy in a sophisticated way in order to reinforce the Arabic/Islamic identity of the nation (UAEU Website).

However, the University conducts its teachings in English Language.

Another factor that plays a crucial role in diluting the influence of Arabic language is that the young generations have no interest in studying Arabic Language academically. According to the UAE University Arabic Department report, over the last few years, fewer and fewer students choose Arabic Language as their major (Abbas, 2012-2013), as only five students graduated from the Arabic department in 2012, whereas eighty two students graduated in 2006 (Abbas).

The author thinks that this process of ranking and accreditation are merely other aspects of globalization, aiming to promote a homogeneous education which is designed according to the Western standards. It is ironic to convert an entire education system of the UAE, an Arabic country, into English, especially “that a good many middle-class Emiratis cannot speak English” (Morrow & Castleton, 2007, p. 210). English has not only become the language of education in the UAE, but also the official language of business, tourism and other domains. In the UAE, “English is encroaching on Arabic in the public sector, private schools, and tourism” (Morrow & Castleton, p. 210). One can argue that due to the fact of the multinational communities that reside in the country, English is obviously the most plausible language to communicate with as a ‘lingua franca’. This is, again, attributed to the proliferation of English worldwide due to its political and scientific influence (Crystal, 1997).

From the author’s personal experience as a conference interpreter based in the UAE, she has rarely interpreted from Arabic into English during high profile conferences since most of the major conventions, seminars, workshops and forums are conducted in English. For instance, in a Seismology Conference held in Abu Dhabi a few years ago, over three hundred participants were present. The majority of those participants were Arabs; only a handful of speakers were foreigners. Still, the entire conference proceedings were conducted in English.

### **UAE Government Perspective**

Fortunately, the UAE government has noticed the alarming status of Arabic language, thus calling for countermeasures and working diligently to reverse the damage that has been done. In this light and in accordance with the directives of Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the UAE Cabinet approved establishing the Consultative Council for Arabic Language in 2012. “The decision reflects the vision of the prudent leadership and reflects efforts by the federal government to preserve

the national identity promote Arabic language in the UAE through innovative methods as per the best practices. (UAE Cabinet, 2012).

On the cultural level, the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage launched several projects to uplift the Arabic Language such as Kalima Project which “selects, translates and publishes in Arabic over 100 of the finest books of literature and science from foreign languages” (Kalima Translation, 2014) every year.

Furthermore, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashed Al Maktoum has launched the ‘Mohammed bin Rashid Arabic Language Award’ in May 2014. This award aims at encouraging “exceptional contributions in serving the Arabic language and to honour its patrons besides highlighting successful and outstanding experiences in disseminating and educating the Arabic language” (Mohammed bin Rashid Arabic Language Award, 2014).

Sheikh Al Maktoum has identified five areas in which Arabic language should be cultivated; these areas are “education, media, Arabisation, technology, preservation and dissemination of the Arab linguistic heritage” (Mohammed bin Rashid Arabic Language Award). The author feels that this award is a crucial step towards promoting and preserving the Arabic language along with its invaluable Islamic and Arabic heritage.

The UAE leadership has been aware of the importance the Arabic language holds. This is evident in the encouragement of non-Arabic speaking expatriates to learn the basics of Arabic language in private schools. In other words, alongside the Arabic subjects which are taught to Arab nationals in schools, non-Arabic speakers receive their Special Arabic Education as an independent school subject (K.A., 2013).

The author believes that the leadership of the UAE aspires to preserve the Arabic heritage, including the Arabic language since it is part of the national identity. However, such efforts will not yield the desired outcomes without full involvement from the concerned parties including private and public sectors as well as parents and students.

### **Recommendations**

The author of this article believes that the key to a successful incorporation of English and the inevitable acculturation that comes with English language acquisition is to maintain a conscious balance between the mother language and English. Accordingly, the author proposes the following:

- Governmental reinforcement in reinstating the Arabic language as the official language of the UAE. For example:
  - All correspondence within the governmental departments should be carried out in Arabic.
  - English is to be utilized in business and tourism.
  - International events which take place in the country should be held in Arabic.
  - Increasing the cultural awareness by celebrating various cultural and religious occasions more prominently. During such occasions, Arabic language oriented activities should be encouraged.
  - While Kalima Project is a promising initiative when it comes to translation, it is very important that the quality of translation is monitored. It is equally important to ensure the quality and value of the content being translated into Arabic.

- Promote the Arabic language as a ‘national treasure’ among the younger generations, and create a sense of pride in mastering and using it by launching more initiatives and awards for the younger generations.
- Careful planning of language policies in order to utilize the positive gain of English as the language of knowledge, not at a replacement of the mother tongue and native culture.
- Modifying school curricula in both private and public schools in a way that provides the students with adequate linguistic knowledge in both Arabic and English. This entails revising the current Arabic curriculum so as to overcome its weaknesses.
- Including Arabic in extracurricular activities in order to enhance the student’s ability to learn the Arabic language properly. For instance, memorizing parts of the Holy Quran and poetic verse from classical Arabic poetry will improve the students’ grammatical knowledge.
- Considering Arabic teacher training and utilizing innovative teaching/ learning tools to stimulate the students and increase their interest in learning Arabic. For instance, utilizing the new technologies in the learning methods, exploring other hands-on on approaches to Arabic language acquisition, ensuring that students have more venues to practice their classical Arabic in school activities.
- In investment of parents in such efforts to ensure that the classical Arabic is preserved through encouraging their children to watch Arabic programs and urge the children to read more stories and books in standard Arabic.

### Conclusion

Globalization has had a huge impact on various aspects of life such as the economy, education, culture and language. The employment of English language as the global language and as the language of the internet has negatively influenced many world languages, one of which is the Arabic language. This paper has aimed at exploring the effects of globalization and the lingua franca on world languages in general and the Arabic language in particular with particular observations from the UAE. Although Arabic will not vanish as a colloquial language, the classical form of the language is highly endangered due to lack of practice by the Arab communities. Regional dialects have taken over even in multimedia. Arabs should preserve their national and religious treasure. Classical Arabic should not be confined to the brief Quranic verses recited during prayers.

We should not blame globalization or the west for the deterioration of the classical Arabic language. It is our responsibility as native speakers of Arabic to preserve our language and ensure it is passed on from one generation to another; it is our responsibility to encourage the use of classical Arabic among our children and youths. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum’s initiatives are exemplary models that should be followed so as to salvage our Arabic language. Still it is imperative that private and public entities work hand in hand to make such endeavors successful and fruitful.

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translated to Arabic: (في الليل كلنا شعراء سود) poems by E. Ethelbert Miller, and (كما الريح) poems by Afaa Michael Weaver.

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## Native and Non-Native English Speaking Teachers' Advantages and Disadvantages

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### Abstract

The present study discusses the results of a case study conducted to explore how students perceive the advantages and disadvantages of having native and non-native English language teachers. The study also reports native and non-native teachers' perception of their own teaching qualities as well as employers' perception of both groups through student feedback. The study was carried out in two locations, a private university in Kabul Afghanistan and a government funded language school in Wales UK. Responding to the questionnaires and structured interviews, students named the following as their native teachers' advantages: teaching ability, grammaticality and idiomaticity, use of the standard English language accent, and their competence in dealing with spontaneous responses in the classroom. Non-native teachers, on the other hand, were perceived as role models, empathetic, better culturally aware and capable of delivering efficient instructions. A small number of the students were less satisfied with non-native teachers' command of the English language teaching in different social contexts. The results will be beneficial for native and non-native teachers in terms of realizing their strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, the results also reveal that native teachers are not always preferred by learners, despite their indisputable command of the target language. Similarly, non-native teachers, contrary to the popular belief, are preferred over native teachers for their possession of distinct advantages as far as cultural and language-learning problems are concerned.

**Keywords:** English as a Foreign language (EFL), English as a Second language (ESL), English for Speakers of Other languages (ESOL) Native English Speakers (NES), Non-native English Speakers (NNES)

**Introduction**

The primary purpose of the present study was to encourage employers both in native English speaking countries and around the world to re-evaluate the idea of predominantly employing native English speaking (NES) teachers in English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English for Speakers of Other languages (ESOL) professions. The majority of the employers around the world support the idea that NES teachers are undoubtedly better qualified, skilled and competent in comparison to the non-native speakers of the English language. The present study aimed at promoting opportunities of employment for non-native English speaking (NNES) teachers and the advantages they have over native speakers; the advantages, which have very little been considered and spoken of.

Very limited recent research have supported NNES teachers in relation to their advantages, their assets as well as bringing the experience of learning the target language into the classroom in spite of their potential linguistic barriers. In terms of the employment opportunities for NNES teachers around the world, the present study has specifically focused at employers in the UK and in Afghanistan. The study have also summarized what is essential and needed for NNES teachers which could promote them and help them become equal to NES teachers in terms of their teaching qualities. The secondary aim of the study was to compare both NES and NNES teachers' substantial advantages, lack of particular skills, teaching experiences/self-evaluation in native and non-native countries as well as English language students' perceptions of both groups of teachers in students' native and non-native countries.

This study has not aimed at specifying whether NES or NNES teachers are best teachers and particularizing one group's advantages and the other group's disadvantages. On the contrary the present study has individualized each group's advantages and lack of particular skills. It is generally viewed that, what is more important for a successful teacher to possess is; language proficiency, personality, longer teaching experience, knowing the cultural background of the learners as well as understanding their language needs and individual learning goals.

**Research Questions**

The present study has answered the following questions related to NES and NNES teachers' particular skills through different perspectives:

1. What are NES and NNES teachers' advantages and disadvantages through learners' perspective?
2. How do the NES and NNES teachers perceive themselves and weigh their own advantages and disadvantages?
3. How do employers in English and non-English speaking countries perceive both groups, NNES teachers in particular?

The first research question discusses students' perception of both groups' and their positive attitude towards each group. The second research question aims at eliciting both NES and NNES teachers' views and opinions about themselves; the pros and cons of belonging to the native or non-native group, as well as summarizing their own strengths and weaknesses. The third research question discusses whether employers both in the inner circles (English-speaking countries) and the outer circles (non-English speaking countries) feel open-minded in relation to employing NNES teachers alongside NES teachers or whether they are prejudiced against them.

**Literature Review**

The present literature reviews issues concerning NES teachers' superiority against NNES teachers in terms of their experience of using the language since early age or their nativeness (Llurda 2010), their native accent (Braine 2010; Butler, 2007; Llurda 2006), their qualifications (Butler, 2007; Nemtchinova, 2005), learners' preference towards NES teachers (Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Nemtchinova, 2005) as well as NES teachers' disadvantages and lack of particular skills (Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

The subsequent part of this section discusses some of the known and well believed linguistic deficiencies of NNES teachers in terms of their non-native accent ( Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Butler, 2007; Bayyurt, 2006; Jenkins, 2005; Nemtchinova, 2005; Lindemann, 2003), their lack of linguistic skills and language proficiency (Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Shin, 2008; Nemtchinova, 2005), their lack of confidence (Moussu & Llurda, 2008) and very briefly, their lack of knowledge of the English language culture (Nemtchinova, 2005; Jeannot, 2004).

However, in the final section of the literature review some of the major advantages of NNES teachers are discussed which eliminates the signs of inferiority when compared to NES teachers and in fact make NNES teachers better teachers (Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Shin, 2008; Evrim, 2007; Nemtchinova, 2005; Carrier, 2003). The substantial and unbeatable advantage of a NNES teacher is discussed in detail as their empathy with learners and having experienced learning the target language (Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Samimy, 2008; Shin, 2008; Bayyurt, 2006; Nemtchinova, 2005; Davies, 2003). Other perceived advantages are: their linguistic skills and qualifications that are assumed to be absent (Samimy, 2008), and their use of standard English ( Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Shin, 2008; Butler, 2007; Davies, 2003).

**Figure 1 Summaries of the perceived advantages and disadvantages of both NES and NNES teachers:**

<b>A: NES teachers' Advantages:</b>	<b>B: NES teachers' Disadvantages:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Adult ESL learners could comprehend <b>standard</b> native speakers' <b>English</b> better than non-standard English'. Eisenstein &amp; Berkowitz (1981, cited in Butler, 2007, p. 737)</li> <li>• 'NES are <b>perfect models</b> for imitation'. Benke &amp; Medgyes (2005)</li> <li>• 'NES are <b>better qualified</b> as language teachers'. Phillipson (1992, cited in Buttler, 2007, p. 732)</li> <li>• 'ESL <b>students prefer</b> to be taught by NES teachers'.Nemtchinova (2005, p. 235)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'NES teachers tend to leave <b>problems unexplained</b>'. Benke &amp; Medgyes (2005, cited in Llurda, 2006, p. 207)</li> <li>• 'NES teachers are often <b>unable to empathize</b> with students going through the learning process'. Barrate &amp; Kontra (2000, cited in Moussu and Llurda, 2008, p. 322)</li> <li>• '<b>Native</b> speakers know the destination, but not the terrain that has to be crossed to get there; they themselves <b>have not travelled the same route</b>'. Seidlhofer (1999, p. 238, cited in Moussu and Llurda, 2008, p. 320)</li> <li>• '<b>Teachers who share a common language with their students are more</b></li> </ul>

	<b>effective'</b> . McNeill (2005, cited in Braine, 2010, p. 72)
<b>C: NNES teachers' Disadvantages:</b>	<b>D: NNES teachers' Advantages:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'NNES English teachers had long been considered second rate, which in turn may have caused a certain <b>lack of self-confidence</b> among NNES teachers' Braine (2010, p. 5)</li> <li>• <b>Teaching Competence:</b> "NNES teachers are sometimes afraid that they are going to make a mistake when speaking." Kamhi-Stein, Aagard, Ching, Paik, &amp; Sasser (2004, cited in Braine, 2010, p. 23)</li> <li>• 'NNES teachers are "preoccupied" with accuracy and <b>more formal</b> features of English' Reves &amp; Medgyes (1994, cited in Braine, 2010, p. 28)</li> <li>• 'Teachers with <b>foreign accents</b> are perceived by students to be less intelligent'. Nelson (1991; Solomon, 1991, cited in Butler, 2007, p. 734)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'The defining characteristic is their <b>experience</b> in learning English as a second language, a characteristic which no NES teacher can claim' Ellis (2002, cited in Braine, 2010, p. 22)</li> <li>• <b>Empathy and being a role model:</b> "The trait I had long given myself , as being sensitive and empathetic to the needs of my ESL learners, seemed fake and pretentious." A NES teacher; Olivia's Journal (April 19, 2002, cited in Samimy, 2008, p. 127)</li> <li>• 'Non-native teachers have the potentials to push the limits of <b>standard</b> norms of <b>language</b> use' Kramsch and Lam (1999, cited in Shin, 2008, p. 63)</li> <li>• 'NNES teachers are <b>serious teachers'</b>. Benke &amp; Medgyes (2005)</li> </ul>

**I. NES Teachers Advantages**

According to Davies (2003, p. 197), standard English needs its 'members', those who uphold its norms by taking on the responsibility of being its native speakers. Native speakers represent standard languages: it is the standard language they are native speakers of. Native speakers' intuitions about their own language are supposed to result in production of correct, idiomatic utterances, as well as providing the ability to recognize acceptable and unacceptable versions of the language.

A study by Benke & Medgyes (2005), summarizes some of the substantial advantages of NES teachers, among which, one of them is the fact that NES teachers are very well capable of teaching conversation classes as well as serving perfect models for imitation.

In a study by Lasagabaster & Sierra (2002 cited in Braine, 2010, p. 34), the students preferred NES English at all educational levels - primary, secondary and university with an increased preference as the educational level rose. This must relate surely to the level of English becoming increasingly complex. In language skill areas - pronunciation, speaking, vocabulary, culture and civilization, the preference for NES teachers was stronger than for NNES teachers.



## ***II. NES Teachers' Disadvantages***

Several respondents in Benke & Medgyes (2005) noted that NES teachers are occasionally hard to understand, especially at lower levels, nor is explaining of grammar considered to be one of their strengths.

Seidlhofer (1999, cited in Llurda, 2006, p. 218) considers that being a native speaker, and therefore having a very high command of the target language, does not automatically imply the ability to identify which language may turn out to be more pedagogically effective. It is obvious that a NNES has gone through the same learning experience as that of their students, which should help them to pinpoint those linguistic and non-linguistic issues that can become too high a hurdle for their students to overcome and lead them to strategies aimed at facilitating the learning process.

The results of a study by McNeill (2005) are also reported in another book by Llurda (2006, p. 123), which suggest that ESL teachers who speak the same first language as their students are generally more accurate in identifying sources of lexical difficulty in reading texts than teachers whose mother tongue is English and who are not familiar with the students' first language.

## ***III. NNES Teachers' disadvantages***

In a comparative study on NES and NNES English teachers in Kamhi-Stein, Aagard, Ching, Paik, & Sasser (2004, p. 92, cited in Braine, 2010, p. 23), listening was the highest self-rated skill, while pronunciation was the lowest rated. One respondent stated that NNES teachers are afraid that they will make mistakes when they speak. Vocabulary skills were the second area of difficulty.

Reves & Medgyes (1994, cited in Braine, 2010, p. 28 and Moussu and Llurda, 2008, p. 322) found that the NNES English teachers were sacrificing the communicative language teaching for the sake of accuracy and more formal features of English. Similar results were found in Samimy & Brutt-Griffler's (1999) subjects, who also perceived NNES English teachers as relying on textbooks, which suggests a lack of innovation and creativity in the classroom as well as preparation for examinations instead of learning for communication.

A growing number of studies on language attitudes have examined students' attitudes towards the non-native accents of foreign-born teachers and instructors. These studies have shown that teachers with foreign accents are perceived by parents and students to be less intelligent compared with teachers without foreign accents (Nelson, 1991; Solomon, 1991, cited in Butler, 2007, p. 734).

## ***IV. NNES Teachers' advantages***

Ellis (2002) points out that the characteristic of 'learning experience' is only significant if the experience is accessible and useful to teachers to draw upon during their teaching. For instance, they have learned the grammar, unlike NES who may have acquired it unconsciously. Ellis further confirms that NES know what "sounds right", but maybe unable to explain it in the classroom. These abilities of NNES come under labels such as "language awareness," "meta linguistic awareness," and "sensitivity to the language." In her later study (2006, cited in Moussu & Llurda, 2008), Ellis reiterates that a good language teacher in addition to mastering a combination of linguistic, pedagogical and methodological skills will need to have experienced the process of acquiring and using a new language in order to understand students' learning process and experiences.



Arva & Medgyes (2000) and Barratt & Kontra (2002) cited in (Moussu & Llurda, 2008, p. 322) confirm that a unique advantage NNES teachers have over NES teachers is that they can empathize very well with their students' learning difficulties and understand what is to be homesick and to experience culture shock. NNES teachers are also admired by their students because they are successful role models and are often very motivated.

A study by Modiano (1999, cited in Moussu & Llurda, 2008, p. 318), argues that regarding English as an international language, it may even be claimed that many NNES of English are more communicatively efficient speakers of English in international contexts than a great deal of NES. In other words, many so-called NES can be far less intelligible in global settings than well-educated proficient speakers of a second language.

A study by Benke & Medgyes (2005, cited in Llurda, 2006; Braine, 2010) reaffirms the advantages of NNES teachers, as teaching and explaining the grammar through a more structural approach, can provide a more thorough exam preparation and stand a better chance of detecting cheats and most importantly are sincerely aimed at their job, by assigning a lot of homework, thoroughly planning their lessons and checking for errors constantly.

To conclude Benke & Medgyes (2005) admit, that the picture is far more complex than what has been discussed so far in the present section of the study. It has often occurred that a feature highly appreciated by one learner is seen as a weakness by another. It cannot be simply clarified and decided as to which group is the best, or superior, but to agree with what Phillipson (1992, cited in Braine, 2010, p. 3), who challenged the "Native Speaker Fallacy" has stated. In terms of deciding who is the ideal teacher, Medgyes (1992: 348f, cited in Moussu and Llurda, 2008, p. 321) states that: The **ideal NES teacher** is the one who has achieved a high degree of proficiency in **the learners' mother tongue**. The **ideal NNES teacher** is the one who 'has achieved near-native proficiency' in English.

### Research Design and Methodology

The present study was conducted in 2010 in the native country of the English language (UK) and the non-native country (Afghanistan). The study was carried out comparatively in terms of identifying both NES and NNES teachers' teaching effectiveness in their native countries and in foreign countries (Evrin, 2007, p.01).

Two sets of case studies on NNES and NES teachers were conducted through questionnaires and structured interviews. Regarding the participants in Afghanistan, 30 university students studying **ESL**, 5 NNES teachers, 5 NES teachers and 5 employers running English language schools, were sent requests for participation. Similarly in the UK, 30 language school students studying **ESOL**, 5 NES and 5 NNES teachers and 5 employers were asked for their participation.

The student participants were first asked category questions in relation to their age, language level, qualification aims and experience of being taught by NES and NNES teachers, where they were required to tick the appropriate category. In the second part of the questionnaire, students were asked five-point scales questions, from 5=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree. This part of the questionnaire, asked the students about the teaching qualities of both NES and NNES teachers. The third and final part of the questionnaire included open-ended questions. The native and non-native teacher participants were asked closed questions, and category questions in the first half of the questionnaire, regarding their educational background, levels at which they were teaching and institutions where they were teaching. The second half of the questionnaire

consisted of dichotomous questions, followed by an open-ended question ‘why’, where the participants had the opportunity to further elaborate on their answers.

The questionnaires designed for employers included a mixture of category questions (size of the company, number of teachers, the type of company), 5 point scale questions, from 5=very satisfied to 1=very unsatisfied (teaching qualities of both NES and NNES teachers), closed rating questions, (excellent to very poor) and another set of 5 point scale questions based on the extent to which they agree and disagree with the statements about both NES and NNES teachers’ qualifications and linguistic competence. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were offered the opportunity to express their opinions further on both groups of teachers through open-ended questions.

**Findings, Analysis and Discussion**

Tables 1 and 2 illustrate, the number of participants, to whom the request for participation was sent and the number of respondents, who actually participated and responded to the questionnaires both in UK and in Afghanistan.

**Table: 1** *Number of participants in the UK (initial number and number of participants who responded*

<b>Location: United Kingdom</b>		<b>Number of Participants: 45</b>		<b>Responses received: 45</b>	
<b>Total number of Student participants:</b>	30	Responses received from Student participants:		30	
<b>Total number of Employer participants:</b>	5	Responses received from Employer participants:		5	
<b>Total number of NES teacher participants:</b>	5	Responses received from NES teacher participants:		5	
<b>Total number of NNES teacher participants:</b>	5	Responses received from NNES teacher participants:		5	

**Table: 2** *Number of participants in Afghanistan (initial number and number of participants who responded*

<b>Location: Afghanistan</b>		<b>Number of Participants: 45</b>		<b>Responses received: 41</b>	
<b>Total number of Student participants:</b>	30	Responses received from Student participants:		30	
<b>Total number of Employer participants:</b>	5	Responses received from Employer participants:		1	
<b>Total number of NES teacher participants:</b>	5	Responses received from NES teacher participants:		5	
<b>Total number of NNES teacher participants:</b>	5	Responses received from NNES teacher participants:		5	

The tables below (table 3,4,5,6) illustrate student participants' responses; their attitudes towards NES and NNEST teachers and how they perceive both groups' advantages and disadvantages. The qualitative findings elaborate on quantitative findings.

**Native Teachers' Advantages:**

**Table: 3 Advantages of native teachers in the UK and in Afghanistan**

<b>Country: UK</b>	<b>Statements:</b>	<b>No of Participants agreed out of 30:</b>
	<i>NES teachers use standard English</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 21 / 30</b>
	<i>NES teachers are more competent and do not make errors while teaching</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 19 / 30</b>
	<i>NES teachers have better speaking/writing skills</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 19 / 30</b>
	<i>Students prefer NES teachers</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 22 / 30</b>
<b>Country: Afghanistan</b>	<b>Statements:</b>	<b>No of Participants agreed out of 30:</b>
	<i>NES teachers use standard English</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 23 / 30</b>
	<i>NES teachers are more competent and do not make errors while teaching</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 18 / 30</b>
	<i>NES teachers have better speaking and writing skills</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 20 / 30</b>
	<i>Students prefer NES teachers</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 26 / 30</b>

The participants in table 3 have equally supported the advantages that the NES teachers possess. Advantages in terms of their use of standard English, their competence and committing less errors while teaching, and they are preferred by the learners. The only variation that could be noticed is; students' preference towards NES teachers. In the UK 73% of the student participants have agreed to have NES as their English language teachers. In Afghanistan, however, 86% of the students, which is the highest figure throughout the study, have stated their preference for NES teachers. The student participants in Afghanistan have perceived the advantages of their NES teachers' as; appropriate teaching, better teaching/grammar/speaking and writing skills, their familiarity with the English language, better pronunciation/accent and fluency, having the right skills and qualifications to teach better, and they can teach new words used in different social contexts. The highest figure (86%) basically confirms what has been predicted in the

present study, the fact that NES are perceived to be more competent and preferred by the learners.

**Native Teachers' Disadvantages:**

**Table: 4 Disadvantages of Native teachers in the UK and in Afghanistan**

<b>Country: UK</b>	<b>Statements:</b>	<b>No of Participants agreed out of 30:</b>
	<i>NES teachers are not serious teachers</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 4 / 30</b>
	<i>NES teachers' language is hard to understand</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 3 / 30</b>
	<i>NES teachers do not understand my language problems</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 6 / 30</b>
	<i>NES teachers do not understand my culture</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 10 / 30</b>
<b>Country: Afghanistan</b>	<b>Statements:</b>	<b>No of Participants agreed out of 30:</b>
	<i>NES teachers are not serious teachers</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 2 / 30</b>
	<i>NES teachers' language is hard to understand</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 4 / 30</b>
	<i>NES teachers do not understand my language problems</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 6 / 30</b>
	<i>NES teachers do not understand my culture</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 18 / 30</b>

Variations could be seen clearly, between the student participants in the UK and student participants in Afghanistan in relation to their views about their culture and how advantageous and disadvantageous it is for their teachers to be aware of their culture. 33% student participants in the UK have agreed that it is a disadvantage that their NES teachers are not familiar with their students' culture. In Afghanistan however, 60% of the student participants have not only ticked the closed questions and revealed their negative feelings towards their NES teachers' lack of cultural awareness, but they have further elaborated in the open-ended questions and have stated clearly and vividly how important their cultural values are to them and what a big disadvantage it is for their NES teachers to be less aware of it.

One reason that students in the UK are less concerned by the lack of cultural awareness of their NES teachers' could be the fact that they have already been mixed with many other different cultures in the ESOL classrooms as well as outside the classrooms. Culture plays a crucial role in the lives of the students in Afghanistan. They are all Afghans and come from one cultural background. To the Afghan people, culture is everything related to the lives of people, such as their ways of living, beliefs, values, norms and daily cultural activities. In their views, the

English language and culture are not interrelated, where there is a reciprocal relationship between language and culture and the fact that they influence one another. Teachers’ verbal language as well as their body language, their appearance and dress codes, topics and materials brought into the EFL classrooms in Afghanistan must be culturally appropriate.

**Non-Native Teachers’ Disadvantages:**

**Table: 5 Disadvantages of Non-native teachers in the UK and in Afghanistan**

	<b>Statements:</b>	<b>No of Participants agreed out of 30:</b>
<b>Country: UK</b>	<i>NNES teachers are not competent and make errors while teaching</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 5 / 30</b>
	<i>NNES teachers usually get nervous when teaching</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 9 / 30</b>
	<i>NNES teachers are less friendly / more formal</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 1 / 30</b>
	<i>NNES teachers have foreign accents</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 5 / 30</b>
	<b>Country: Afghanistan</b>	<b>Statements:</b>
<i>NNES teachers are not competent and make errors while teaching</i>		<b>Participants agreed: 8 / 30</b>
<i>NNES teachers usually get nervous when teaching</i>		<b>Participants agreed: 15 / 30</b>
<i>NNES teachers are less friendly / more formal</i>		<b>Participants agreed: 6 / 30</b>
<i>NNES teachers have foreign accents</i>		<b>Participants agreed: 9 / 30</b>

Table 5 confirms that most NNES teachers are highly competent speakers of English language who nonetheless have some limitations in their command of English, especially if we compare them to their NES counterparts. (16 %) of the student participants in the UK and (26%) of the student participants in Afghanistan perceive the NNES teachers to be less competent and committing errors during their teaching. This figure has proven to be much lower than initially predicted and used as the central point of the present study (NNES teachers are less competent). Their lack of confidence is the biggest problem compared to the lack of competence. (30%) of the participants in the UK and (50%) of the participants in Afghanistan have agreed that the NNES teachers feel nervous and lack confidence when teaching. The second disadvantage, though not the biggest, of NNES teachers through learners’ perspective is their foreign accent

and pronunciation. (16%) of the participants in the UK and (30%) of the participants in Afghanistan have agreed on the non-standard quality of NNES teachers’ accent. The lowest disadvantage however, is NNES teachers’ formal attitude and lack of friendliness, which is agreed by (3%) of the participants in the UK and (20%) of the participants in Afghanistan. In relation to NNES teachers’ accent, the student participants both in the UK and in Afghanistan revealed ambivalence. Out of the 60 participants in both countries, 46 of them responded positively. One of the participants has stated that it is best to speak clearly and succinctly, in order to convey messages across, rather than working on improving accent. According to this participant, NNES teachers could rarely be able to sound exactly as NES teachers, regardless of their effort of imitating. The remaining 14 participants were negative or uncertain. One student participant has stated that teachers with good accent and standard English accent indicate that they have a good command of the English language.

**Non-Native Teachers’ Advantages:**

**Table: 6 Advantages of Non-native teachers in the UK and in Afghanistan**

<b>Country: UK</b>	<b>Statements:</b>	<b>No of Participants agreed out of 30:</b>
	<i>NNESTs are serious teachers</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 17 / 30</b>
	<i>NNESTs understand my language problems</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 18 / 30</b>
	<i>NNESTs speak standard non-idiomatic language</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 19 / 30</b>
	<i>Students prefer NNESTs, based on the fact that NNESTs understand their culture</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 14 / 30</b>
<b>Country: Afghanistan</b>	<b>Statements:</b>	<b>No of Participants agreed out of 30:</b>
	<i>NNESTs are serious teachers</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 13 / 30</b>
	<i>NNESTs understand my language problems</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 17 / 30</b>
	<i>NNESTs speak standard non-idiomatic language</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 12 / 30</b>
	<i>Students prefer NNESTs, based on the fact that NNESTs understand their culture</i>	<b>Participants agreed: 24 / 30</b>

Table 6, is believed to hold the greatest significance throughout the study, which summarizes NNES teachers’ advantages. Table 6 is evidence to the contrary and clearly shows that not only



in one country, but in both countries, they are believed to be serious teachers by 43% (Afghanistan) to 56% (UK) student participants. 56% (Afghanistan) to 60% (UK) of the student participants agree that NNES teachers are capable of understanding their students' learning problems. It is obvious that NNES teachers have gone through the same learning experience.

63% of the student participants in UK agree that NNES teachers possess a standard, non-idiomatic language. This figure is based on the fact that most of the ESOL teachers at the institution that participated in the present study come from Wales. The Welsh accent can sometimes be found slightly difficult to understand, compared to the standard English accent, which comes from England. Similarly, 40% of the student participants in Afghanistan have confirmed that NNES speak non-idiomatic language, compared to their NES teachers who come from different linguistic backgrounds, with different accents, particularly the north of the UK.

The last and the most important issue for which the NNES teachers have been admired to a great extent, is the cultural awareness. 46% of the ESOL students in the UK prefer NNES for their cultural awareness. In Afghanistan however, 80% of the participants admire their NNES teachers and have agreed that it is their biggest advantage that NNES understand their students' cultural background.

To summarize, based on students' perception of their NES and NNES teachers in both countries, they identified NES teachers as informal, fluent, accurate, owners of standard English accent, using different techniques, methods and approaches, being flexible, being serious, using conversational English, knowing subtleties of the language, mostly prepared to answer students' questions, using authentic English, and providing positive feedback to the students. NNES teachers on the other hand were perceived as relying on textbooks, being sensitive to the needs of students, being aware of the students' culture and knowing the students' background, understanding students' language problems, having the experience of learning the target language, being more efficient in terms of delivering their lesson, and having exam preparation as the goal of their teaching.

### NES and NNES Teachers' Perception of Themselves

The 2 tables below, (table 7 and table 8) illustrate both NES and NNES teachers' responses; how they perceive themselves, how they report their students' attitudes towards them and their overall teaching experience.

**Table: 7 NES and NNES teachers' perception of themselves in the UK**

Location: UK			
Native Teachers		Non-native Teachers	
Masters level qualifications	2/5	Masters level qualifications	3/5
Knowledge of languages other than English	3/5	Knowledge of languages other than English	5/5
Teaching at higher levels	3/5	Teaching at higher levels	2/5
Feeling nervous at the beginning of	4/5	Feeling nervous at the beginning of	2/5

career		career	
Still feeling nervous	0/5	Still feeling nervous	0/5
Advantages of being a NES teacher reported	5/5	Advantages of being a NNES teacher reported	5/5
Disadvantages of being a NES teacher reported	3/5	Disadvantages of being a NNES teacher reported	4/5
Students' positive attitudes reported	5/5	Students' positive attitudes reported	5/5
Students' negative attitudes reported	0/5	Students' negative attitudes reported	0/5
Good classroom memories reported	5/5	Good classroom memories reported	5/5
Bad classroom memories reported	5/5	Bad classroom memories reported	5/5
Strengths reported	4/5	Strengths reported	5 / 5
Weaknesses reported	5/5	Weaknesses reported	5/5
Errors made during teaching	5/5	Errors made during teaching	5/5
Challenges faced	3/5	Challenges faced	5/5
Any contributions reported	5/5	Any contributions reported	2/5

Table 7 clearly indicates that NES and NNES teachers are equally qualified, and capable of teaching at higher levels. Both groups have an equal number of weaknesses in relation to their teaching and an almost equal number of strengths. Students' attitudes towards both groups are positive and no negative attitude has been reported. Both teachers have reported bad classroom memories. Responding to their questionnaires, 1 out of 10 NNES teachers has reported facing a rude student in the classroom. Similarly only one NES teacher has reported a particular learner's prejudice towards her for being a female teacher. The remaining 8 teachers from both groups have reported their bad classroom memories as learners not aimed at learning and therefore not making progress. It can also be noticed that the number of NES feeling nervous at the beginning of their teaching career is higher than the NNES teachers. However, both groups seem to have built their confidence in subsequent years.

As mentioned in our literature review, NES teachers are believed to be immune from linguistic deficiency, and therefore preferred by the majority of students as well, (see table 3), in Table 7, however number of NES and NNES teachers, who have made language errors during their teaching, is equally similar. NES teachers have reported a spelling error as a trivial issue and have stated that they were feeling comfortable and trusted by the learners. The NNES teachers' responses when they made language errors in the classroom in the UK, has surprisingly been moderate and less humiliating, as they believe NES could also commit errors while teaching.

**Table: 8 NES and NNES teachers' perception of themselves in Afghanistan**

Location: Afghanistan			
Native Teachers		Non-native Teachers	
Masters level qualifications	3/5	Masters level qualifications	1/5
Knowledge of languages other than English	2/5	Knowledge of languages other than English	5/5
Teaching at higher levels	3/5	Teaching at higher levels	3/5
Feeling nervous at the beginning of career	1/5	Feeling nervous at the beginning of career	4/5
Still feeling nervous	0/5	Still feeling nervous	3/5
Advantages of being a NES teacher reported	5/5	Advantages of being a NNES teacher reported	3/5
Disadvantages of being a NES teacher reported	5/5	Disadvantages of being a NNES teacher reported	4/5
Students' positive attitudes reported	4/5	Students' positive attitudes reported	3/5
Students' negative attitudes reported	1/5	Students' negative attitudes reported	2/5
Good classroom memories reported	5/5	Good classroom memories reported	5/5
Bad classroom memories reported	4/5	Bad classroom memories reported	4/5
Strengths reported	5/5	Strengths reported	5/5
Weaknesses reported	5/5	Weaknesses reported	4/5
Errors made during teaching	4/5	Errors made during teaching	4/5
Challenges faced	3/5	Challenges faced	4/5
Any contributions reported	3/5	Any contributions reported	4/5

In Table 8 we can see that there is a lot of similarity among NNES teacher participants in Afghanistan and in the UK, in terms of their responses towards the advantages and disadvantages of belonging to the non-native group, their strengths and weaknesses as well as good and bad classroom memories. However, variations could be noticed in the areas such as higher qualifications, number of challenges faced during their teaching career, confidence, students' attitudes towards them, and their feelings after committing a language error in the classroom.

We can see that the number of NNES teachers feeling nervous at the beginning of their career is higher than the NES teachers in Afghanistan. One of the NNES teachers in UK has stated: *"despite knowing about the language quite well, errors and inaccuracies in the use of language*

*especially where a spontaneous response is required*” as one of the disadvantages of being a NNES teacher.

There is also evidence through the literature review and findings from the present study that not all NES and NNES teachers are equally qualified to teach in different contexts and at different levels. There is some ground to believe that NNES teachers with a high language proficiency level will be far better prepared to teach EFL in a university than NNES with so called ‘weak’ or ‘problematic’ language skills. Therefore, the above results appear to respond affirmatively the strengths and weaknesses of the two groups. Language proficiency is a necessary condition for NNES language teachers, and a high level of proficiency and communicative skills are necessary for those who plan to teach in EFL/ESL/University contexts or at advanced levels. Once this condition is met, there will be no need to look differently at NES and NNES teachers, as both will still need a set of pedagogical skills, as well as a fair amount of energy, will, and resources, in order to become effective language teachers.

In relation to the question of challenges faced during their career, the NNES participants’ responses in Afghanistan are more severe than those in the UK. 3 out of 5 have suffered from stress and anxiety during their careers as English language teachers, either because of a lack of confidence or receiving a negative feedback from their learners. One participant has even experienced an unfair dismissal from a previous employer. This action underlines the serious consequences that can arise because of the issue of negative attitude towards NNES teachers. Similarly, when asked about their feelings experienced after committing a teaching error in the classroom, 4 out of 5 participants reported embarrassing feelings and receiving a peculiar look from their learners. 2 participants reported themselves as extremely embarrassed and mortified.

Table 9 is an illustration of employers’ responses in both countries; how they perceive both NES and NNES teachers, how they report their students’ attitudes towards both groups and the advantages each group own.

**Table: 9 Employers’ responses towards NES and NNES teachers in the UK and in Afghanistan**

Employers responses			
UK		Afghanistan *	
More NES employed than NNES	3/5	More NES employed than NNES	1/1
More NNES employed than NES	0/5	More NNES employed than NES	0/1
Satisfied with NES teachers	5/5	Satisfied with NES teachers	1/1
Satisfied with NNES teachers	4/5	Satisfied with NNES teachers	1/1
Leaners satisfied with NES teachers	5/5	Leaners satisfied with NES teachers	1/1
Leaners satisfied with NNES teachers	4/5	Leaners satisfied with NNES teachers	1/1
Employers agree that NES and NNES teachers are equal in their level of competence	2/5	Employers agree that NES and NNES teachers are equal in their level of competence	1/1
Employers agree that NNES require more training	3/5	Employers agree that NNES require more training	1/1
Employers agree that NNES should	4/5	Employers agree that NNES should	0/1

start teaching lower level classes first		start teaching lower level classes first	
NES teachers have certain advantages	5/5	NES teachers have certain advantages	1/1
NNES teachers have certain advantages	4/5	NNES teachers have certain advantages	1/1
* 1 out of 5 employers participated in the study. The reason was stated as lack of financial support and security in the country, where NES are strongly preferred but employers could not afford to hire them.			

The one and only employer in Afghanistan, has provided us with somewhat mixed and ambiguous results. In relation to NES and NNES teachers' advantages, positive feedback from the learners and the employer's overall satisfaction of both groups' teaching quality, have been responded positively. Confusion rises, where the employer agrees that NES and NNES teachers' level of competence is equal and at the same time, the employer agrees that NNES require more training. In the UK however, 2 out of 5 employers agree that NNES and NES are equal in their level of competence and 3 out 5 agree that NNES require more training. These 3 employers have not only recommended further training for the NNES teachers, but their number of NNES teachers is below 5 in their institution. They also agree that NNES teachers should start teaching at lower levels and subsequently move on to teaching higher-level classes. Nevertheless, they have admitted that NNES teachers have certain advantages and have reported their overall satisfaction based on NNES teachers' teaching quality and feedback received from their learners. To conclude, according to Samimy (2008, p.129), when both groups collaborate and work together for a common purpose, the English language teaching profession makes strides in terms of promoting strengths on both sides and begins to see 'the other' as a resource rather than as a deficit model or representation of unattainable standard.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

It is hoped that the present study has eliminated most of the false beliefs and fallacious judgments made against NNES teachers. In addition, it is also hoped that the present study subsequently helps non-native teachers increase their confidence by believing in themselves. By believing that when compared to native teachers, they are not the only ones who lack linguistic and/or pedagogical skills, and most importantly by believing that they are still preferred by a considerable percentage of English language students.

The majority of the students have shown preference towards qualified, dedicated and teachers with excellent communication skills both oral and written. At the same time, teachers who are empathetic, and understand their learners' language problems are also preferred. But, most importantly, a strong preference is shown towards teachers who are extensively aware of the cultural background of their learners. Native teachers will never be able to gain the experience of learning the English language, despite the fact that they may have experienced learning another language. Non-native teachers on the other hand will always be viewed as the second hand speakers of the target language. Moreover, it is often impossible for an individual teacher to possess all of the valuable qualities, albeit not always impossible.

In addition to these qualities, the crucial requirement for all NNES teachers, according to the results obtained from the present study, is to gain an excellent command of the target language. NNES teachers need to further familiarize themselves with the culture of the target language. Becoming a near-native speaker of a language is not impossible, but requires time, effort and determination.

My recommendation for further research would be to explore possible answers to the following questions: what other necessary training could the NNES teacher trainees be provided during their 'teacher training course' to nurture and develop their linguistic and communicative skills? What possible approaches could be implemented to help NNES teachers become near-native? What are NNES teachers' own responsibilities for improving their linguistic skills alongside other pedagogical skills? As a final remark, it is absolutely necessary to increase NES teachers' cultural awareness of their students' culture, specifically in Afghanistan and increase NNES teachers' competence in teaching the English language in different social contexts.

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## Learning Circles: Promoting Collaborative Learning Culture for Teacher Professional Development

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### Abstract

This case study examined Palestinian English language teachers' views of the implementation of learning circles (LCs) and their impact on instructional practices and on promoting a collaborative learning culture for teacher professional development. These learning circles involved designated English language teachers teaching from fifth to tenth grade coming together twice a month for six hours during the one year leadership and teacher development program (LTD) to reflect on and share their insights, experiences, difficulties and challenges as leaders of change. Learning circles in the LTD program aimed at providing powerful opportunities for growth and professional development. The data sources included semi-structured interviews, observation and analysis of teacher participation, presentations and reflections. The data also included several sub-questions that this study set out to be answered and explored by the teachers orally and through emails. A total of forty Palestinian teachers participated in this study. Half of the teachers were from Ramallah district and half from Qabatyah-Palestine. The results of this study were a narrative description of teachers' views of the implementation of learning circles used to impact their instructional practices and their professional development. The data from the interviews and the observation of teachers' participation and presentations suggested that teachers have positive views towards learning circles that support and positively affect their instructional practices and professional development. Teachers' reflection revealed that LCs refined their teaching practices and encouraged them to create a collaborative culture that often leads to professional development. They helped them explore new methods and techniques to advance their professional practices. Through learning circles, English language teachers share their best practices in a safe, supportive and collaborative environment.

**KeyWords:** Culture of collaboration, learning circles, learning communities, professional development, teacher expertise

**Introduction**

The Leadership and Teacher Development (LTD) program is a program that is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Palestine and the AMIDEAST. It started in the fall of 2012 and will continue until the spring of 2016. It is a comprehensive education reform initiative focused on improving the quality of school education through an evidence-based approach to leadership and teacher development. It addresses core group of supervisors, as well as teachers and principals from 300 public schools in the West Bank. The aim is to develop a community of educators who share a common understanding of good teaching practice gained from the in-service professional development experiences (MoE & AMIDEAST, 2014).

It should be noted that in the LTD program, teachers were to attend face to face sessions every month for six hours to discuss different new educational theories and their implications. Whereas LCs were held twice a month for six hours to help teachers deeply understand and apply what were presented in the face to face sessions. LCs were practical opportunities to help teachers present and discuss their understanding with their colleagues. LCs in the LTD program are considered as one form of knowledge production. They aim to promote, strengthen and foster cooperation to enhance teachers' professional development based on the different experiences teachers have. LCs are intended to lead to positive action and change in teacher instructional practices.

The learning circles in the LTD program are a collaborative tool used by a group of ten to twelve teachers (community of learners) coming together with a facilitator to engage in a critical discussion and reflection on issues pertaining face to face training sessions. The facilitator's role is to support teacher's thinking and learning.

In the LTD learning circles, the facilitator listens attentively and uses questions and comments to refocus the teachers' discussion. He/ She ensures that there is a thoughtful debriefing process. The goal is to build and share knowledge of successful experiences through the process of open discussion and deep reflection around face to face issues related to teaching English as a foreign language. LCs also aim to help teachers work together and share successful experiences.

In the LTD program, LCs are expected to help teachers explore approaches that expand their knowledge, skills, and confidence with the focus on improving teaching and learning processes. In LCs, teachers invest time on discussing their hopes and expectations, identifying issues of concerns, identifying some challenges regarding the application of some new ideas, making recommendations of actions, promoting risk-taking, evaluating some practices, deepening their understanding of some of the topics discussed in the face to face meetings, giving and receiving reflective feedback, asking for alternative strategies, and then following up and discussing next steps.

Discussion and reflection are two key skills at all stages of LCs. Reflection leads to a meaningful discussion and provides opportunities for clarifying some assumptions and challenges about teaching and learning. In LCs, the facilitators and the teachers are expected to reach a shared understanding of the issues raised and presented through face to face sessions. Peters & Le Cornu, (2005) explained that "In the LCs, participants reflect on and share their insights, tensions and dilemmas as leaders of the change process" (p.1), and thus enhance their understanding of the teaching and learning processes.

LCs aim to provide a climate of trust, respect, acceptance and support among teachers and facilitators and among teachers themselves. Teachers are encouraged to look at issues raised from different perspectives and discuss how the raised issues could be applied in their English

language classrooms. LCs create a culture of collaboration that enhances continuous learning and builds meaningful relationships for the purpose of improving teachers' practices.

It is expected that LCs enable teachers to express and explore ideas without fear of being judged or evaluated. The facilitators are the ones who are responsible to hear all the participants and to create fruitful discussions that lead to better performances.

### **The Significance of the Study**

This study is important because it explored how teachers' perceive the implementation of LCs in the Leadership and Teacher Development (LTD) program (2013-2014). It examined the impact or the power of learning circles on teachers' professional development and on improving and changing their instructional practices.

Equally, this study is important because it helps us recognize that leadership and teacher professional development and growth are interrelated. In the Palestinian context, administrators are the ones who decide what teachers need to know without paying attention to what teachers really want to learn and need to improve. This means that many programs are not always based on critical needs analysis. Therefore, in LCs, teachers have the opportunity of getting support and of gaining different experiences from colleagues through dialogues and fruitful discussions raised among them. LCs could be an opportunity for some teachers to change their practices and to influence not only their classrooms and their students, but also the school they work in as they are viewed the agents and the leaders of change.

Research has shown the importance of professional learning circles in improving teachers' performances (Peters, and Le Cornu, 2004). The trusting, the openness and the respectful relationships through the LCs create the positive atmosphere that encourages teachers to discuss and reflect on their own and their peers' practices. LCs are opportunities to practice being a critical friend in addition to receiving and giving reflective feedback.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine how teachers' perceive the implementation of learning circles in the LTD program. It also investigates the impact of learning circles on teachers' professional development and on improving instructional practices.

### **What seems to be the problem**

In-service teacher professional development is an ongoing process of acquiring new knowledge, experiences and skills that relate to the teaching profession. Palestinian teachers are always trying to be better, but the problem is that they do not have opportunities to pursue their professional development in a positive, rich, safe, respectful and supportive environment. Besides, in many cases their voices are not heard, and their needs are not addressed. In Palestine, like many other countries, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, the most common types of in-service teacher professional development programs are almost always based on workshops designed by administrators and implemented by the supervisors. Workshops are common international tools that are used professionally to develop teachers.

Garet, et al. (2001) defines workshops as — “a structured approach to professional development that occurs outside the teacher's own classroom. It generally involves a leader or leaders with special expertise and participants who attend sessions at scheduled times often after school, on the weekend, or during the summer (p. 920)”. Teacher training through workshops is criticized in the literature as less effective than the programs that are based on teachers' needs,

expectations and changing teacher classroom practices (Garet et al., 2001). Garet et al., (2001) explains that “this is because of the limited time assigned for these workshops and the lower level of participants’ engagement in such workshops. Sometimes these workshops are not planned according to teachers’ needs and almost always they are not based on everyday classroom practices (p. 920).”

Many problems and challenges occur in teaching and learning processes. These problems and challenges can be minimized through in-depth critical reflection, dialogues, discussions and presentations in LCs. Teachers have the opportunity to assess and reexamine their teaching beliefs and practices in these LCs and benefit from the experiences that they and other teachers have.

Teachers always claim that in-service training programs are not always effective because they are not connected to their real practices of teaching or they do not provide ongoing follow-up support. As well as, they are more theoretical than practical. Robinson (2008) asserts that “We have to recognize that most great learning happens in groups, that collaboration is the stuff of growth. If you atomize people and separate them and judge them separately, we form a kind of disjunction between them and their natural learning environment. And thirdly, it’s crucially about the culture of our institutions, the habits of institution and the habitats that they occupy” (p. 2). Creating a collaborative learning cultures in schools and engendering trust, are unquestionably the ways we lead to improved performance on a variety of measures (Robinson, et al, 2009).

### **Research Questions**

This study addresses the following main and sub questions:

1. How do English language teachers participating in the LTD program perceive the implementation of the LCs?
2. What is the impact of LCs on teachers’ professional development and on improving and changing their instructional practices?

#### **Sub Questions**

1. What is the major role of the facilitator in the LCs in the LTD program?
2. What are the objectives of LCs in the LTD program?
3. What are the expected outcomes of the LCs in the LTD program?
4. Do LCs provide real opportunities for the professional development and growth of teachers?
5. How can LCs improve teachers’ teaching practices?
6. What makes successful LCs?
- 7.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study is only restricted to teachers participating in the LTD program for the school year 2013-2014 either in Ramallah or Qabatya districts.

### **Literature Review**

LCs are defined as a place where a group of people come together to examine an issue or body of knowledge in which they are interested. After some initial planning, the group sets up a series of meetings with a specific [(set of)] goal(s) that the members of the group wish to accomplish through the meetings (Aksim, 2005, p. 20).



Others define LCs as series of meetings where teachers discuss, demonstrate, present, reflect, or report on readings and presentations. Teachers in the LCs share their knowledge and experiences, learn new information and apply and test new skills. These circles are learning networks that create successful knowledge communities (Katz and Earl, 2010).

Research asserts that LCs provide a rich, fruitful learning situation. Teaching and learning involve communication with different people. Teachers can't develop skills without a group of people, who can support, advice, inquire, criticize and offer appropriate alternatives. A learning circle gives essential feedback to teachers from colleagues who are working on the same context, the same body of skills and information, and whose suggestions on techniques and resources are essentially valuable (Chalmers and Keown, 2006).

LCs provide a supportive and shared leadership. This shared and supportive leadership provides opportunities for effective professional development. Teachers are engaged physically, cognitively and emotionally through activities such as problem solving, sharing and discussion, application and reflection. Supportive professional development supports the teacher motivation and commitment to learning and development (Hunzicker, 2011).

Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) emphasized that there are many benefits for teachers who participate in LCs. They reported that teachers feel more positive and secure about their profession. Collier (2011) made an interview with Hammond in which she asserted that when teachers collaborate with each other, they can better serve their students. However, teachers are not given enough time in their workdays.

Hammond continued in the interview to emphasize "those schools with such teacher communities or circles are better places because of the open-policy where teachers share information and exchange experiences. LCs are opportunities in which teachers can see each other engage in practice. They can reflect on their and other practices. They can solve common challenges."

LCs are seen as an effective way to support teachers and bring about the changes that are considered important for teaching in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Cooperation and collaboration are important skills that teachers need to develop in order to improve their instructional practices. The importance of communication skill is paramount in LCs.

LCs support teachers to critically examine their practices and the assumptions underlying them "Central to the vision is a recognition that, as professionals, teachers need to update their skills and knowledge continuously, not only in response to a changing world, but in response to new research and emerging knowledge about learning and teaching" (DET, 2005, p. 2). Being a teacher in the twenty first century is based on the assumption that teachers nowadays have to exert effort to continue to learn in order to foster students' right to learn. Teachers nowadays are seen as educational professionals and ongoing learners. Teachers need to build a culture of cooperation to enhance, modify, adopt and adapt different instructional practices.

In LCs, participants are engaged in conversations that foster deeper thinking. In these conversations teachers dialogue their own practices. Feldman (1999) argued that "conversations (dialogues) are a form of inquiry which enables people to work through the dilemmas, quandaries and dissonances that relate to their living and being in the world (p. 137)".

However, teachers face some challenges in these learning circles. Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth (2001) explained the challenges this way:

Forming a professional community requires teachers to engage in both intellectual and social work ..... new ways of thinking and reasoning collectively as well as new forms of



interacting interpersonally.....Learning from colleagues requires both a shift in perspective and the ability to listen hard to other adults, especially as these adults struggle to formulate thoughts in response to challenging intellectual content (p. 973).

In a learning circle, everyone is a teacher and a learner. Everyone has a voice to share experiences, challenges, success stories, to reflect and to gain new insights into problems and challenges. Professional development and building a culture of collaboration occur with supportive communities (Little, 2003) and (Creswell, 2008).

Teacher professional development must take place within a positive-supportive professional learning circle. When teachers are supported by a professional learning community they perform better. As researchers have explored, both the professional community and professional development are interrelated. We need to have quality training for our teachers but at the same time we need to encourage them to create their learning communities. Education has greater and greater demands placed on the teacher responsibility for on-going professional development. We as educators need to form professional communities and create a culture of collaboration for professional development.

### **Research Method and Data Collection**

The methods of qualitative data collection were used in this study. They included semi-structured interviews, observation and analysis of teacher participation and presentations of their assignments and their classroom practices. Data also included teachers' reflection. There were several sub-questions that this study set out to answer and explore in order to investigate in depth the main questions in this research. Sub questions were answered orally by teachers during the LCs and were sent to the teachers in Ramallah and Qabatya to be answered again through email. The data from the different resources were analyzed using common themes and patterns. The researcher indexed and categorized the data and began an ongoing data analyses process. During the analysis of the different categories, the researcher was able to identify clear themes and patterns in teachers' views towards the implementation of learning circles (LCs) and the impact of these circles on instructional practices and professional development.

### **Research Findings and Discussion**

In the first-sub question, participants were asked to identify **the role of the facilitator in LCs** in the LTD program. Participants revealed either through interviews or emails that the facilitator played an important role in helping teachers present successful implications and actions they practiced in their English language classrooms.

Their oral discussions and their emails revealed that the primary role of the facilitator was to make sure that discussion took place and that almost all teachers' voices were heard. The facilitator ensured teachers' participation and involvement in discussion that were raised during the LCs. Teachers respected, listened and reflected on each other practices, even though they sometimes had differences of opinion. Teachers felt safe and secure to express and to test their opinions and beliefs. They had the freedom to agree and disagree about different viewpoints in a supportive, respectful environment provided by the facilitator. For one of the teachers in Qabatya, the facilitator played a number of roles. "The facilitator is a helper who helps teachers understand what they miss or don't understand; a coordinator who sends and receives emails from teachers, a supplier who supplies teachers with methods, materials, information, announcements; an adviser who advises teachers to do the best, an expert who provides reliable

sources of techniques and skills, and finally he/ she is the one who helps teachers to accomplish the perfect assignment for each module.”

Teachers in the LTD program emphasized the importance of the facilitator role. Teachers, at the same time, pointed out that the facilitator should try more to ensure that all voices are heard and given equal opportunities in the discussion. Some teachers were more dominant than others. Teachers said, “They realized that maintaining a discussion or a conversation over a three-hour period, around themes, topics, or assignments discussed in face to face meetings could be quite a challenging process for facilitators, especially, leading LCs was a new experience for the facilitators.” Teachers suggested that the detailed agenda of the learning session should be sent in advance to the trainee through emails in order to enrich the discussion and the presentation. Teachers assured that the most productive sessions were when circles of viewpoints and opinions were raised.

However, there were very few contradictory views towards the role of the facilitator in the LCs. One participant from Qabatya district said “some facilitators were undereducated and were not aware of the importance of such LCs,” quoting his exact words. Another teacher from the same district also criticized “some facilitators tried to play the role of expert, but the fact that they should practice the role of being attentive, reflective listeners,” quoting her exact words.

In the second sub-question, participants were asked to pinpoint **the objectives of learning circles in the LTD program**. Teachers revealed that the purpose of the LCs in the LTD program were not clear at the beginning of the program but at later stages they realized that they were opportunities for them to explore ideas discussed in face to face sessions or implemented in their classrooms in cooperative learning situations in which teachers felt secure, safe, and supported. In LCs teachers were encouraged to take some intellectual risks and to examine some new ideas through action research. LCs in the LTD program were based on inquiry and rethinking teaching methods and techniques.

Teachers believed that the objective of LCs was to develop them professionally through professional activities and through their rich expertise. They pointed out that LCs were opportunities to discuss some instructional practices and to question their teaching performances based on the discussed issues in the face to face meetings.

From my observation to three learning circles held for nine hours, I noticed that teachers achieved the objectives of LCs. They were open to talking and to discussing issues that might help in improving their practices. They were open and honest about discussing their problems of practices and the challenges they face in their English language classrooms. Some teachers expressed through their emails that they benefited from the rich experience of other teachers coming from different schools as it enabled them to share different approaches for the purpose of meeting the needs of Palestinian students. A teacher from Ramallah wrote, “My participation in the learning circles contributed to a new understanding and stronger commitment to building the desired learning communities in our schools for a better future for the Palestinian students.”

Some teachers asserted in their reflections that the experience of LCs was valuable, and had added to their understanding of how they themselves could improve their own practices. Teachers realized that they were the only ones who could solve the challenges that they face because they understand their real context more than anybody else. However, LCs were opportunities to expand their knowledge and to learn some new techniques and strategies that might help them solve some of the challenges they used to face or encounter.

LCs were an opportunity to explore common areas of concerns among teachers with the purpose of finding new and effective ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As it

was stated by the teachers, LCs promoted personal and professional growth that led them to positive changes in their practices. For example, how to differentiate their instructions with large size classes and with multi-level students were concerns that were discussed during the face to face meetings and during the LCs. How to create a culture of thinking and make students thinking visible was also an issue that was discussed deeply in both the face to face sessions and in the learning circles. How to convince head teachers and supervisors with the new practices they have implemented or would like to implement were also discussed.

Some teachers' views about LCs were very positive. For example, a teacher from Ramallah district wrote, "LCs are like enrichment courses for us since teachers exchange their experiences. They are great opportunities for teachers to cooperate and benefit."

However, about 30 percent of the teachers had a negative perception towards LCs. To quote the exact words of a teacher from Qabatya "LCs were dedicated to discussing our implementation of the issues discussed in the face to face sessions but the real fact was that we mostly discussed things that we hadn't practiced or done, yet. We discussed things theoretically, without doing anything, or lying of doing things. We discussed the utopian students and schools that we perceive only in our imaginations."

The teacher continued, "English language teachers are jammed with school and social burdens, especially with the educational disorder we live in Palestine because of the occupation. Let us be realistic and down to earth. We face many difficulties that we can't do anything about."

In the third sub-question, teachers were also asked to restate **the expected outcomes of the learning circle in the LTD program**. Teachers noted that LCs in the LTD program helped them revisit new concepts that they encountered in the face to face sessions. Issues like, being reflective teachers, thinking as an assessor, creating professional development portfolios through action research, using authentic assessment, enhancing students' literacy skills, implementing thinking routines were some of the issues discussed in LCs. LCs helped teachers work together to develop their practices. For example, when discussing the instructional design models or theories of Wiggins and McTighe, it was not easy for English language teachers to fully comprehend this backward design without application. Accordingly, LCs were the appropriate context for teachers to discuss the method more and to apply on "English for Palestine" textbook.

The LCs provided teachers with the opportunity to exchange experiences, learn and share together both as critical friends and colleagues. LCs enhanced teachers' personal growth and professional development. Teachers emphasized that the ultimate benefit they have gained was from the rich experiences that some teachers have.

The most important outcome that teachers mentioned was that they tried to apply some new methods and techniques that might help their students learn better and achieve more. They were promoted to take risks and try new strategies that might help in improving students' learning.

In the fourth question, teachers were asked if **LCs provided significant opportunities for professional development of teachers**. Teachers in the LTD program showed themselves to be committed and caring for developing their instructional practices, with deep concerns for the Palestinian learners and for their achievements. Teachers noted that "unlike any other nation, Palestinians face difficulties and challenges that should be taken into consideration in planning and implementing new techniques and strategies." Palestinians' problems are always related to the conflict and the ongoing violence in Palestine, the lack of security, the socio-economic and educational difficulties. As a result, teachers in Palestine have greater responsibilities that they should take into consideration while designing and implementing their lessons.

English language teachers pointed out that face to face meetings were the stepping stones for the LCs meetings as they provided significant professional development opportunities to improve teachers' practices. Teachers reported that they wanted to know more about managing learning and teaching processes as well as to better understand the relationship between theory and real classroom practices.

A teacher from Ramallah district mentioned "LCs are a great opportunity for us as teachers. For me, students' involvement is a key in the teaching and learning process. I believe I have a problem in engaging students in my classes but with the LTD program and the LCs, it is getting better and students started to enjoy their English classes more and more. LCs are a great opportunity to help one another find solutions for some of the problems we encounter."

The key for their professional development in the LCs was the micro presentations that teachers implemented as a collegial professional development. These presentations were opportunities for all participants to analyze, reflect, adopt, adapt, and many others.

In the fifth question, teachers were asked **if LCs improve their classroom instructions**. Teachers stated that LCs created experiences for teachers to evaluate and improve or transform their teaching practices. Teachers pointed out that several effective practices were developed as a result of the LTD program and the LCs discussions. Some examples of improvements were provided by the teachers. Teachers stated that their classes used to be more teacher-centered rather than student-centered. However after the LTD program, and in spite of the large number of students in Palestinian classes, they have tried to apply activities that made students the center of their English language classes. They have used instructional strategies that enhance students' understanding.

Teachers revealed that they had started to construct performance assessment tasks based on real world goal, real world role, real world audience, real world situation, real products or performances and standards (GRASPS) (Wiggins and McTighe, 2005). Teachers asserted that they had provided multiple opportunities for their students to use English language skills and to receive constructive feedback that help them develop and improve. For example, teachers' training on the importance of working portfolios encouraged them to ask their students create their own portfolios. These portfolios were used as an authentic assessment tool in the classroom. Portfolios exhibited students' efforts, progress/ growth, and achievement. Students demonstrated their accomplishments and then get feedback from both their teachers and their peers.

Another example was launching the daily five routines (Boushey and Moser, 2006). The daily five program that LTD teachers implemented with their students was read to self, read to someone or read with someone (EKK: elbow to elbow, knee to knee, I read to you, you read to me), listen to reading, work on writing, and word work. Moreover, check for students' understanding was part of program.

Teachers reported that LCs were fruitful and successful. They enriched their experiences and helped them feel that they are better English language teachers. They realized the importance of changing their classroom environment by giving more responsibilities to their students. A teacher from Ramallah stated "We became more aware of the importance of giving our students more roles in our English Language classrooms."

Teachers suggested that it would be better if the program provided more training on teaching English listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Since, effective professional development should also include activities for developing the teaching of the foreign language skills. Teachers asserted that they need more training on how to make their students thinking more visible and how to help their students be more critical and creative.

Regarding the last question that was related to their recommendations for more **successful learning circles**, teachers stated that the more LCs are tied to teaching and learning activities that take place in the real English language classrooms, the better LCs will be. The more successful stories presented from the real difficult and complex Palestinian context, the more successful learning circles will be.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The main rationale for this research was to find out teachers' views towards LCs and to examine the impact of LCs on the teachers' professional development. The results of the study presented in the findings showed that LCs were one of the tools that encourage English language teachers to speak, listen and participate in problem-solving and decision-making regarding classroom practices.

LCs helped teachers observe, comment, reflect and experience their colleagues' practices, as well as their own. LCs helped teachers broaden their perspectives by considering the many viewpoints around them. Teachers have become more familiar with each other's practices, including the power of sharing experiences and reflection that impact their professional development as well as their teaching practices. Experiences were shared and developed through LCs in the LTD program.

From my observation and from teachers' responses either through the interviews or through their emails, it was obvious that LCs in the LTD program were a tool to develop teachers' instructional practices. They were a safe environment that allowed teachers to present, discuss, dialogue and reflect on the raised issues freely and to share different points of views with their colleagues. LCs were great opportunities to help one another in finding alternative solutions for some practical problems. Teachers during the LCs were given the opportunity to reflect critically on some classroom practices and above all to learn from the experiences of other teachers teaching in different schools but nearly in the same context.

LCs had impact on improving and changing some of the classroom instructions that led/ lead to better professional development. An LTD participant from Ramallah said "Through exchanging personal experiences, many classroom performances have changed. Now we try to increase the role of the students, and we focus more on students' needs and differences."

A teacher from Qabatya expatiated, "Before the LTD, I was nothing rather than a traditional teacher. My preparation was simple and didn't cover the whole unit as I am doing today. Today I focus more on the big ideas and the essential questions in the unit. I was/ am always trying to be the best. I was always looking for modern and new methods to motivate and encourage my students be better learners. Now, I am someone who has a holy goal in the process of teaching. I have to be a better ongoing learner to educate my students. Face to face meetings and LCs were valuable opportunities for us to maintain a high level of quality teaching and learning."

Teachers realized that professional development and leadership are intertwined. They recognized that to lead means to engage in LCs for the purpose of improving and developing classroom practices. Teachers came together to share some experiences and to overcome some challenges. LCs do create a learning experience where teachers are able to improve their instructional practices and to construct knowledge for themselves and for their colleagues. LCs improve teachers' communication skills and build confidence to cultivate a culture of collaboration and teamwork. Through LCs, teachers are in the inquiry circles that help them professionally develop and be better English language teachers.



### Recommendation

The following recommendations are based on the views that English language teachers had towards the implementation of LCs in the LTD program and its impact on their professional development.

English language teachers showed their positive attitudes towards learning circles to the extent that they have willingness to recommend it to other colleagues. The awareness of the importance of the LCs should be promoted in all Palestinian schools. Based on the experiences that teachers had in the LTD program, they recommended that the issues or the topics of LCs discussion should be more focused in order to help teachers gain better understating. They also recommended that the facilitator should try more to encourage the participants to think differently about the topic of discussion, and this could be achieved by better ways of questioning.

Administrators need to spare enough time for teachers to build their learning communities at school level. It is recommended to transform a school organization into a learning community where teachers collaboratively and continually conduct open-reflective dialogues about their students and their teaching and learning processes. The learning community ought to be based on continuous inquiry and continuous improvement goals.

Teachers recommended the use of the facebook page as a virtual learning circle in which teachers can share and participate in fruitful discussions that might lead to professional development. They suggested the facebook page as a meaningful and feasible online professional learning community as the page might promote a collaborative learning culture that bring professionals together to learn.

Finally, more studies are recommended to examine the impact of learning circles on students' achievement.

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## Expectances and Outcomes of an Extensive Reading Programme Carried out among University Students

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### Abstract

Intensive reading courses that teach reading strategies and skills may not adequately equip students or produce behavioural changes required for academic studies. An extensive reading programme (ER) was therefore introduced as an adjunct, to support the goals of a reading for academic purposes course. This paper reports on the language learning and literacy skills expectances and outcomes that second year undergraduate students self-assessed as having accomplished as they participated in the ER. Before-and-after (ER) study design was employed, and self-perception questionnaires were administered to generate data that were subjected to descriptive analysis. High percentages of outcome expectations suggest that the students felt that their needs could be met by the ER, believing that it would influence relevant factors in their language learning and literacy skills improvement. Although the ER did not completely meet student expectation levels, it produced very impressive outcomes that recommend ER as a reliable support for reading and language improvement among learners of English as a second language in similar contexts as Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Extensive reading, academic reading, literacy skills, ESL, expectancy-value theory

**Introduction**

Reading extensively improves reading comprehension, and those who read voluntarily tend to perform better academically (Commeyras & Inyega, 2007) than those who do not. Studies (Day, 2011) reveal that learners in extensive reading (ER) programmes cultivate a love for reading, develop multi-dimensionally in their reading abilities, as well as grow in language use. ER helps learners to increase reading speed and fluency (Taguchi, Takayasu-Maass & Gorsuch, 2004). Moreover, McKenna (2001) observes that good and poor readers show more distinct difference in attitude towards recreational reading than attitudes towards academic reading. These claims advised the inclusion of an extensive reading programme as a supplement to a regular Reading for Academic Purposes course to afford a set of second year undergraduate students an opportunity to improve their language and literacy skills meaningfully. It was also hoped that students' experience in the exercise could cure students' apathy towards reading, and positively affect their reading attitudes and motivation as they improved on their competences.

This article reports on language learning and literacy skills improvement expectations and outcomes as assessed by the participants themselves. The study is exploratory rather than experimental. No tests were conducted to find out students' literacy or language competence levels before or after the reading exercise. Further, students were their own judges of what they benefitted from the extensive reading programme. Before-and-after programme self-perception questionnaires were used to elicit students' assessment of gains derived from participating in extensive reading programme activities.

**Literature review**

The practicality of ER in language learning observed over the years since 1980 (Furr, 2011) could not be ignored, particularly because English learners develop diverse domains of their language competence by participating in literature/reading circles. This review highlights the relevance of ER in improving language skills proficiency, reading in particular. And because the ER programme on which this study is based invited participants to anticipate the outcome of the exercise, works on expectancy-value theory in reading are briefly reviewed.

***Extensive reading and language skills development***

ER programmes engender positive attitude towards English language learning and motivate learners to indulge in tasks that would help them become more proficient in the language. In both ESL and EFL situations, ER is employed to enhance global language development or to focus on particular aspects of learning, reading, language or communicative competence improvement, particularly vocabulary acquisition. Learners improve their language proficiency the more they interact in the language in different media and modes. Extensive reading exposes learners to various linguistic elements and language in use; so that they are able to learn words and structural rules (Tran, 2006).

Words encode concepts and semantic propositions (Toledo & Salager-Meyer, 2009). Therefore, vocabulary knowledge is considered a determining factor in L2 reading and academic performance (August, Carlo, Lively, McLaughlin & Snow, 2006). A language user requires a large vocabulary size to interact in a language, especially in reading – Nations and Hirsh (1992) estimate that a 97-98% vocabulary coverage is required for making meaning from texts. ER programmes create avenues for learners to become conversant with sight and general vocabularies (Day, 2011) as they encounter familiar words over and over in text. Graded reading materials provide a cushion for learning new words in familiar language context. The Word

Detective role in literature circles of ER programmes further focuses learner-reader attention on learning meanings of new words.

Beyond words, grammatical elements, idioms, cohesion devices (Tran, 2006) guide a reader in the negotiation of meaning (Nassaji, 2011). If learners need to encounter new words ten to twenty times to really acquire them, they should see grammatical rules in use for thousands of times to master them (ERF, 2011). Extensive and pleasurable reading not only exposes learners to words, but also deepens their understanding of how language works. They acquire implicit knowledge of discourse structures (Nassaji, 2011), the formal features and conventions of writing (Dupuy, 2006), as they read whole texts.

Integration of all language skills in the process is an appealing aspect of ER. It therefore supports growth in literacy and oracy skills, as well as fluency and accuracy in language use, as learners interact with the language in diverse modes and media when they read alone and when they participate in group discussions. ER gives learners the confidence to speak the language (Earnst-Slavit, Carrison and Speisman-Laughlin, 2009) by providing them with a message and giving them the urge to speak in group discussion (Fredricks, 2012). Earnst-Slavit et al. believe that confidence gained in communicating in English within the classroom in literature circles could encourage English language learners (ELLs) to use the language outside the classroom. Indeed Blanton, Pilonieta and Wood (2007, p. 230) adduce that “discussion is the primary way that reading knowledge, meanings, concepts, interpretations, and understandings are passed around and learned.” Thus, ER ensures wholesome language experience in the learning of the English language.

Literacy circles is also employed for scaffolding reading strategies that students could apply in deconstructing content area texts. Blanton et al. (2007) found that this way of instruction benefitted all categories of learners (weak and strong). Further, such circles helped to integrate disengaged and frustrated adolescent readers and writers in the learning process (Casey, 2008).

The observed outcomes of ER programme over the years and across spectrum of learners have recommended its adoption by learning and national institutions. According to The Korean Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF, 2011), ER compliments intensive reading and aids reading fluency by consolidating and raising awareness of language elements taught under the latter. In line with this assertion, Mahmood (2011) found that ER changed students’ writing and increased their desire to read when it was adopted by The Ministry of Education in Bahrain to support observed language needs of learners. Additional effects observed were changes in personality – such as the cultivation of confidence and positive attitudes towards learning. Prentice (2011) reported similar findings about ER outcomes in Jordan.

### ***Expectancy-value theory of reading motivation***

The review so far, largely, has concentrated on language learners. The students in this study, on the other hand, already speak and learn in the English language. However, it has been observed over the years that such students lack adequate control of the language and therefore do not attain proficiency in English language skills to an extent commensurate with their level of education after graduation from the university. Moreover, experience shows that many students find it difficult to read any kind of books during their studies. Thus, it was hoped that the ER programme could create or increase the motivation to read in general, and to read academic books in particular among the students. Since an attempt was made in the study to measure the impact of the ER on motivation to read, a brief review on motivation and related concepts is carried out here.

Motivation is a critical factor in reading, because it determines whether an individual will take action or not (McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence & Jang, 2012), as well as the extent to which reading tasks are engaged. The “intensity of motivation is determined jointly by the learner’s expectancy for success and by the incentive value of the goal” (Hootstein, 1994, p. 475). “By facilitating the persistence and intensity of performing activities” involved in reading, motivation increases reading competence (Schiefele, Schaffnern, Moller & Wigfield, 2012, p. 437). The amount and breath of one’s reading impact reading competence, since the more one reads the better one becomes. It follows that students with low-level reading motivation may fail to develop their reading strategies and sub-skills optimally. On the other hand, if students with poor reading competence find materials suited for their level difficult to comprehend, this could constitute a de-motivating factor to reading. Thus, perceived reading self-efficacy and value or belief about the outcomes of reading could influence reading attitudes (McKenna 2001), “level of motivation, aspiration, and academic achievement” (Martinez, Kock & Cass 2011, p. 352) among students.

Outcome expectation (Schiefele et al., 2012) or outcome expectancies (Barkley 2006) result from beliefs that a given behaviour will produce desired outcomes. Barkley posits that the outcome for those who perceive that the completion of a task is very important is often very different from that of those who attempt the task with low outcome expectancy. By implication, students would indulge in reading and read engagingly only if they believe that the task is of any relevance to them. This proposition on an affect issue presupposes that the student has, to a large extent, control of the cognitive aspect of reading competence. However, where reading competence is poor, other attributes of reading could also be low.

Having been educated in environments that offer very little in [non-academic] literacy activities and book availability, most individuals may fail to develop characteristics of literacy suited to reading at tertiary education level or for growth in different dimensions of reading. There are indications that many university students, having undergone elhi education with suboptimal exposure to prints and reading, failed to cultivate enough reading motivation, positive attitude towards reading or capacity for information-seeking and self-learning. Therefore, the term “struggling readers” in the Nigerian context may apply to a majority who have to read materials otherwise suited to their education level but which are not within their reading ability. This assertion is made bearing in mind that reading for comprehension is different from reading to pass examinations. Reading in general has become a chore to be avoided, or given minimal effort through rote-learning in order to pass examinations, rather than to learn in genuine ways. If students are to read with comprehension, they need support to cultivate reading strategies and sub-skills, habits, motivation and a positive attitude towards reading, even at university.

Much as the students in the ER programme were expected to enjoy their texts, the concern of this paper is the concurrent language learning and language skills improvement that students were to derive from ER related literacy activities. If a high value was placed on it, the more relevant the ER exercise would be in improving different dimensions of their reading experience and growth as well. Heath and Bryant (2000, p. 363) posit that the expectancy-value theory implies that “people orient themselves to the world according to their expectations (beliefs) and evaluations.” Consequently, in line with the use and gratification theory, the authors argue that “the products of belief (expectations) and evaluation influence the seeking of gratifications, which in turn influence media consumption” (p. 363). One would expect that students’ assessment of ongoing



literacy activities as gratifying (outcomes), or otherwise, would influence perception, attitude and behavioural patterns about reading, and therefore the extent of engagement with future tasks at different points in the ER programme. This would ultimately determine outcome produced.

Students were expected to grow in various dimensions of reading, in both cognitive and affective areas during the ER exercise. It was hoped that they would pick up reading sub-skills and strategies as well as find reading and information gaining pleasurable. This study investigates how much they identified with the benefits of ER (expectation) and the gains that they made (outcomes) ultimately. Did they grow in these areas of language and literacy competence that past studies (Day, 2011, p. 14) associated with ER: vocabulary range and knowledge, writing skills, positive motivation and attitudes towards reading, speaking proficiency, listening proficiency and grammar?

### **Methodology**

In this non-experimental classroom research, a before-and-after design was adopted and questionnaires were administered to second year undergraduate students that participated in an extensive reading programme (ER). ER was introduced for practice and as a supplement to a reading for academic purposes course; as a means of reading competence improvement rather than as a research project. Thus, students were not grouped into experimental and control groups, but treated as a whole group. The study became necessary to verify the lecturer's assumptions about students' reading attributes, on the one hand, and on the other, the efficacy of an ER programme in helping students develop/improve cognitive and affective aspects of language and literacy skills. It turned out that some students were already aware that they needed support to improve relevant skills beyond what the core-course, being theoretical, could afford them.

In addition to what teachers think about students' performance, their view of themselves is important in their growth. Specifically, the ER programme could have a long-lasting impact, and in fact become a life-changing experience for some, if students themselves assess the literacy activities they participated in as instrumental in their growth. Further, considering that students' composite growth, academic and language competence, would derive from input from their diverse curriculums and extra-curricular activities, they, rather than tests, were considered the best judges of the benefits they gained from the ER exercise. Thus, a pre-ER questionnaire was administered to explore the expectancy-value beliefs that they brought into the reading programme. The post-ER questionnaire, which was similar to the pre-ER questionnaire, gave the students the opportunity to evaluate what they had actually gained. It seems to me that students became more aware of what they could gain from ER when they completed the pre-ER questionnaire, and this could have activated their task value beliefs (Schiefele et al., 2012) on relevant language and literacy skills at the outset. This in a way made them their own observers, implicitly, regulating and monitoring their own progress (Klingner & Edwards, 2006), which they were able to evaluate in the post-ER questionnaire.

Under the ER programme, each of 96 students read three-four books (page range: 110–299) out of ten titles selected off bookshop shelves by class representatives. At the beginning, each student purchased the book that fell to their group, and after each round of reading, books were reassigned/rotated. The reason students had limited choice, unlike in typical ER practice (Day, 2011, Furr, 2011), was the absence of a relevant library. Further, the number of books had to be limited to what could be taken early in the semester, since the ER was an extra activity that did not attract academic credit in itself.



The students did their best to read books assigned them (and were able to evaluate different writing and publishing elements). Since they had limited time to read, and needed to learn to apply different reading sub-skills, they were asked to read as fast as possible and target general understanding of a book. After the period assigned for reading each selection, the class met at the same hour to discuss respective books in pre-arranged groups. Each person served an earlier assigned role of Team Leader (e.g., prepared general questions about the story), Word Detective (picked 10 new words and explains their meaning in context to group), Connector (connected story world with real life experience), Summariser, Passage Picker (presented important passages in story), or Culture Collector (optional – compared culture in story with own culture). The students embraced the challenging introduction, and enjoyed a sense of control as they discussed their reading in groups with little or no interference from their lecturer.

The “before” or pre-ER questionnaire was administered to ascertain students’ perception of outcome expectancies prior to their ER experience; and the “after” or post-ER questionnaire elicited outcomes produced. Both questionnaires were similar, differing only in the use of tense – while the pre-ER used future tense to express expectation (e.g. [Prefix: “Right now I know that the reading programme will...” – “It will enhance my writing skill.”]), the post-ER used past tense to express achievement (e.g. “It enhanced my writing skill.”). The pre-ER anticipations constitute students’ expectations or outcome expectancies (also expectancy-value beliefs) of the ER and the post-ER self-assessment indicate the outcomes produced.

The relevant section of the questionnaires had 12 items with five Likert-scaled options:

- Certainly not                      *Low*
- Not so sure
- Don’t know
- Sure
- Very sure                              *High*

Students indicated in the pre-ER questionnaire how certain they were that the ER would bring improvement in their language and literacy skills, while in the post-ER questionnaire they assessed the extent they perceived that they benefitted from the ER. In addition, an open-ended question in both instruments invited students to comment freely on the exercise.

There was an (unexpected) interval of three months between the two questionnaires occasioned by an unexpected extension of the semester following a sudden shut down of the university after student demonstration. This, nonetheless, did not affect the study, but rather created opportunity for examining the impact of the ER exercise on students’ reading behaviour, for example, an observed increase in voluntary reading. The study questionnaires were administered during regular class hours under the supervision of the lecturer. In both cases, students were not informed before hand that a questionnaire would be administered to them.

The findings of the study are presented using these research questions as a guide:

1. How did students accept suggested outcome expectancies?
2. To what extent did the extensive reading exercise influence language and literacy skills development among students?
3. How do outcomes produced compare with outcome expectancies?
4. What is the relationship between expectancy-value motivationof, and outcome produced by, the extensive reading exercise?

### Discussion of findings

Contrary to expectation, students embraced a novel idea, the introduction of an extensive reading programme as an adjunct to a regular course, with very high expectations, anticipating that it would have positive impact on their language learning and literacy skills. Perhaps a weekend reading of their first text, before the administration of the pre-ER questionnaire, inspired their response. Below is a thematic summary of students' initial comments in the pre-ER questionnaire:

- a. Excitement: all 93 students in the study, but one (who complained that ER would take attention away from other academic work) expressed their excitement with this innovative addition
- b. Confessions of reading weaknesses, e.g. apathy towards reading
- c. Expected benefits
- d. Recommendations that ER be introduced at all university levels (in fact, every educational institution in the country).

Theme (c) is relevant in the examination of the expectation that students brought to the ER exercise, and is expatiated on in the discussion of the first research question.

#### *Students' acceptance of suggested outcome expectancies*

The value that students placed on the ER exercise determined how much they exerted themselves in completing tasks (Barkley, 2006, Schiefele et al., 2012). Their response reveals the extent of involvement and yields a basis (or control) for evaluating the influence of ER on skills development. It establishes that a behaviour, reading, that could produce an effect, growth in language and literacy skills, took place. Table 1 shows that the majority of the class were either "sure" or "very sure" that the ER exercise would support their needs in language proficiency development.

**Table 1. Percentage of students indicating certainty that ER would impact their language and literacy skills (N=93)**

Language/literacy skill	Expectation <i>ER programme will</i>	Sure + Very sure
LANGUAGE LEARNING	help me to increase my vocabulary	92.0
	I will gain better knowledge of grammar	87.0
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCIES	improve my language proficiency	95.6
	make it easier to understand lectures (Listening)	59.4
	give me ideas to talk about with my friends (Speaking)	83.7
	enhance my writing skill	70.7
READING	improve my reading skill generally	91.3
	have positive impact on my reading	93.4
	help me increase my reading speed	84.7

	improve academic reading skill	83.3
AFFECT	help me overcome my dislike for reading	47.2
	I will be motivated to read more	80.2

Almost all the suggested outcome-expectancies were relevant to the majority of the class. It is noteworthy that about one half of the class (47.2%) were not favourably disposed to reading prior to the ER and hoped to achieve a behavioural change. Again, quite a large number of the students believed that ER could improve listening to lecture (59.4%). Further, free comments made by students in the questionnaire corroborate their desire to improve on the above features of language learning. Table 2 shows a summary of their comments.

**Table 2. Thematic analysis of students' comments on expected benefits of ER**

Theme	Frequency (N=75)	<sup>1</sup> Percentage (of N)	Need assessment
Reading skills			Reading competence improvement needs = 58.7%
Skills improvement	23	30.6	
Application of skills taught in class	6	8.0	
Extensive/Recreational reading	19	25.2	
Intensive reading	5	6.6	
Increase comprehension	2	2.6	
Motivate reading	13	17.3	Language learning needs = 32.0%
Language proficiency	6	8.0	
Vocabulary development	18	24.0	Other = 9.3%
World view expansion	7	9.3	
<i>Total</i>	97	100.0	

<sup>1</sup>Note: The table represents only a summary of descriptive data and does not suggest agreement or disagreement. *Adapted from* Christopher (2012, p. 118)

In having the students predict what they could gain from the ER, the pre-ER questionnaire helped to engage them in the exercise. The data presented above suggest that the students were (or became) aware of their needs in language learning and acquisition of reading competence. Importantly, they wanted their problems solved. The post-ER questionnaire allowed the students to engage in a self-assessment of changes experienced in their areas of need.

***Assessing language and literacy skills improvement outcomes produced by ER***

Table 3 reveals that students benefitted from ER in different domains of reading and language competence improvement.

**Table 3. Self-assessed outcomes produced by ER (N = 93)**

	Sure + very sure of positive impact (%)	Class mean (Max = 5)	Index for category
Language learning	80.7	3.88	78.4% Mean = 3.9

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grammar</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> </ul>	76.0	3.89	
Language proficiencies			70.2% Mean = 3.7
Improve language proficiency	80.6	3.83	
Listening	43.0	3.19	
Speaking	86.1	4.10	
Writing	54.8	3.40	
Reading	87.1	3.95	
Reading			79.9% Mean = 3.9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading skill</li> </ul>	90.3	4.10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading speed</li> </ul>	72.1	3.89	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic reading</li> </ul>	77.4	3.76	
Affect (reading)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude</li> </ul>	47.0*	3.52	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation</li> </ul>	72.0	3.66	

\*Not applicable = 33.3%. Some students did seem to have negative attitude towards reading prior to the ER.

Growth in reading competence (79.9%) shows the highest gains. It is particularly impressive that the majority (77.1%) of the students found extensive reading useful in the improvement of their academic reading. For one, this was the major goal of the supplementary ER exercise. Second, most Nigerian learners' attention is usually focused on reading academic materials exclusively for literacy growth.

A pre-ER comment by one of the students had predicted that ER would make this impact:

- “The extensive reading programme is a good programme which I like because it will help me improve my academic reading skills and the usage of language.”

(Christopher, 2012, p. 122) [pre-ER]

Other comments by students give more insight on how ER supported academic reading:

- “And when a student is interested in reading anything readable, then learning becomes easier” [post-ER]
- “Any time I am reading other courses and I feel stuffed up, I just pick up my reader and go through a few pages. By the time I finish with this I'm able to read better and assimilate easier” (Christopher, 2012, p. 122) [pre-ER]

Obviously, reading extensively increases reading comprehension (Commeyras & Inyega, 2007, Schiefele et al., 2012). Moreover, ER motivated learners (72%) to read (e.g. Fredricks, 2012, Mahmood, 2011), and enabled 47% of the class to overcome their dislike of reading.

Again, the ER was salutary in language learning (78.4%), enabling most of the students to become more conversant with the grammar of the language (80.7%) and to extend their vocabulary (76%). By increasing meaningful interactions in the language, while reading and at literacy circles, the ER exercise impacted on growth in language skills proficiency, with Speaking (having ideas to talk about with friends) showing more gains (86.1%) than Listening (to lecture, 43%). The next section indicates the extent to which the outcomes produced compare with the expectancies.

***Comparing outcomes produced with outcome expectancies***

Other than “Speaking,” which shows a percentage outcome produced (86.1%) higher than the outcome expectancy (83.7%), the ER exercise did not meet the class expectation fully. Nonetheless, when the level of success is evaluated against targets, the picture looks impressive. Table 5 shows the level of achievement (percentage) of students’ expectations from the ER.

**Table 5. Percentage achievement of ER outcome expectations vs outcomes produced of ER (Percentages)**

	Sure + very sure of positive impact of ER (%)		Percentage achievement
	Pre-ER	Post-ER	
Language learning			
• Grammar	87.0	80.7	92.8
• Vocabulary	92.2	76.0	82.4
Language proficiencies			
Improve language proficiency	95.6	80.6	84.3
Listening	59.4	43.0	72.4
Speaking	83.7	86.1	102.9
Writing	70.7	54.8	77.5
Reading	91.3	87.1	95.4
Reading skill	93.4	90.3	96.7
Reading speed	84.7	72.1	85.1
Academic reading	83.3	77.4	92.9
Affect (reading)			
• Attitude	47.2	43.0*	91.1
• Motivation	80.2	72.0	89.8

\*Not applicable: pre-ER = 37%; post-ER = 33.3%

The results in Table 5 indicate that the ER exercise significantly influenced improvement in language learning and literacy skills. Further computations reveal the percentages of students that noticed the impact of ER on various aspects of language and reading competences as:

- Language learning = 87.4%
- Language skills proficiency = 87.7%
- Reading skills growth = 91.7%
- Affect improvement = 91.1%

The findings imply that students’ overall performance in reading comprehension and academic achievement should improve as they become better readers and writers.

***Relation between expectancy-value motivation and outcome produced***

People with high expectancy-value beliefs tend to benefit more from a programme of activities than those with low values, because they are usually better prepared to confront and complete tasks (Barkley, 2006, Bandura, 1997, Zimmerman, 1997). However, experience during ER

activities may contribute to the affect domain positively, leading to those with low self-efficacy and motivation at the outset to produce desired results.

To explore a possible relationship between the value (outcome expectancies) that the students placed on the ER exercise and outcomes produced, the post-ER self-assessment in Reading and Writing skills for the students with high expectation at the beginning of the exercise were analysed. Of 84 students that had high expectation on reading improvement, 72 or 85.7% attained a high outcome, while in writing only 61.5% indicated attaining a high outcome.

The above confirmation of the importance of self-efficacy – narrowly operationalised here as students expectation to achieve good outcome – notwithstanding, further analysis indicate that those students with low expectation values did not necessarily achieve low outcome. Tables 6 and 7 show the dynamics in response for the entire group.

**Table 6. Cross-tabulation of expectation (Pre-ER in March) & outcome (Post-ER in June) of ER impact on Reading skill**

Period	Reading programme improved general reading skill (June)			
		Not so sure + Don't know	Sure + Very sure	Total
Reading programme will improve general reading skill (March)	Not so sure + Don't know	0	8	8
	Sure + Very sure	12	72	84
	Total	12	80	92

Table 6 shows that all eight (8) students who did not expect ER to make impact on their general reading skill found that it did, but 12 with high expectation did not find ER helpful in improving that skill. Nonetheless, these constitute only 14% of the 84 students who were positive that ER would influence their growth in general reading skill. A similar pattern occurred in writing skill improvement for both the Low and High groups as Table 7 indicates.

**Table 7. ER impact on Writing skill: Cross-tabulation of expectation (Pre-ER = March) & outcome (Post-ER = June)**

Period	Reading programme improved writing skill (June)			
		Not so sure + Don't know	Sure + Very sure	Total
Reading programme will improve writing skill (March)	Not so sure + Don't know	17	10 (58.8%)	27 (100%)
	Sure + Very sure	25 (38.5%)	40	65 (100%)
	Total	42	50	92

Table 7 shows that 10 out of 17 students who did not expect ER to have a positive impact perceived that they achieved some growth in their writing skills, while 40 out of 65 who expected positive impact made expected gains. The less impressive outcome (when compared with that of Reading skill) may be attributed to a longer time required to observe the impact that



extensive reading is bound to make on writing (Dupuy, 2006), particularly for students who may have failed to use writing as an integral part of their group contribution.

Taken together, these findings suggests that where low expectancy-value is observed gains could still be recorded, and that high expectancy-value among learners would not on its own ensure the achievement of expected outcome without external motivating input by a facilitator or other factors. Again, low self-efficacy or expectancy-value may not preclude a determination to engage and complete a task.

The motivation that students bring to a task or cultivate as they undertake series of activities could make a difference. Although this study did not specifically elicit students' motivation level at the outset of the ER exercise, their pre-ER expectation that the programme would motivate them to read more is taken as motivation to accomplish outcomes. The influence that this had on outcome produced is assessed by cross-tabulating post-ER Vocabulary increase and Academic reading improvement achieved with pre-ER motivation (as explained above).

Almost all the participants (94.6% in March and 96.6% in June) had indicated that they wished to acquire more vocabulary so they could use more words in their communication. This therefore seems an important aspect of language learning and reading to the students. At the beginning of the ER exercise, 92.2% believed that they would increase their vocabulary, but at the end of the exercise, 76% claimed that they made substantial increase. Table 8 shows the relation between motivation levels and perception of success in vocabulary increase.

**Table 8. Relation between anticipated ER influence on motivation (to read) and vocabulary acquisition outcome**

Period	ER helped to increase vocabulary (June)			Total
		Not so sure + Don't know	Sure + Very sure	
ER will increase motivation to read (March)	Not so sure + Don't know	3	15	18
	Sure + Very sure	18	55	73
	Total	21	70	91

The table shows that a convergence (worked out as 63.7%) occurs were three students neither expected to be motivated nor made gains in vocabulary acquisition, and 55 of those who expected to be motivated made expected gains. On the other hand, 15 (83.3%) out of 18 students who were not sure that the ER exercise would increase their motivation to read (March) made gains in vocabulary acquisition, whereas 18 (24.7%) who believed they would be motivated did not make the required gains. Thus, although the relation between high motivation level and language learning (vocabulary acquisition) is significant – 75% achievement of expectation – the results show that those with low motivation level also made gains. A similar outcome obtains in Academic reading skill.

**Table 9. Relation between anticipated ER influences on motivation to read and Academic reading skills outcome**

Period	ER improved academic reading skill (June)			
		Not so sure + Don't know	Sure + Very sure	Total
ER will increase motivation to read (March)	Not so sure + Don't know	7	11	18
	Sure + Very sure	18	54	71
	Total	25	65	90

Table 9 shows that students' expectation about ER and increase in motivation to read converged with Academic reading skills improvement achieved to a large extent (67.8% or 7 + 54). The difference is accounted for by 11 (12.2%) students who did not think they would be motivated to read, but experienced improvement, and 18 (20%) with an inverse relation in anticipation and realisation. It is noteworthy that 61% of those with low motivation anticipation (i.e. 11 out of 18) achieved academic reading improvement, while 24.4% of those with high motivation failed to experience academic reading improvement (or perceived that they did not).

These readings indicate that while students with low (intrinsic) motivation may actually take necessary actions, those highly intrinsically motivated at the outset of a programme may also require external motivation; or, that other factors could limit task performance and gains. Besides, other factors, such as a healthy scepticism at the outset of a programme, may account for low motivation expectation/score at the outset of an intervention.

### Conclusion

Many factors were at play during the execution of the ER, for example, the lecturer could not facilitate the programme as effectively as she had intended due to other duties. An unexpected semester break interrupted the fourth rotation of books. On the part of the students, academic assignments may have limited the extent to which they could read recreational texts for optimal participation in group discussions. Expectedly, the exercise would have been more tedious for students that were reading at low efficient level (over 60% assessed their reading effectiveness at or below average). Nonetheless, the results are very encouraging and show that ER is a welcome intervention in Nigerian learning situation. Although the outcome produced did not match (unanticipated) high expectations with which students embraced a modest extensive reading programme, the goal of the ER exercise was achieved, and ER is confirmed a veritable instrument for improving language and literacy competences.

The study findings reveal that the ER programme compensated for a low-print environment and mitigated apathy towards reading. It positively influenced reading attitude and motivation and improved language and literacy skills: fluency and accuracy. Thus, the study provides further evidence of the benefits of ER in second language learning situations. ER is relevant in higher education, and Nigerian students will benefit tremendously from ER programmes. ER is salutary to creating active readers, and reduces apathy towards reading when students participate in reading circles.

The administration of a pre-ER questionnaire may have raised students' consciousness on possible gains from the exercise. The expression of their expectation, quantitatively and qualitatively, may have helped the learners to concentrate on identified areas of need. Expectedly, ER increased language in-take, autonomy in language learning as well as collaborative learning. Observed behavioural changes among students indicate that they would carry over new understanding about reading beyond the programme period into academic studies and recreational reading. Since students' expectations were met, they should more readily indulge in independent extensive reading, and find confronting academic texts less daunting than was the case hitherto.

In confirming the expectancy-value theory, that individuals with outcome expectations would persistently complete tasks, the study also revealed that those who could have been adjudged as not possessing this prior energy also obtained good outcome, suggesting that it was not necessarily absent from the outset. It could also be that gratifications (outcomes) observed as students participated in the ER exercise elicited appropriate behaviours conducive to achieving required outcomes (uses and gratification theory). Again, the importance of collaborative learning in motivating learners cannot be ignored.

The gains of the ER, notwithstanding, questions abound. If students were aware that reading would improve their reading competence and language proficiency (pre-ER response), why did they not seek out materials to read? Many excuses could be advanced, such as a socio-cultural environment that does not support voluntary reading, a culture of reading for examination purposes exclusively, poor print environment, little or no literacy activities requiring reading, apparent "institutionalisation" of a no-reading culture (readers are often ridiculed) and poor foundation in reading development at lower educational levels. These factors may prove more significant reading deterrents than the incursion of the Internet and social media, which are often blamed for literacy failures that were already prevalent in the system before their advent. Reading and literacy improvement will take place when all factors in the reading environment are taken into consideration and reading materials and activities are readily available to the ordinary child/person.

#### **About the Author:**

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## **Eleventh Grade Comprehension Questions in a Palestinian Context: A Textbook Analysis of Linguistic Phrases**

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### **Abstract**

Recognizing the importance of the comprehension questions in EFL, the study aims to analytically describe comprehension questions in English for Palestine Eleventh Grade English Textbook to reveal their compatibility with Barrett's five higher thinking skills levels, the linguistic equivalence of the 281 questions, and higher thinking questions compatibility with the English for the Palestinian Ministry of Education's syllabus. The analysis revealed that there are real discrepancies between the levels of higher thinking skills levels of questions in students' textbook and the syllabus and that the linguistic and that the linguistics phrases were either under or over used.

**Key words:** EFL reading comprehension , EFL reading comprehension questions, higher thinking skills, Barrett reading comprehension taxonomy



## Introduction

The pre reading, while reading and post-reading questions in schools Palestinian English textbooks constitutes the major block of questions used in the classroom followed by oral questions from teachers directed to students. However, not all textbook authors assure a fair distribution of these questions according to the higher thinking skills level and a fair distribution of their linguistic phrases. Their main concern is rather to write questions which cover the passages in textbooks regardless of their level and their linguistic phrases. Therefore, an analysis of the linguistic equivalents of these questions is necessary to make sure the textbooks are delivering on their premises. Many have proposed taxonomies for comprehension questions and their linguistic equivalents which integrate reading comprehension and higher thinking skills which help to make these taxonomies function as standards in the evaluation of these questions. Examples of these taxonomies are suggested by: Gray, Herber, Peason & Jonhson, Raphaer Bloom and Barrett (1997) as cited in Sunggingwati, 2003). The researcher used Barrett's taxonomy to analyze 281 reading comprehension questions in Palestine's the 11<sup>th</sup> grade English textbook to identify the most and least frequent linguistic phrases. The linguistic equivalence of each question was also examined to find out the distribution of the questions over the five higher thinking categories according to Barrett's Taxonomy. Another objective of this research is to discover the compatibility of percentages of the questions with the objectives of the syllabus for the eleventh grade English textbook.

## Review of Literature

Comprehension questions have served very important roles in foreign language teaching and learning which makes it inevitable for researchers to conduct further investigation to evaluate them. Using Bloom's Taxonomy, Alul (2002) analyzed the questions in the eighth grades of an English language textbook, workbook and a story and he found that 51% of the questions in the student book were under the lower levels, 49% were of higher levels. Sixty six percent of the workbook questions were of lower levels, 34% were of higher levels while 78% of the story questions, were of higher level and 22 % were of lower level.

The fact that questions have served as an important and accurate means for teaching and learning a second language is a valuable opportunity for researchers to conduct studies in order to evaluate the questions raised by the textbooks. In the current research summaries of a number of these studies are discussed. Sunggingwati (2003), analyzed the questions in *Let's learn English* based on Barrett's Taxonomy and found that 79% of these questions were literal or of lower level. Inamullah (2011) analyzed 440 minutes of teacher talk at a secondary school using Bloom's Taxonomy. The findings were the following: 67% of these questions were knowledge-based, 23% comprehension, 7 % Application, 2 % analysis, 1% synthesis, with no evaluation questions.

A year later, Abu Humos (2012) conducted a research on the questions used by the 12<sup>th</sup> grade *English for Palestine* textbook according to Barrett Taxonomy and found that 59.5 % of the

questions are literal, 13.6 % were reorganization, 10% inferential, 13.6% evaluation and 2.7% were appreciation questions. When the researcher compared them to their syllabus he found a disparity since the distribution in the syllabus is as follows: 30.7 % should be literal, 19.2 % reorganization, 23 % inferential, 15.3 % evaluation and the appreciation level forms 11.5 % of the syllabus objectives.

Hunaifi (2008) conducted an interesting study analyzing the 40 reading comprehension questions of the academic reading test 1 on IELTS module using Barrett's Taxonomy and he found that the questions are divided into 2 levels: literal and inferential ones.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Statement**

There is a common belief among scholars and university professors that students who have joined universities recently are incapable of answering higher level questions believing that the main cause behind this is that these students were not exposed to questions of this type at school whether from the teacher or in the textbook. Thus, the researcher wishes to examine whether or not if the textbook questions are partially responsible for this situation by considering their linguistic equivalence (phrases) and to what extent the phrases used are fairly distributed.

### **Purpose of the study**

The present study aimed at analyzing the linguistic equivalence of the English reading comprehension questions for Palestine's eleventh grade English textbook. Based on Barrett Taxonomy of higher order thinking skills, the study attempted to find out to what extent the questions and their linguistic equivalence match the five categories of the taxonomy and their subcategories respectively. Also, the researcher analyzed the questions in respect to their matchability with the syllabus's objectives. Another aim of the researcher was also to discover if the reading comprehension questions designed for high school students are really compatible with higher order thinking skills. Recommendations will be made for the text book designers and teachers to help make the questions function effectively as tools for activating student thinking by using them as indicators of the students levels of thinking and understanding.

### **The Significance of the Study**

The central role that questions play in the teaching and learning process encourages us as researchers to verify whether the questions raised by the textbooks reflects higher thinking skills. Analyzing these questions is crucial for both academic purposes and life.

This study is significant since it deals with an essential component of language textbook questionings. Some scholars believe that what we ask is what we get, and therefore if we want to get answers of high level from our students, we have to be sure about the nature of our questions, what languages or what linguistic equivalence are used informing these questions. Another

significance of this research lies in the fact that this study is the first research conducted on the Palestinian English curriculum and which explores the linguistic equivalence of the questions.

### Research Design

The descriptive method was used to analyze and evaluate reading comprehension questions in the eleventh grade English for Palestine students' textbook according to Barrett taxonomy. The 281 reading questions were evaluated in order to decide whether they are fairly distributed over the five levels of Barrett's higher order thinking skills taxonomy. The researcher also examined the linguistic equivalence of these questions to see if they are compatible with the subcategories of the mentioned taxonomy. The researcher also applied Barrett Taxonomy to the 23 objectives of the eleventh grade syllabus then compared the percentages of the syllabus with those of the questions in order to see if the results of the questions analysis match the objectives of the syllabus. Numbers and percentages of the questions were computed and tabulated.

A copy of Barrett's Taxonomy and the English for Palestine syllabus are attached in Appendix A and B.

### The Research Questions

1. What are the distributions of the comprehension questions over the five higher thinking skills for Palestine's eleventh grade English textbook?
2. What are the percentages of linguistic phrases of the comprehension questions used in each of the subcategories of the taxonomy?
3. Are there any significant differences between the distribution of the eleventh grade objectives in the syllabus and the questions at the five higher thinking levels?

### Results

**Question 1.** What are the distributions of the comprehension questions over the five higher thinking skills for Palestine's eleventh grade English textbook?

**Figure 1.**

*The distribution of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade comprehension questions over the five higher thinking skills levels*

Level of questions	No of the questions	The percentage of the question
Literal comprehension	157	55.5%
Reorganization	50	17.4%
Inferential	32	11.2%
Evaluation	25	8.7%
Appreciation	17	6.2%

<b>Total</b>	281	100%
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The results show that the literal questions represent the highest level of the comprehension questions raised by the textbook with a percentage of 55.67% which may be attributed to the fact that textbook designers when dealing with a comprehension text focus on questions that cover “the material” without paying a lot of attention to the language of the question forgetting the level of higher thinking skills’ issues and the linguistic phrase used. Abu Humos (2013) found out that regarding the twelfth grade English for Palestine textbook 55.5% of the questions were literal level ones, while 17.4% represented the reorganization questions in the textbook. As regards the higher levels, the percentages started to fall; For example, the inferential level is represented with 11.2%, the evaluation questions 8.7% and finally the appreciation level is represented with 6.02%. The researcher believes that levels of higher thinking skills vary according to academic levels questions.

**Question 2.** What are the percentages of linguistic phrases for each of the subcategories of the taxonomy used in questions?

**Analysis of the Linguistic phrases of the comprehension questions**

**Figure 2.**  
*Analysis of the Literal level*

Linguistic phrases	Identify	find	Recall	describe	what caused	point out	complete	List
No. of questions	31	22	60	12	15	6	5	6
Percentage	11.0	7.8	21.3	4.2	5.3	2.1	1.7	2.1

This level is the most occurring with 55.5% of the total number of the comprehension questions in the eleventh grade English textbook. However, the analysis of the linguistic equivalence has revealed the following: the questions are not fairly distributed over the subcategories of the taxonomy. The most occurring questions in this category are the “recall” ones with 21.3 %, the ‘Identify’ questions comprising 11.0%. The least occurring questions were both categories ‘point out’ and ‘list’ with 2.1%.

**Figure 3.**  
*Analysis of the Reorganization level*

Linguistic phrases	compare	para-phrase	pronoun references	Order	correct	Draw	Write	Turn
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No. of questions	11	17	12	1	5	2	1	1
Percentage	3.9	6.0	4.2	0.3	1.7	0.7	0.3	0.3

The reorganization level which represents 17.4 % of the five levels shows a predominance of the ‘paraphrase’ questions with 6.0 % followed by ‘pronoun’ references with 4.2%. The least occurring questions are ‘write’, ‘turn and ‘order’ with 0.3% each and “draw” with 1.3% which is not mentioned in the taxonomy but showed up in the analysis.

**Figure 4.**

*Analysis of the Inferential level*

Linguistics phrases	Predict	Guess	Match	characterize	could	Suggest
No. of questions	8	11	8	2	1	2
percentage	2.8	3.9	2.8	0.7	0.3	0.7

The inferential level questions represented 11.2 % compared with the other four higher thinking skills. The most occurring of the subcategories is “guess” with 3.9% usually recommended as a linguistic phrase to be used in questions and the least occurring is ‘suggest’ with 0.3% which means each represents one question in the textbook.

**Figure 5.**

*Analysis of the Evaluation level*

Linguistic phrases	in your opinion	do you agree	tone
No. of questions	14	6	5
Percentage	4.9	2.1	1.7

This level represents 8.7% of the total number of questions. The analysis revealed that ‘in your opinion’ is represented with 4.9%, and 2.1% for “do you agree”. The “tone of the writer” is represented with 1.7 %.but it does not show in the taxonomy.

**Figure 6.**

*Analysis of the Appreciation level*

Linguistic phrases	do you agree	do you know anyone	Identification	emotional response
No. of questions	2	3	10	3
Percentage	0.7	1.0	3.5	1.0

Finally, this level of questions is represented with 6.02% of the total number of questions. It has the following distribution over its subcategories: “Identification” with 3.5%, “do you know anyone” and “emotional response” sub level with 1.0%, each and ‘do you agree’ with 0.7. The distribution of the comprehension questions over the 5 level of Barrett’s Taxonomy is not achieved nor are the sublevels in terms of the linguistic phrases.

**Question 3:** Are there any significant differences between the distribution of eleventh grade objectives in the syllabus and the questions at the five higher thinking levels?

### Discussion

*Distribution of the syllabus objectives and the textbook questions over the five higher thinking skills categories*

**Figure 7**

Level of the taxonomy	The percentages of the syllabus	The percentages according to the results	The differences in the percentages
Literal	30.6%	55.5%	24.9%
Reorganization	19.2%	17.4%	1.8%
Inferential	19.2%	11.2%	8.0 %
Evaluation	23%	8.7%	14.3%
Appreciation	7.6%	6.2%	1.4%

As Figure 7 shows, the results of the analysis of the percentages of the comprehension questions diverge from the ones recommended by the syllabus. The syllabus proposes the literal level to be 30.7%. In the textbook, the questions are represented with 55.5%. Regarding the reorganization type the findings show some compatibility with the syllabus. A serious discrepancy shows up in the third and fourth levels the inferential level is represented with only 17.4% and the syllabus proposes the percentage to be 19.2%. The differences in the percentage of the evaluation level in the syllabus is 23% and the actual presentation of this level in the questions is 8.7% with 14.3% difference. The appreciation level is represented with 7.6% in the syllabus while in the textbook with 6.02%. which reveals 1.4 % difference.

### Recommendations

1. Modifications of the distribution of comprehension questions in the textbook over the five levels and the sublevels of the taxonomy higher thinking skills since the eleventh grade is considered an upper advanced level.



2. Since Barrett's Taxonomy proved to be a valid tool when evaluating instructional questions whether written or spoken, teachers and curricula designers need to be trained to use them effectively when directing questions to students or when developing textbooks' questions.
3. Since there are discrepancies between the objectives of the English course syllabus and the question; it is recommended that compatibility be restored in the redevelopment of course textbooks.
4. It is also recommended that studies be conducted on other grades as well in order to verify the validity of the conclusions drawn by the present study.

**About the Author:**

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Appendix A

Barrett's major five reading skills in details

1. Literal Comprehension
  - 1.1 Recognition
  - 1.2 Details
  - 1.3 Main Ideas
  - 1.4 Sequence
  - 1.5 Comparison
  - 1.6 Cause and Effect
  - 1.7 Character Traits

2. Reorganization

- 2.1 Classifying
- 2.2 Outlining
- 2.3 Summarizing
- 2.4 Synthesizing

3. Inferential Comprehension

- 3.1 Supporting Details
- 3.2 Main Ideas
- 3.3 Sequence
- 3.4 Comparisons
- 3.5 Cause and Effect
- 3.6 Character Traits
- 3.7 Predicting Outcomes
- 3.8 Interpreting Figurative Language

4. Evaluation

- 4.1 Judgments of Reality or Fantasy
- 4.2 Fact or Opinion
- 4.3 Adequacy and Validity
- 4.4 Appropriateness
- 4.5 Worth, Desirability and Acceptability

5. Appreciation

- 5.1 Emotional Response to the Content
- 5.2 Identification with Characters or Incidents
- 5.3 Reactions to the Author's Use of Language
- 5.4 Imagery

Appendix B

The 23 reading comprehension skill objectives in the 11 grade syllabus

- 1. Answer factual, inferential, judgment or evaluation questions
- 2. Read familiar material with correct pronunciation and intonation
- 3. Recognize pronoun referents
- 1. Generate questions about reading text
- 2. Summarize reading text
- 3. Make predictions about reading text
- 4. Make inferences about reading text
- 5. Develop awareness of synonyms and antonyms

6. Develop awareness of semantic fields (word mapping)
7. Identify the main idea of reading text
8. Identify supporting details
9. Distinguish main idea from supporting details
10. Recognize rhetorical markers and their functions
11. Comprehend visual survival materials
12. Deduce meaning of unfamiliar words from context
13. Skim to obtain gist or general impression of text or graphics
14. Distinguish fact from opinion
15. Infer mood and author's attitude or tone
16. Scan for information from texts and realia (ads, menus, schedule, calendar, flight information and tickets, etc
17. Interpret information presented in diagrammatic display
18. Relate text for setting, theme, characters, etc
19. Extract and synthesize information from several sources to present in into expository form
23. Evaluate text for accuracy of information, soundness of argument, etc.

## Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback Revisited: A Critique and an Improved Model

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### Abstract

Giving feedback on the students' grammatical errors of their written assignments is an issue that received a lengthy debate. Several studies were conducted and produced contradictory results. A model was proposed (Hartshorn, et al, 2010) to overcome the theoretical and practical obstacles. This model is called Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback (DWCF). This paper introduces a critique of the DWCF model and it shows that DWCF has two main problems that make it unsuitable for the ESL classroom. These problems are related to its authenticity and practicality. Furthermore this paper presents a modified model of DWCF to overcome these problems. The modified model integrates two aspects; Peer feedback and Automated Essay Evaluation systems (AES) –s or so called Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE). The proposal is that peer feedback and AES will work as a filtration system that can solve the issues of authenticity and practicality that the original model has suffered from

**Key words:** Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback, AES, Integrative model, Critique

**Introduction**

Giving corrective feedback on the students' grammatical errors has received a lot of research with results supporting its effectiveness (Fanselow, 1977; Lalande, 1984; Robb. etal, 1988; and Ihde, 1994) and others who claim the opposite (Keppner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992; and Semke, 1984). Fanselow (1977) investigated eleven teachers through videotaping their teaching. He found that there is a relationship between different kinds of corrective feedback and their effectiveness. Lalande (1984) Conducted a study on sixty students and found that combining the two techniques (students awareness and problem solving skills) had positive effects. Another group of researchers investigated the same issue on 134 Japanese college freshmen and their results suggested more effective ways of treating students' errors (Robb etal, 1986). Ihde (1994) researched 50 French and American instructors and found that different methods of giving students corrective feedback.

On the other hand, there are some papers that suggested the opposite (Keppner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992; and Semke, 1984). They claimed that giving corrective feedback to the students has no value and thus no need to implement it in the course. For example, in her article (Effects of the Red Pen, 1984) Harriet Semke Studied more than 140 students and found that students improved their writing by practicing only. Corrective feedback did not help at all in improving their Written accuracy. In 1992, Ken Sheppard investigated two different ways of giving feedback on 26 university students. The first method was concentrating on the mistakes on the form. The second method was giving a holistic feedback on the paper in general. He found that the later method was more effective in improving the students' performance on the form and the content as well. Kepner (1991) studied sixty students of 201 Spanish to find the effect of giving feedback either on the form (grammar errors) or the content (message related errors). She found that giving students feedback on their grammatical errors alone is not effective. Instead, giving feedback on the message or content contributed in improving the students' grammar proficiency. From viewing these different results, it becomes evident that the findings are inconsistent. These results were the foundations of what will be known as the corrective Feedback Debate.

**The Debate of Corrective Feedback**

Corrective Feedback was not a hot issue until the 1996 when John Truscott wrote a very strong article questioning the effectiveness of this issue. In his article (The Case against Grammar Correction in L2 Writing Classes); he started with a very open sentence (GRAMMAR CORRECTION DOES NOT WORK). He reviewed a great deal of research papers. All of them showed that corrective feedback did not work.

These strong claims by (Truscott, 1996) led to different responses. Dana Ferris (1999) wrote one of the opposing papers against Truscott's claims in 1999. In her article, Ferris (1999) confronted the points proposed by Truscott. She said that there is no enough research that covers all the different contexts and longitude research to have some consistency in the results. She claimed also that Truscott overstated the research articles that supported his case and tried to ignore the ones that did not.

Several research papers were written either to confirm or to reject John Truscott's claims. Some researchers argued in favor of the effectiveness of written feedback (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 1995, 1997, and 1999; Ferris & Robert, 2001) and some others claimed that it is not effective ( Truscott, 2004, 2001, 2007a, 2007b, Truscott & Hsu, 2008). These raised several questions on the conflicting results and their reasons.

A good explanation for this controversy is the existence of variables beyond the researchers' control. These factors can greatly affect the outcome of the research. As Gu nette (2007, p. 40) concluded:

Rather than interpret the conflicting results as a demonstration of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of corrective feedback on form, I suggest that findings can be attributed to the research design and methodology, as well as to the presence of external variables that were beyond the control and vigilance of the researchers.

It would be a good idea before starting the new approach to correcting the students' mistakes to resituate our concept of students' errors and how we view them. It has been noted that through all the research that dealt with the students' errors that the students themselves are neglected. What the writer is trying to say is that no attention was paid to the students as humans. They have feelings, needs, and emotions. The students may sometimes be very tired or hungry to an extent in which learning itself would be impossible. However, such factors did not appear in the research papers presented. Instead, more focus was given to the final product without considering these factors. It would be a good idea also to quote (Nabei & Swain, 2002) who was describing recast. They Say:

Recasting is a complex verbal behavior influenced by the teaching environment, the interaction context, and the learner's cognitive orientation. The effect of recasts is influenced not only by the linguistic elements (e.g. grammatical vs. lexical) of the feedback, but also by paralinguistic elements and the learner's autonomous utilization of the learning opportunities provided by the feedback.  
(p.1)

Here we see that there is shift of the attention from the linguistic elements themselves to the learner. Recognizing the learners themselves as important factors in giving corrective feedback may help to understand the dilemma of the contradictory results that appeared in the previous research.

Another group of researchers were more specific regarding the other factors that may affect the learning process and make Corrective Feedback effective or not (Hartshorn et al, 2010). In their article, they divided the factors that may affect the final product to three major variables. The first group of these variables is the learners' variables. What they mean here are the variables related to the learners themselves. This will include motivation of the learners, the different learning styles of each learner, what the objective of the learners are, and the interlingual effects that result from the learners' first language (or languages). The second group of variables is related to the situation. These include the teachers; their gender, teaching styles, their background... etc. The physical environment starting from the class room is it big small, visual aids .....Etc. and the socioeconomic conditions. The third group of variables is the methodological variables. This will include the instructional design, what is taught, and how is it taught.

Taking into consideration all the factors and variables described above, (Hartshorn et al, 2010) proposed a new model that takes into account all of them. They called it (Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback) or DWCF.



The DWCF model presented by the researchers (Hartshorn et al, 2010) consists of six steps. First, the student writes an assignment and hands it to the teacher. The teacher indicates the types and number of mistakes and assigns grades. The teacher then hands the assignment to the student whose job is to record his errors in a tally sheet, rewrites his or her assignment and gives it back to the teacher. The teacher then rechecks the assignments and gives it back to the student for a final revision. The last two steps are repeated until the assignment is error-free.

The researchers argue that DWCF will likely to be effective because it is meaningful, timely and consistent, and manageable. What the researchers (Hartshorn et al, 2010) mean by "meaningful" is that students should understand the feedback given to them. They suggest that the symbols used to refer to the errors should be clearly explained. If students cannot understand what the teacher means by the symbols he or she write. It would be difficult for the students to recognize the error. They suggest that the best way of giving feedback is through continue repeated feedback. For example, the students receive the feedback on their assignment the second day or class.

Manageable means that the feedback given on the students' errors should be enough for both the students and the teachers to handle. If the feedback was more than what the teacher can handle, it may affect the quality of it because the teachers will not be able to concentrate on each point. The same thing can be said for the students. If the students cannot process all the feedback given to them on their papers, they may end up neglecting it and not paying attention to the points that were treated.

(Hartshorn et al, 2010) tested their model on 47 students. These students came from different L1 backgrounds. They divided them to two groups. The first group was the control group. It did not receive the feedback. The second group was the experimental group. Results have shown that the experimental group has improved its performance greatly compared to the control group.

### **Limitations of DWCF.**

Despite of the fact that DWCF has successfully responded to some of the questions related to the effectiveness of grammatical feedback, I still think that there are obstacles that limit its effectiveness. These obstacles are related to the model's practicality and authenticity

One of the problems is the sheer amount of errors that both the teachers and students have to deal with. It is often the case that teachers have to give feedback on several errors for each assignment and for each student. Considering the fact that teachers deal often with more than one classroom, this would leave them buried in unlimited numbers of duties. The same thing can be said for the learners. Students cannot always respond to all the feedback especially if they are producing too many of grammatical errors.

In an attempt to reduce the amount of the errors that teachers have to deal with, Bitchener (2008) suggests that teachers and learners might benefit from focusing on 'one or only a few error categories' at a time (p. 108). Focusing on limited types of errors seems beneficial for both the teachers and students. It will make it easier for the teachers to give complete feedback and it will be easier for them to track their students' progress. Students will also be able to benefit from their teachers' feedback.

However, DWCF was designed to respond to "all" the grammatical errors in an attempt to make the feedback authentic. Evans, et al (2010) argue that 'in authentic writing situations, students

have to focus on multiple aspects and types of errors simultaneously' (p.453). To solve this dilemma, they limited the time and the length of the writing task. The researchers state that "The alternative approach we present limits the length of the writing task to ensure that dynamic WCF remains manageable" (p.453). This means that the students will write for a short period of time "ten minutes" and will produce a shorter piece of writing. This assignment will be manageable for the teacher to respond to.

The issue that limiting the writing time and tasks in DWCF might not be authentic as well. The researchers might have successfully reduced the amount of work that the teachers have to do. However, they did that on the expenses of the tasks' authenticity. In the real writing classroom, students are required to produce different kinds of written assignments. These assignments vary in their length. It is usual to ask students to write long essays and spend longer times producing them. It would make no sense to require the students to produce a "limited" task for assignments that are originally long and claiming that their tasks are authentic. This will bring us to the first square and will jeopardize the authenticity of DWCF

The second issue that the DWCF does not respond to is the number of the students. In all the experiments designed to test the effect of DWCF ( Hartshorn et al, 2010; Evans et al, 2010, 2011) the number of the students per teacher was small (maximum of 30 students per teacher in one of the experiments). The number might sound suitable for classrooms in the western hemisphere. However, in many ESL settings (especially in the developing countries) instructors teach several classes with more than that number mentioned in the research above in a regular basis. With such huge numbers of students, even the ten-minute assignment could become overwhelming for the teachers to give feedback on. This brings back the question of how to give a manageable yet authentic feedback to the students. A possible solution to this dilemma is through the use of Automated Essay Scoring (AES) systems.

### **Integrating AES with DWCF.**

As we have seen above, giving a timely and manageable feedback might be difficult in the real ESL environment. This will make it unsuitable to apply DWCF in the writing classroom. On the other hand, applying technology in ESL teaching and learning produced several useful tools. Among these tools are the Automated Essay Scoring (AES) systems. Automated Essay Scoring (AES) or Automated Writing Evaluation (AWE) systems were developed to meet the growing needs of the skills and time necessary to respond to the students' writings (Warschauer & Ware, 2006). Several AES applications were designed and tested in different settings. (Rimrott & Trude, 2008; Felice & Pulman, 2009; Napolitano & Stent, 2009; Ebyary & Windeatt, 2010; Weigle, 2010). The results of these experiments varied from one group of students to another (Ellis & Calvo, 2010; Lai, 2010) and from one tool to another (Ebyary & Windeatt, 2010; Harbusch et al, 2009; Felice & Pulman, 2009;). The growing body of research gives us insights of the potentials of technology in the field second language writing and in ESL pedagogy in general. I propose the use of Automated Essay Scoring systems (AES) as a possible solution to this problem.

One of the points that is noticed in the research related to AES above is that these studies were conducted on the programs themselves. The researchers' main objective was to find a stand-alone program that can give feedback on the students' essays without the teachers' interference. All what the students need to do is to write an essay and upload it to the program to receive feedback

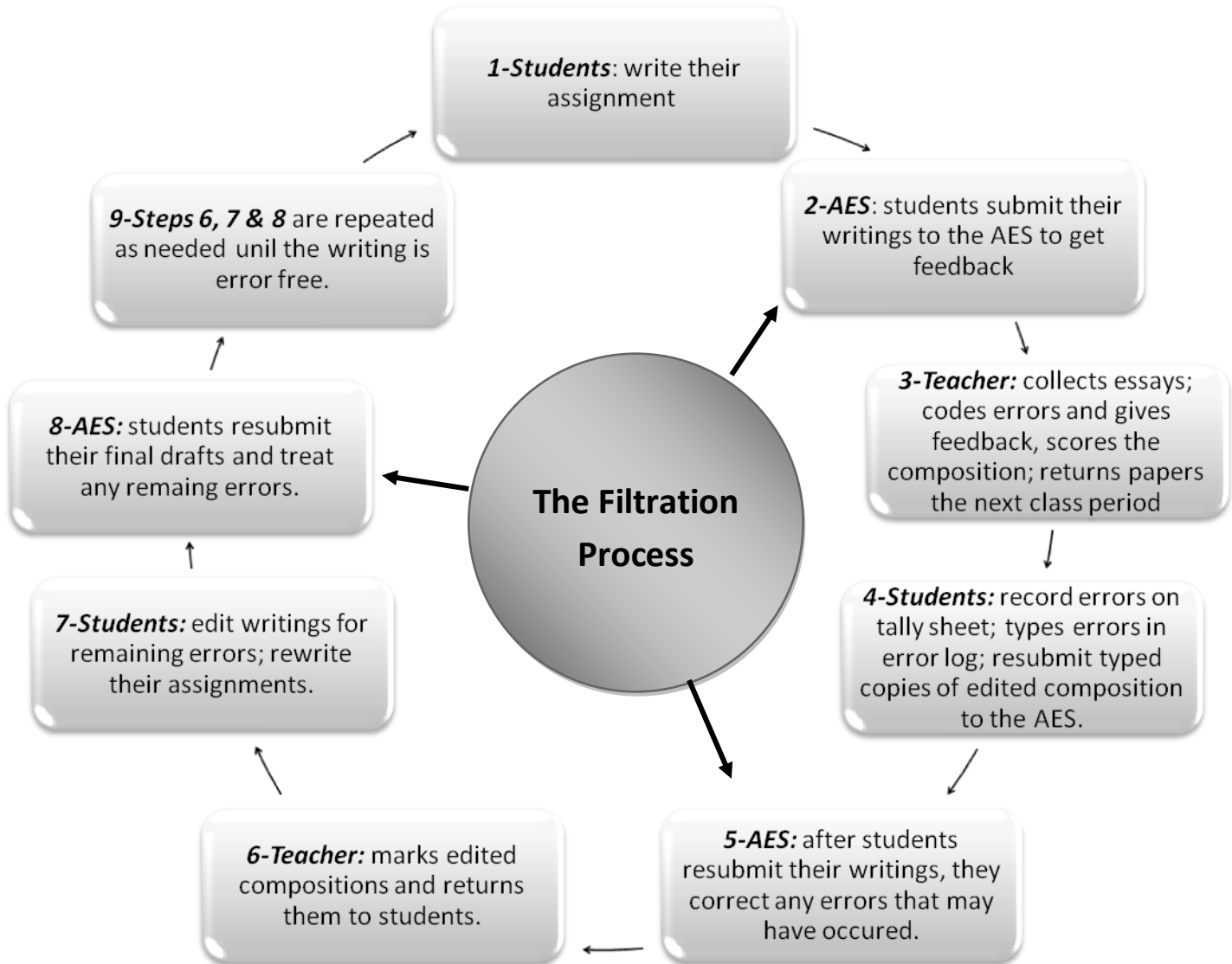
on his or errors. The research on AES above does not describe how their applications would function if they were integrated with WDCF.

I believe that integrating technology with DWCF would greatly enhance the effectiveness of the feedback given to the students and would help to overcome the problems associated with the DWCF model. The research on ASE systems showed that the results were no consistent and differed from one program to another (Ellis & Calvo, 2010; Lai, 2010; Ebyary & Windeatt, 2010; Harbusch et al, 2009; Felice & Pulman, 2009). On the other hand, the DWCF model presented by (Evans, et al, 2010) did not respond to the theoretical obstacles introduced by John Truscott in 1996. These practical problems include giving timely and manageable feedback. These shortcomings of Automated Essay Scoring Systems (i.e. inconsistent results) and the Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback (i.e. time and management issues) could be solved by integrating AES systems and DWCF in one model.

The essential point in the integrated model is to exploit the strength of both DWCF and AES. Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback (DWCF) produced successful results in treating the students' written errors. However, this model cannot function properly if the number of the students or the amount of the tasks is large. On the other hand, AES systems have clear advantage in dealing with larger task and student groups. Integrating both systems can lead to better results in giving feedback to the students' written assignments.

The integration process will use the AES application as a filtration system in the DWCF model. This will be conducted by asking the students to submit their written assignments to an AES system before they give them to the teacher (Figure 2). After the students submit their writing to the AES application, they will use the feedback given to them to rewrite their assignment. After that, the students will give the revised assignments to the teacher. The teacher then will provide feedback on the remaining grammatical and content errors. This process will be done every time after the students write each draft and before they submit them to their teachers.

**Figure 1: DWCF and AES integrative model (Adapted from the DWCF cycle designed by (Hartshorn et al, 2010)**



**Advantages of the integrative model.**

- 1- The integrative model can process a large amount of errors in a short time. This will allow teachers to assign long writings without worrying about the time spent in correcting them.
- 2- Because of the fast error processing capacities of this model. Teachers can deal with large number of students.

- 3- The integrative model gives individualized feedback according to each student's needs.  
 4- Using this technology will help to increase the students' motivation (Chen & Lou, 2001; Ilter, 2009; Nehme, 2010)

### Conclusion

This paper proposes a model that integrates the Automated Essay Scoring (AES) systems and the Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback (DWCF) model. The paper reviews the debate over the issue of written corrective feedback and the several attempts to solve them. After that, it reviews the Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback model (DWCF). Then, the paper introduces the Automated Essay Scoring systems and proposes possible integration model.

The main objective of the integration model is to overcome the limitations of both the automated Essay Scoring systems (AES) and the Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback (DWCF) model. The Automated Scoring systems works successfully in treating the grammatical errors, but it has several limitations in treating the content errors. On the other hand, the Dynamic Written Corrective Feedback model helps to improve the students' accuracy. However, this model cannot work if the assignments or the students' number is high. Integrating both systems, (I.e. AES & DWCF) could help solving this problem by creating a "filtration system." The filtration system will work by reducing the amount work the teacher has to do. This allows teachers to respond to a larger number of students without being overwhelmed by the huge numbers of papers to be corrected.

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## Second Language Writing and Culture: Issues and Challenges from the Saudi Learners' Perspective

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### Abstract

The focus of this article addresses and explores English L2 writing difficulties and challenges among foundation year Saudi foreign language learners up to intermediate level students. Saudi, English foreign language (EFL) learners are commonly stereotyped as poor writers of English, the target second language (L2). How does the Saudi context uniquely un-level the playing field in contrast to non-Arab contexts in its response to personal written expression? The researcher attempts to understand and explain contextually significant challenges the Saudi learner contends with on a subtle, yet powerfully influential level. Implications are made in the conclusion of this article for focused approaches to the writing task and skill development with awareness to Saudi learner identity and history. This article is a theoretical literary review of writing and the Arab learner; and is divided into four parts. First, the context is the Saudi learner whose educational experience has taken place in Saudi Arabia; and second, the term 'Arab learner' refers to subject participants cited in research articles that may or may not specifically be from Saudi Arabia. Part one begins with an introduction to the aims and the rationale of the article. Part two describes Arab learner attitudes towards the complexity of foreign language writing. The third part defines the term 'culture' and its influence on the Arab learners' English writing development. Part four then examines the potentially contentious effects of religious conformity and cultural resistance to self-expression. The article closes with a conclusion and implications for the Arab learner'.

**Keywords:** The Saudi learner and writing; second language writing; Arab identity and writing; challenges for Saudi L2 writers

## 1. Introduction

Writing in a second language poses many problems for the majority of English as a foreign language, EFL, learners. Learners in the Saudi Arabian context will be discussed here. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Western perspectives perceive Arab EFL student writers as knowledge tellers, who report information (Cummings, 1991) rather than knowledge transformers, who synthesize information into personal and critically meaningful concepts. Arab learners perceive writing in the traditional style where it abides by rules, and a certain structure. They are unable to think of different rhetorical approach. Based on Ryan (2005), the formality of the educational system of Arabic speaking learners of English consists of traditional drills and structured written exercises. Students may have to abide to models of writing rather than write freely. Arab learners find composing in English difficult because the writing process may require them to think (Doushaq, 1980).

However, with proper contextual awareness and with appropriate writing instruction, all learners can become better writers (Hyland, 2003). Contextual issues of religious conformity, cultural resistance to self-expression, and pedagogical background affect the way Arabs perceive learning, in general, and learning to write in a second language, specifically. Therefore, negatively stereotyping Arab learners as not being good writers may need reappraisal.

### 1.1. Aims

The literature concerning the development of L2 English writing skills in the Saudi Arabian context is limited. Several studies have addressed writing difficulties in the development of L2 writing skills, but the challenges that Saudi learners encounter have not been discussed in depth. Difficulties for Saudi L2 language learners may arise from factors such as L1 transfer, the orthography of Arabic writing, religious conformity, cultural resistance to self-expression, fulfilment of teacher expectation based on stereotyping, and the rote learning background that is embedded in Saudi culture. The aim of this article is to give an overview of the difficulties and challenges faced by Saudi language learners when writing in English.

### 1.2. Rationale

The quantity of literature concerning the relationship between Arab learners' cultural context and writing skill development in English is limited. Thus, a discussion of the cultural issues and challenges of the Saudi learner will be the central focus of the paper to further the conversation of how to improve Saudi learner competence in L2 English writing.

## 2. The Arab Learner and Writing

The Arab World is perceived as a diglossic speech community where language has two forms: colloquial and classical (Al-Khatib, 2000). Colloquial Arabic exists in varieties of vernacular in major Arabic speaking nation states. Classical Arabic, reflecting the language of the Quran, provides the common and standard written form (Smith, 2001). The Arabic language is closely associated with the religion, Islam (Al-Mutawa and Kailani, 1989). It is the means of communication for official government administration, religion, and education throughout the Arab world (Al-Mutawa and Kailani, 1989).

English, in contrast, has become the globalized means of communication in the field of education, as well as, in commerce. Although English is taught as a compulsory subject in all government schools as the first foreign language, in Saudi Arabia, the teaching of it is highly reliant on rote learning and the receiving of information (Smith, 2001). In the Arab context, it is

suggested that examinations mostly require the reproduction of rote-learned notes; and tasks requiring original thought or the expression of personal opinions may be considered unfair. Learners tend to be dependent on their teacher to provide modelled written passages. This prevents them from being experimental, brave and creative in their writing.

Rote memorization of basic texts continues to be a central feature of the educational system in Saudi Arabia even today, and can be traced back to the Kuttab school (Rugh, 2002). The Kuttab school focuses on Islamic religious teachings of the Quran and other religious texts through memorization. Three characteristics apparent in the Saudi education system are government regulated curriculum, the intensive study of religion, and rote memorization. This approach imposes extrinsic controls on learning processes (Smith, 2001). As a result, learner autonomy can be severely undermined, if not altogether abolished.

The international curriculum for foundation year Saudi students demands that students be able to write about themselves, their family, and a variety of topics pertaining to travel, food, daily life, etc. Students come from either the private school sector or the public school sector. Those who graduate from private schools tend to be creative and independent while those from the public schools are more dependent on the teacher as the possessor of knowledge. The current curriculum continues to focus on textbooks, leaving teachers with insufficient time to implement creative writing activities. The researcher finds this method difficult to cope with in the university setting because it promotes knowledge banking, and frustrates knowledge creation.

Richardson's (2004) classroom observations indicate that Arab students prefer prescriptive learning environments where they are told exactly what to do, thus active learning and the role of the teacher as facilitator (currently implemented in the United Arab Emirates) often causes anxiety amongst them. Students' resistance to taking more responsibility for their learning stems from previous experience during their primary and secondary schooling where passive learning and memorization are the expected ways of learning. Richardson (2004) further contends that such approaches make it difficult for students to become accustomed to efficient modes of learning later, in university. This contention is applicable in our context where most students are dependent rather than autonomous learners.

### *2.1. Writing in a Second Language*

Writing in a second language is complex (Bowen and Mark, 1994, Kroll, 1990, Smith, 2001; Hyland, 2003). Khuwaileh (1995b) found that Arab students primarily translate ideas from their native language into English. Drawn from this point was a sort of negative transfer which resulted in unsatisfactorily written samples. Hussein and Mohammad (2012) similarly contend that Arab learners tended to compose words and sentences in their L1 and then translate them into the L2.

Hussein and Mohammad (2012) argue that topic familiarity and cultural appropriateness are important factors affecting negative L1 transfer into L2 writing. But, despite this argument, when students wrote on topics that were both familiar and culturally appropriate to them, negative L1 transfer was not prevented. Students were asked to compare and contrast, in essay form, "Qatar in the present and in the past." Student writing samples included: "Qatar is very changing between now past," "a lot of women go to job," "we speak the similarity language," and "they are different and same in many things".

Cognition plays a role where writing is learnt through a process of instruction and comprehension of the written form of the language (Fageeh, 2003). According to Byrne (1988), difficulty in writing arises from psychological, linguistic and cognitive issues. He adds that

writing becomes even more complex with inadequate teacher feedback concerning process, cohesion and organization. In contrast to the native speaker, the L2 learner must consider meta-language and the pragmatic values of grammar, vocabulary, rhetorical patterns, and mechanics which can increase levels of writing apprehension and anxiety.

Arabic orthography is a cursive system, running from right to left where only consonants and long vowels are written (Smith, 2001). Kharma and Hajjaj (1997) note that Arab students encounter major difficulties from the irregular spelling system of English in compared to the regular phonetic script of Arabic. The irregularities are exhibited in the silent letters such as the final –e as in care, bite, the –h in question words like what, why and the –gh in various words such as night, taught. Problems may also arise in homophones where two words sound alike but are spelled differently. Thus, Arab learners need to be aware of the English orthography system when learning English in high school.

Elkhafaifi (2005) posits that anxiety plays a critical role in foreign language students' classroom performance. He suggested that reducing anxiety and providing a less stressful classroom environment might enable teachers and to help students improve their classroom performance. Furthermore, Cheng (2002) investigated the relationships among students' perceptions of their second language (L2) writing anxiety and various learner differences. The findings suggest that enhancing students' motives and perception of their own writing competence are equally relevant to the development of students' writing skills.

In the researcher's pilot study, about 10 foundation year Saudi students volunteers were interviewed about the common writing problems faced in the classroom. Half of the students studied in private institutes and the other half studied in public ones. They were asked 2 questions regarding their common problems in writing and about their needs in the classroom. Students experienced writing difficulties in using appropriate vocabulary, writing in correct spelling, following accurate grammatical rules and establishing cohesion in writing. Many students claim to have "the ideas" but have neither the L2 skills nor the pragmatic understanding to express them. Most students are self-conscious of making mistakes and this is a contributing factor to why few students are able to initiate a writing task without the assurances of explicit step-by-step instruction. This dependency is relative to their rote learning background, where 'knowledge banking' is teacher and subject-centered.

## ***2.2. The Complexity of the Writing Skill***

Many studies reveal the complexity of the writing skills of Arab learners. For those engaged in learning to write in a second language, the complexity of mastering writing skills is compounded by the difficulties apparent in learning a second language and the effect of first language literacy skills (Kroll, 1990). In their study on the Writing Ability of Arab Learners, Khuwaileh and Al Shoumali (2000) note common problems in the participants' L1 and L2 performance. Problems arose in the areas of subject and verb agreement, emphasis on certain tenses, irregular past tense forms, paragraph unity, and, coherence and cohesion. Fifty-five percent of students wrote compositions in their L1 with no appropriate logical linking of ideas, and lacked the skills to organise their ideas. Even L1 sentences posed to be major obstacles.

Similarly, Ahmed (2010) investigates cohesion and coherence problems in EFL essay writing in the Egyptian context. In his study, Ahmed (2010) reports that the students faced difficulties writing thesis statements, topic sentences, transitioning of ideas, and the sequencing of ideas. Doushaq (1986) conducted a study investigating the writing problems of Jordanian Arab university students, and noted that the main problems lay at the sentence and paragraph level, and

that there were also problems of content. The research confirmed weakness in L2 writing was due to an original weakness in the mastery of Arabic writing skills.

Khuweileh (1995) found that Arab students usually think to prepare their ideas in their native language and then translate them into English, which results in a negative transfer of unsatisfactorily written samples. More recently, Ridha (2012) used an error analysis study to investigate the effect of EFL learners' L1 on their written English. After describing and diagnosing the writing errors of Iraqi EFL college students, she found most of the errors could be attributed to L1 transfer, as can be seen in the following example: "I cut a promise to help other people." Many of the learners relied on their mother tongue to express ideas.

In a different context, Wang (1999) investigates the use of references in Chinese (L1) and their effect on cohesion in English (L2). He figures out that EFL learners commit errors because they think in their native language and that they translate their thoughts into L2 or foreign language. Thus, it may be critical to comprehend the learners' cultural background and how it affects their writing in the first and second language.

### 3. Culture and Writing

Hyland (2003) explains that cultural factors are reasons for writing differences, and that there are numerous ways to form meanings. With those who are inexperienced, and lack experience about other cultures, there is a danger of ethnocentrism about learning to write, or regarding other writers as deficient. He emphasizes that an appreciation for writing differences, can facilitate cross-cultural understandings that can help us perceive that writing difficulties are not problems inherent in students themselves. By openly addressing students' L1 writing experiences, rhetorical styles and contrasting them with the expectations of target writing communities, teachers can make both instruction and genres applicable to context. Indeed, such awareness would increase the comprehension of the Arab learner in the classroom.

Social sciences' definition of culture refers to three aspects: "(a) the entire or total way of life of people, including a shared social heritage, visions, of social reality, value orientations, beliefs, customs, norms, traditions, skills, and the like (b) artistic achievements; and (c) knowledge or thought and the sciences (Barakat, 1993, p. 41)." According to El-Araby (1983), cultures are often so dynamic and complex that they defy scientific description and categorization.

Hofstede (1980) perceives culture and its traditions as learned thinking habits: in the form of collective programming of the mind which sets an individual group in contrast to another (Hofstede, 1980), and it is this early programming that causes people to react differently in similar situations. Hofstede's model may be applicable to Saudi learners. His research proposed four cultural framework dimensions which he labelled as "power distance (from small to large), collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance (from weak to strong)" (Hofstede, 1980, p. 14). Larger power distance reflects an acceptance of unequal power distribution without question, regarding it as normal. Uncertainty avoidance relates to the means by which cultures select, adapt, and cope with uncertainties. Individualism-collectivism relates to a person's relationship with the larger social groups of which he or she is a part.

Due to the tribal nature of Arab society, individuals typically put aside personal aspirations for the good of the collective. Specific circumstances depend on every individual's family and rearing. Some families favour personal aspirations as a priority, but generally, Arab families are strongly group oriented. The collectivist group tendency suggests they feel more comfortable when they are in unified situations rather than individualistic ones. This found comfort zone, rather than a zone where they have to think independently stems from family dynamics and radiates into the



educational system, according to Sidani and Thornberry (2010) may not be flexible to change and development.

Second language instruction often addresses cultural issues (Harklau, 1999). For instance, ESL teachers employ L2 cultural activities to demonstrate different cultural contexts in order to help students develop a degree of pragmatic literacy that will guide language construction and decision making competence. Research on written discourse highlights variations of the prose structure manifested in rhetorical style, purpose, task, topic and audience (Purves, 1988). Frequently, the L1 modus operandi appears to be transferred into L2 writing. Thus, addressing cultural issues help to socialize L2 learners regarding embedded cultural norms in the academic texts of the target language. Though teaching culture may not be an explicit goal of ESL writing courses, cultural patterns and values nevertheless influences the character of the content through which second language writing skills are taught. ESL writing classrooms hence serve as arenas for cultural orientation, and ESL teachers often serve not only as writing instructors, but also as explainers and mediators of culture and cultural values.

Saudi students face a new culture, as is apparent in their Oxford series textbooks that bear a predominately Western tone in terms of life style and tradition, interlaced with some modern global themes. As we are now living in a globalized and technologically connected world, students are accustomed to many themes. However, they do not show the curiosity to know more; they are accepting of the knowledge as it is. Some may be curious to ask but still resist asking. There is an element of hesitation in their reactions to certain themes such as religion, politics, and of course, taboo topics. This hesitation is further legitimized as instructors are themselves reminded to avoid these issues, as well. Some instructors are willing to carefully approach boundaries while others limit expression and discourse due to their own thinking and fears. Modern topics naturally inspire free-thinking and debate, yet when classroom discussions do not broach these topics, the opportunities to generate opinions and ideas are thwarted before students and teachers understand the reason for their frustration.

### ***3.1. The Arab Way of Writing: Contrastive Rhetoric***

Kaplan (1966) states that speakers of Arabic transfer rhetorical patterns from their mother tongue into their English writing. Ibrahim (1978) explains that language transfer patterns are not restricted to Arab learners, but apply to all EFL learners. Purves (1988) suggests that ESL students should first comprehend the rhetorical patterns of their native language to better understand the rhetorical patterns of the English language. He adds that differences among rhetorical patterns do not represent differences in cognitive ability, but rather in cognitive style.

In order to comprehend the term culture, one must comprehend the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis (CRH) which has inspired a great deal of research on writing across cultures and on the teaching of writing in English to speakers of other languages (Leki, 1991). As Connor (1996) explains:

*“an area of research in second language acquisition that identifies problems in composition encountered by second language writers and by referring to the rhetorical strategies of the first language, attempts to explain them ...contrastive rhetoric maintains that language and writing are cultural phenomena. As a direct consequence, each language has rhetorical conventions to it.”(p. 5)*

Contrastive rhetoric was intended to facilitate creative use in expressing one's ideas in text in the second language (Panetta, 2001). Additionally, Baker (2003) notes that a contrastive approach to

culture should aid and enhance the learners' understanding of the target L2 culture as well as its language. If language and culture are inseparable, learners in the act of acquiring a new language will also acquire a new culture. As learners' develop understanding of the foreign language they may come to understand other values and meanings familiar to the target culture that are alien to their own. Yet, their understanding of these values and meanings may still remain different from that of the native speaker. This leads Kramersch (1993) to suggest that foreign language learning takes place in a third place that the learner must make for himself or herself between their first culture (C1) and the foreign one (C2).

Within the Asian context learners are often exposed to a limited range of encounters with English language speaking culture through Western media and brief encounters with tourists, which can easily lead to unrepresentative stereotypical impressions. Teachers are asked to help learners become aware of these stereotypical images through classroom discussions and through the use of English language media (Wongbiasaj, 2003). Kramersch (1993) highlights the constant conflict between the personal meanings learners' try to communicate and with the larger social context in which those meanings are expressed. Arab learners may still find themselves in a dilemma of whether to embrace the new Western culture or to abide exclusively with their own culture.

The idea of cultural differences in rhetoric has been of interest to writing teachers since Kaplan's (1966) study of 600 L2 student essays (cited in Hyland, 2003, p. 46). Kaplan found that students from different backgrounds systematically identified and developed their ideas in ways different to English native speakers. Compared with the essentially linear pattern of English paragraphs, he suggested that Arabic speakers produced texts based on a series of parallel coordinate "oriental" clauses, used an indirect approach, and came to the point only at the end. Patai (1983) states that repetition, overemphasis, stylistic elaboration, and stylistic exaggeration characterize Arab rhetoric. The western mode of argumentation is based on syllogistic model of proof, while Arabic argumentation is characterised by repetition, which is deeply rooted in the language (Barakat, 1993). Kaplan (1987) cited the influence of L1 syntactic discourse elements and prior education over L2 writing.

### ***3.2. Knowledge telling/ knowledge transforming***

As mentioned previously, Arab writers are mostly perceived as following the knowledge telling model whereas western writers are perceived as knowledge transforming (Ballard and Clanchy, 1991; Cumming 1989). Based on Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) theory of writing expertise, Cumming (1989) refers to an anecdote about an Arab learner, Abdullah, who demonstrates a knowledge-telling approach to writing where he tells the knowledge he has about his subject, but he does not refine that knowledge to transform his thinking. People who write from a knowledge telling model in their mother tongue tend to approach writing this way in a second language, as well (Cumming, 1995), and this may be applicable to Asian learners in general. From my own experience, I have always written based on the knowledge telling model, because in my undergraduate years, we were not taught to write critically. It is a skill that needs to be learned.

Hatim (1997) notes that modern standard Arabic tends to prefer Thorough Argumentation: thesis-substantiation-conclusion, while English prefers the Balance: thesis-opposition-substantiation-conclusion. In other words, an Arab writer shows a preference for a persuasive style where arguments for a particular point-of-view are accumulated, until the writer feels he or she has proven his or her point; while the Western argument considers both sides of

point-of-views that may even be oppositional to the thesis, to eventually reach a conclusion. In short, Arab learners persuade by means of their descriptiveness and judgement. This could be explained by Arab students' rote learning background, as they may have not had an adequate experience in developing problem solving skills necessary to demonstrate critical analysis.

Ballard and Clanchy (1991) point out that these attitudes toward learning range on a continuum, from respect for knowledge conservation to considering its extension. This could also describe the process of a novice writer transitioning from basic writing ability to developing higher order thinking skills that are capable of being critical and argumentative. In the same way, Figure 1 displayed in page 29\_which is based on critiques or stereotypes of Asian learners as knowledge telling (Hyland, 2003)\_ shows the different phases that the Saudi learner processes beginning as knowledge tellers till employing a new rhetorical writing approach and reaching the needed critical thinking level.

However, the researcher contends that an environment inclusive of stimulating content and effective teaching methodology can indeed produce competent writers in both L1 and L2. Student interviews conducted in the researcher's pilot study regarding writing needs, revealed students had extra writing practise in private schools, but those who studied in government schools had not.

Based on the researcher's past experiences as a student, teacher and parent, private schools reliably build-in opportunities for students to participate in creative activities such as art class and extracurricular activities like cooking, photography, and drama. These considerations to exploration and discovery are in sharp contrast to the flat abiding to of curricular subjects and textbook memorization.

Many Asian cultures, however, prefer maintaining and reproducing existing knowledge by memorization and imitation. Both memorisation and imitation demonstrate respect for the knowledge, but may seem to the unaware teacher like the copying others' ideas. According to Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987), this is "knowledge telling" which, to them, represents immature writing. Then knowledge telling may connote copying, plagiarism and memorization. The learner's objective is to recall what he or she can. If cultural considerations are ignored, teachers may see this as plagiarism or repetition (Leki, & Carson, 1997). In a review of cultural conceptions of self, Markus and Kitayama (1991) contrast the Western view that emphasizes the separateness and uniqueness of persons, with many non-Western cultures, who insist more on a sense of community. A commonly held truism in writing pedagogy is that texts must display their author's voice, and concepts such as voice and textual ownership are familiar. However, such concepts may create problems for L2 writers from more collectivist, interdependently oriented cultures (Ramanathan and Atkinson, 1999). For this reason, second language learners in the non-western cultures might find it difficult to express ideas freely in writing. They might find it difficult to challenge accepted knowledge in their effort to create new ideas.

Educational processes in Western contexts tend to reinforce analytical questioning, and maintain an evaluative stance toward knowledge by encouraging students to be critical and recombine existing sources of knowledge, to challenge traditional wisdom, and to form their own points-of-view. Students are often asked to analyze problems, to reflect on arguments, and to redraft their ideas, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987). In the Western classroom, "good writing" generally reflects the writer's individual creativity and critical thinking, and teachers frequently perceive their role as helping to develop these skills in their students. Teachers often expect writers to reflect their voice through their judgements, display their knowledge, and give their opinions. Similarly, Carroll (2002) suggests that students have to learn to write differently, to

produce new, more complicated forms addressing challenging topics with greater depth, complexity, and rhetorical sophistication. In the Arab culture, the students think of writing as transmitting ideas only rather than rhetorical organization. It was founded that there is a clear absence of students' personal voice in writing as they lack critical thinking and just paraphrase what has already been written before.

Asian writers transmit the knowledge of important thinkers as homage of respect and thus show respect for learning by passing it on to their readers. The hallmark of Western excellence in writing demands that the writer's voice be heard in a multi-resourced debate and argument, and such copying of other's ideas are perceived as carelessness and as plagiarism (Hyland, 2003). Pennycook (1996) discusses cross-cultural differences of opinion on plagiarism based on different cultural and educational backgrounds. A variety of cultural perspectives towards knowledge, texts and the self are indeed major factors to be considered in learning and writing. Students may be operating from different positions than their teachers about texts, authorship, and reader expectations which mean that clarity of objectives must be emphasized.

Various cultural beliefs about the nature of knowledge, and, learning and writing are not the only differences between writing in a first and second language. Culture also affects the classroom experience through student expectations concerning instruction and with the meanings they attach to the writing activities they are asked to perform. One influential theory of learning emphasized the idea of "situated cognition" (Lave and Wenger, 1991), that the setting and the activity of learning are inseparable from learning itself. In this sense, L2 writing instruction should be seen as an expression of culture. Moreover, because educational contexts are quite diverse students' previous learning experiences must be given consideration in the interest of the learner who may not have had adequate preparation, scheme or scaffolding to take on certain writing tasks and assignments (Hyland, 2003).

#### **4. The Influence of Culture on Writing in L2**

Kramsch (1993) posits that culture and language are intertwined. The second learner is exposed to a new culture through its food, beliefs, ways of life, and societal norms. The learner unconsciously becomes a part of it, and enters a stage of acculturation. Kramsch refers to the inseparable nature of culture and language as, "a single universe or domain of experience" (Kramsch, 1991, p. 227). In her book, *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*, Kramsch (1993) adamantly states that cultural awareness while learning the target second language aids in the attainment of L2 proficiency. In her view, second and foreign language learners necessarily become learners of the second culture because language cannot be learned without understanding the cultural context in which it is used.

##### **4.1. Cultural Resistance**

Research studies suggested that there exist cross-cultural differences in students' writings. In the field of contrastive rhetoric, the investigations have shown that multicultural and multilingual students tend to write differently from the native writers. In analyzing compositions written by second language students of English, Kaplan concluded that the differences he found were not simply grammatical or surface matters, but underlying rhetorical differences, including "paragraph order and structure" (Kaplan, 1987, p. 277). Furthermore, he made a comparison between ESL cultural practices and typical Western ones and found interesting results related to rhetorical trends and deviations (Piper, 1985). As an illustration, student writers from Anglo-European languages seemed to prefer linear developments, however student writers from Asian

languages seemed to take a more indirect approach, coming to their points at the end of their papers.

Research is emerging regarding the many aspects of foreign language learning's effect on the interpretative principles and paradigms of the learner's natal culture where the second language learner's cognitive ability is fundamentally affected by his or her culturally defined worldviews, beliefs, and assumptions (Kramsch, 1991). Cultural factors shape students' background understandings or schema knowledge and it's likely to have a considerable impact on their writing performance (Hyland, 2003). Simultaneously, he notes that writing topics are potentially culture-sensitive and may be inappropriate for some groups.

There are prohibitions, shared in Saudi Arabia and in other Islamic nations, on the topics of religion and family that cannot be discussed in the classroom. El-Araby (1983) notes that non-Arab teachers should be aware of cultural prohibitions to avoid inconsiderate references to the Arab learners' values. These topic prohibitions and other issues originate from conservative Islamic teachings that prescribes education to proceed cautiously, "without promoting morals and customs which are contradictory to our religious beliefs" (Shehatah, 1998, p.24 cited in Khafaji, 2004, p. 42). The Saudi learners' adherence to religion and conservative values prevents them from accepting a new culture with open arms.

Zhang (2004) did a study on the influence of topic choice, individual (cultural) stance and text types in different cultures. He notes that if the topic seems to be out of the student's cultural context, then he or she will find it difficult to express him or herself. Culture provides a set of values writers use in choosing how they write about a given topic, and as a result of these choices, writers produce quite different text types about different topics. Topics influence the decisions the writer makes and contextualize how the writer chooses to write, shaping the writer's view and stance that are then projected into the writing.

Based on the researcher's experience in the writing classroom, some Saudi learners find it difficult even to speak about certain topics of Western culture, and some resist embracing the new culture (Western) because of their sense of loyalty towards their religion (Islam), because Westerners are negatively perceived as open minded and liberal. Therefore, when it comes to writing in English, the activity of writing becomes even more complex. Corbett (2001) illustrates examples of repressed, suppressed and overt rhetorical conflict students face when they attempt to write in rhetorical forms that contradict or marginalize the ideas apparent in their native rhetoric. For instance, Corbett (2001) describes suppressed rhetoric when a Japanese student thinks it is unfair to write about any negative issue concerning his or her country; and when a Muslim student only talks of religion.

Also, in the researcher's experience, topics related to music and relationships have been sensitive subjects for some of the Saudi learners. Religion, politics, status, death and sex can be taboo topics, while the fact that "privacy" is not a universal concept means that writing about personal or family issues may seem intrusive to some learners (El-Araby, 1983; Barakat, 1993; Hyland, 2003). Since cultures attribute their own meanings to events and relationships, not all writers will be pleased to take a particular topic and write critically about it. Selection of writing topics can be sensitively approached with awareness for L2 writers when teachers understand the context they're working in. Awareness for the learners' and the teacher's cultural differences can help teachers cultivate different expectation for learners' out-put, resulting in more cooperative teaching and learning. This awareness will also facilitate the teacher's finding new ways to encourage and help students overcome years of educational conditioning which has barred creativity



#### **4.2. Religious Conformity**

Saudi Arabia is widely known as an Islamic country. In the Arab world, Islam permeates all of life, guiding tradition and contemporary lifestyle issues (Barakat, 1993). It is significant that the student has the Islamic creed as part of their life, and that students are furnished with Muslim values, teachings and ideals." (Ministry of Education, 1970, cited in Khafaji, 2004, p. 10). Some Saudi learners note that since English is a Western language, it may connote Western ways of thinking and beliefs which contradict the teachings of Islam (Ozog, 1989). As mentioned previously, this implies limiting topics appropriate for Saudi students to write to. Arab learners prefer not to lose their identity nor to lose their distinctive religious outlook, or be influenced by Western ways of teaching (Husain and Ashraf, 1979).

The beliefs and values of the Arab, Islamic society do not readily agree to the transfer of Western teacher education concepts and models (Richardson, 2004). Clarke and Otaky (2006) contradict Richardson's view regarding the Arab society by noting the opposite. From my point of view, there are still those who want to retain tradition and are unwilling to accept change, but there are also those who are moving forward by embracing new cultures without any kind of resistance.

#### **5. Conclusion and Implications**

The Arab learner is currently faced with many challenges in the age of globalisation. As pinpointed in the previous section, some Arab learners are faced with religious conformity, strict tradition as well as cultural resistance to certain topics of the West when it comes to writing in English. However, Arab learners need to keep up with the age of globalisation. Al-Essa (2006) notes the relevance of the English language as playing an important role worldwide as an effective tool for modernization, and as the language of science and technology. This is because the global economy, international business/commerce, science, technology and computer literacy are dominated by the USA at present. In this respect, as suggested by Howard Community College (1999), students must learn global competencies, embrace change and recognize the interconnectedness of all people with different life styles, backgrounds, beliefs and cultures in order to be effective in their learning and in their lives. Hence, approaching these relationships with tolerance would enable EFL learners to be creative and effective in their learning.

In the age of globalisation, Arab learners who experience resistance towards some topics or different cultures must practice cultural tolerance. Stephens (2002, p. 4) notes that "cultural tolerance is the ability of an individual to respect the beliefs, customs, and practices of a group or a race of people other than one's own." Vogt (1997) defined tolerance as the ability of individuals to endure things they do not necessarily like, even along the lines of cultural differences or diversity. With these points in consideration, students may learn to consider embracing the new culture with an open mind rather than resistance. If students do not learn to practice cultural tolerance they will not be receptive to learn anything new from any culture. Thus, they will just appreciate their own culture which will slow or even impede their learning.

The role of learning materials in the Arab classroom plays a significant role in embracing other cultures. Khafaji (2004) notes that the high school textbooks in the Arab context are purely designed in an Arabic setting since there is a need for learners to talk about their own culture with visitors. However, this will not encourage Arab learners to be exposed to other cultures. Another deeper reason is that such materials are usually designed to help students become aware of their own cultural identity. This could be the reason some Arab learners find some of the trends in Western culture difficult to embrace, because they have grown complacent in familiar



surroundings. Thus, when learners are confronted with different lifestyles and religions, some might find it difficult to accept.

It is hoped that this study might have provided a general view of the Arab learner, the common difficulties in writing, and a better comprehension of the influence of culture on writing. It has been noted earlier that language and culture are intertwined (Kramsch, 1991). An understanding and an awareness of how Arab learners write provide a grasp of how Arab learners learn. However, as Hyland (2003) explains we ought to not stereotype writers depending on their culture since it really depends on the writer's individual context, learning and past experience. Because of the Arab's strong religious background, a collectivist culture, some Arab learners may resist writing about certain topics, and prefer to write about familiar and general topics such as nature and country.

Though Arab learners are faced with obstacles in writing, competency can be achieved given proper exposure to appropriate materials and instruction. Transitioning learners from their rote learning background and moving them away from a memorizing strategy towards a creative movement is a major undertaking. If they are guided with the right supervision and made aware of their weaknesses, learners can manage to overcome the complexities of writing. Another challenge embedded in the students' educational background is that they have only been trained to follow a strictly structured format in writing which is similar to an audio-lingual method as explained by (Khafaji, 2004). Also, Saudi students are limited in exposure to restricted resources such as books and are subsequently limited in their thoughts, and are not be globally oriented. Therefore, it is quite hard for some students with such background to be in the knowledge transforming mode (Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987), but again if they are given the correct instruction and environment, they will undoubtedly perform better in writing (Hyland, 2003).

In summary, ESL learners need deeper understanding guidance and support from their teachers. The organisation of the ESL/EFL writings is influenced by the writer's cultural background. By being flexible to our judgements, being explicit about our expectations and giving reasons for our teaching methods are significant components to the learning process (Hyland, 2003). Importantly, writing in a second language is similar to exploring an unfamiliar territory. Teacher commitment is required in helping students overcome their resistance to writing through conflicting ideologies in a multicultural world is indeed crucial (Corbett, 2001). Teachers could find ways to make the learner comprehend writing in L2 and to take it in gradual steps. Also, teachers may be in a position to scaffold the learner till they become autonomous writers. Finally, with awareness for the Saudi learner, writing and culture has been brought to light and may prove beneficial to readers who are interested in learning about the obstacles that Saudi writers face.

#### **Implications for the Saudi learner:**

1. To be brave to search and experiment.
2. To develop self-autonomy in searching for ideas, and not be completely dependent on the teacher.
3. To achieve a transition from learner dependence to learner autonomy.
4. To know about new cultures and be inquisitive.
5. To overcome religious conformity by being flexible and having the ability to change and embrace new cultures without reservation.

#### **Implications for the Writing EFL teacher:**

1. To encourage activities that promote learner autonomy.

2. To motivate the student to be creative and think outside the box.
3. To encourage students to accept and appreciate different cultures, not just their own culture.
4. To reduce language anxiety in the writing classroom by providing interesting motivating materials for the students, and to translate when necessary when explaining instructions in writing. An awareness of the anxiety in writing will also help the learner to overcome this difficulty and able to write with confidence (Chan and Wu, 2004).
5. To be caring, patient and supportive when students feel frustrated to write and unable to find interesting ideas.
6. To scaffold the learner in all stages of writing.
7. To be aware of the learners' various learning styles, proficiency levels and motivation so that to design writing activities that would be appropriate and applicable to visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners.

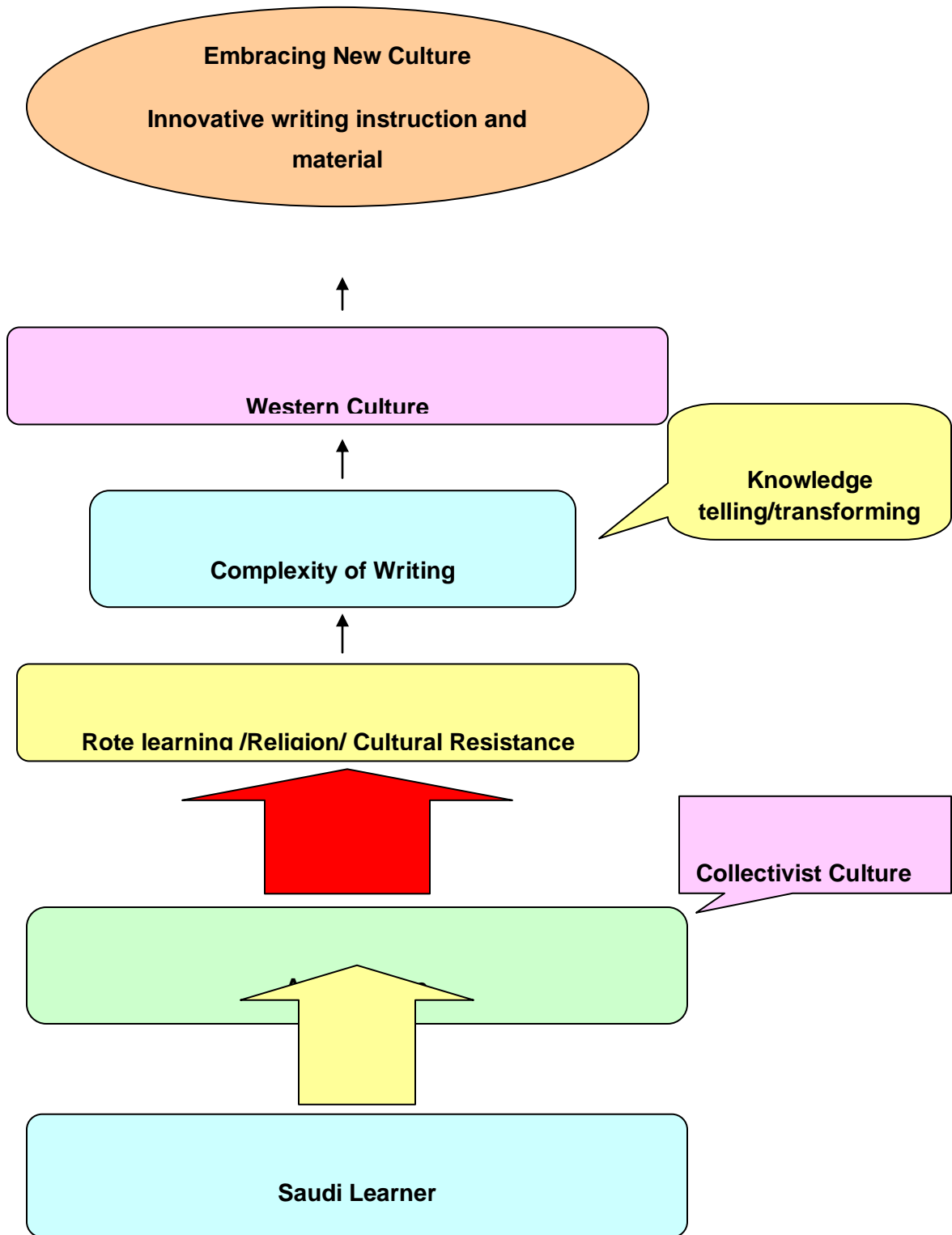


Figure 1. The Saudi learner and the writing challenges.

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## Alternative Causal Meanings of Some Arabic Particles and Prepositions with Reference to Selected Qur'anic Verses: A Semantic Analysis

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### Abstract

This paper investigates the concept of causality as a linguistic phenomenon, usually defined in terms of the relation of two events, states or situations where one of them causes and /or represents a result, an effect or concession of the other. Causality can be expressed by using particles and prepositions. These particles and prepositions – separable and inseparable – have different or secondary meanings besides the major one. These meanings can be interpreted according to the context in which they occur. This paper attempts to scrutinize the primary meaning and the secondary meaning of causal meaning of some particles and prepositions. Specifically, the coexistence of many possible meanings for some particles and prepositions is examined in certain selected Qur'anic verses highlighting some semantic aspects that have an impact on identifying causal meaning. The paper concludes that Arabic particles and prepositions have a very important function and are useful in sustaining those aspects elements related to semantic aspects in the translation of the Quran through a discussion of the alternative and semantic variations of particles and prepositions.

**Keywords:** *Alternation, Causal meaning, Particles, Prepositions, Semantics.*

## 1. Introduction

This paper is devoted to the study of causality, which occupies a fundamental place in linguistics and philosophical studies. It is usually defined in terms of the relation of two events, states or situations where one of them causes or represents a result, an effect or a concession of the other. The relationship between causality and meaning has a particular significance in language as nearly all linguists have agreed about the linguistic model in which semantics is at an end (Lyons, 1977; Ibn Hisham, 1998; Al-Samarrai, 1991 and Al-Ameedi, 1989). Yet, different linguistic elements and expressions are used to indicate the causal meaning. Additionally, the study of causality in Arabic language is of great significance because of its importance “as the language of a major culture and of a major religion” (Comrie, 1991, p.4). Therefore, in the Glorious Qur'an, there are exact causal particles that occur to carry special meaning as in:

**Example 1:** وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا لَئِمَّا رَبِّيَانِي صَغِيرًا (الاسراء/ 24)

And say: ‘My Lord! Have mercy on them both as they did care for me when I was little’ (Pickthall, 1971, p.366).

On the other hand, Arabic causality includes a group of particles that give different meanings according to the position of the element in speech and its effect on the following word. Parts of these elements that have causal meaning have significance on the following texts, like *الباء السببية causal ba'a* and *اللام lam* as in:

**Example 2:** وَإِنَّهُ لِحُبِّ الْخَيْرِ لَشَدِيدٌ (العاديات/8)

And LO! In the love of wealth he is violent (Pickthall, 1971, p.366).

**Example 3:** وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (المزمل/20)

And seek forgiveness of Allah. Lo! Allah is forgiving, merciful (Pickthall, 1971, p.774).

Thus, particles and prepositions in Arabic are subdivided according to their form into separable and inseparable. On the one hand, the separable preposition is the one that has a free form, which is not attached to the noun such as *من from*, *عن away from*, *على on* and *في in*. However, inseparable prepositions are always bound or rather prefixed to the nouns such as *ب/bi-/ 'of'* and *ل/li-/ 'for'*. On the other hand, separable particles include: *إِذ/when*, *لعل/perhaps*, *أَنَّ that*, *حتى so that* and inseparable are *الفاء so that*, *كي in order that and so on*. As such, the use of particles in selected Qur'anic verses with particular reference to their semantic significance highlighting their alternative meanings can be examined. Therefore, the coexistence of many possible meanings for a particle causes difficulty in managing the exact meaning to be used in translation. Accordingly, the importance of this paper arises from being of great use in sustaining those who are specialized in issues related to semantic aspects in the translation of certain Qur'anic verses through discussing some of the difficulties concerning the semantic variations of a particle.

## 2. Literature Review

This section reviews the literature on causality and Arabic particles (coordinating conjunctions, subjunctive or adverbials) and prepositions, which have causal meaning from different linguistic viewpoints through presenting general semantic aspects of causality in Arabic.

## 2.1 Definition of Causality in Arabic

There is a consensus among Arab philosophers and grammarians in their definitions of causality in the sense that asserts the necessary connection between the cause and its effect, the account that some philosophers and grammarians believe, the cause precedes the effect; this is obvious in the terminological notion of causality or causation, as illustrated by Ibn Mandhooor, which means

(اللسان: ماده "عل") "ما يتوقف عليه وجود الشيء ويكون خارجاً ومؤثراً فيه"

It is what the existence of a thing restricted to and it is an external and has impact upon the thing (Authors' translation).

Or as Al-Tahanwi (3, p.1045 cited in Nahar, 1987, p.47) modifies it

"علة الشيء وما يبيئد به من العلة على المعلول"

It is the caused thing which refers to the affected or patient (Authors' Translation).

Al-Alawi (D.749, 1914) defines causation as the situation where two clauses may be connected without the connective particle *و* *and* as in:

**Example 4:** وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُفَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ (البقرة/190)

Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors (Pickthall, 1971, p.36).

Al-Samarra'i (1991, p.86-90) claims that causality can be expressed by using prepositions such as *من* from, *الى* to, *عن* away from, *الى* on and *في* of *and so on* as elucidates in the following verse:

**Example 5:** بَلْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ (البقرة/88)

Nay, but Allah hath cursed them *for* their unbelief. Little is that which they believe (Pickthall, 1971, p. 16).

Furthermore, causation can be used to affirm the reasons of certain facts to be positively true. As such, the process of mentioning any state of affairs or event by conjoining it to its cause, or stating any reason conjoining it to its result, strengthens its impact on the recipient's mind and thinking process. Also, this process increases the property of the reliability of the state of affairs in question. Therefore, in contrast with telling a matter without joining it to its cause, it is better and most affective rhetorically to follow the former case (i.e. to mention the events or state, cause/effect and reason / result – with its cause (s)) for two reasons, as Al-Zarkeshi (1957, p.91) mentions. These reasons are as follows:

i. "إن النفوس ترتاح إلى نقل الأحكام المعللة بخلاف غيرها"

The justified events or states of matters which are causally asserted are more likely to be understood and believed rather than an unjustified or uncertain one, (the aspect which makes it unbelievable) (Authors' translation).

ii. "إن العلة المنصوص عليها تقتضي بعموم المعلول"

The existence of a reason requires and proves the existence of the result, i.e. whenever there are causes there are effects or whenever there are results there are reasons ; this means that the matters in question do actually exist (Authors' translation).

As a result, causation plays a greater role in the reliability of most of our communicated matters or information in our speech. For this, thinkers, authors and others, occasionally, may create alleged (i.e. unreal) causes, of events that have happened, in a rhetorical uncommon/unusual use in order to intensify their attentions or their opinions, whether the caused matters (the effects, or results) have a stable well-known temporally related reasons or not. This kind of causation is what the Arab rhetoricians called "Rhetorical causation", حسن التعليل (Al-Qazwini, n.d. p. 264). Causality can be expressed by using different types of particles and prepositions as will be illustrated in the following sections.

## 2.2 Arabic Particles and Prepositions and Alternative Meanings

Arab grammarians have devoted great deal of effort and studies to the study of particles and prepositions. Sibawayhi in his book (Al-Kitaab) maintains that "فالكلم اسم أو فعل وحرف جاء لمعنى ليس باسم ولا (i.e. *the speech consists of nouns or verbs and particles which are used for certain meaning*). Then, he uses the general term *Huroof* حروف to denote both particles and prepositions which have their specific structures and meanings. Concerning the terminological debate on prepositions, Al-Samarra'i (1991) illustrates that prepositions are also called *additive particles* حروف الإضافة because they add meanings of verbs to nouns to link or connect them. Also, Al-kufa school call such type of particles or prepositions as *genitive particles* حروف الخفض and *attributive particles* حروف الصفات, because they govern their complements (nouns) in the genitive case with a new adjective or meaning such as the meaning of duration or time, portative, causative, place or simple position and other descriptive meanings of nouns. Therefore, Arab grammarians suggest that prepositions are called as such because they assign meanings of verbs to nouns, i.e. the nouns have the meaning of verbs.

However, there is a debate between the two Arabic linguistic schools (Al-Basrah and Al-Kufah) concerning some particles, which are used to denote a causal meaning like *in order to* (كي) and *so that* (الفاء). Al-Akfish (D. 215 H.), one of Al-Basrah school's figures, maintains that *in order to* (كي) is a preposition used to indicate causation. It is used in the same way as (اللام). Al-Kufa school, on the other hand, restricts the use of *in order to* (كي) to a subjunctive particle only (Ibn Hisham, 1996, p.138).

Another particle which has been widely discussed is *so that* (الفاء). This is, perhaps, due to the fact that *so that* (الفاء) has different syntactic functions; it attached to an imperative or a present verb to indicate a request, (Al-Maliqi, 1975, p.336); or *so that* (الفاء) precedes a predicate, (Al- Mubarrid, 1994, p.342), as in:

**Example 6:** وَمَا بِكُمْ مِّنْ نُّعْمَةٍ فِيمَنَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ (53/النحل)

And whatever of comfort ye enjoy, it is from Allah. (Pickthall, 1971, p. 161)

Al-Baghdadi (971 H., p.38) argues that Sibawayhi and other grammarians believe that *so that* (الفاء) (*fa'a*) precedes a subordinating clause which embodies a conditional meaning and it is a subordinating conjunction used to indicate causal meaning. Therefore, this means that *so that* (الفاء) precedes the predicate only when the predicate includes the meaning of a condition. Thus, particles are used to precede subordinate clauses that refer to a cause. This opinion asserts causal meaning in an Arabic clause. In fact, determining the meaning of a particle can be achieved through illustrating the syntactic function of a particle in a certain context by a process of parsing. For instance there are certain restrictions on the use of *so that* (الفاء) (i.e., whether it is additional, coordinator or causal) realised through the process of parsing used by Arab grammarians in determining the meaning of *so that* (الفاء) in any context. Accordingly, the constraints on the meaning of any particle, causal or not, is subject to a great extent to the context in which it is used (cf. Ibn Al-Atheer, 1960, p. 235-242; Al-Zarkeshi, 1972, p.175).

In addition to their primary meaning, particles and prepositions can be used in an alternative way as mentioned by Al-Kawarizmi (as cited in Zwin, 1986, p.110) to express another meaning. They may

change from introducing their basic meanings to introduce other alternative meanings. This is due to certain linguistic contexts. To elaborate, Al-Muradi (1975, p.44) contends that a particle or a preposition has a principal use (meaning), but it may also express other meanings, which may be understood out of context. For instance الباء /ba'a/ is used for *attachment* الإلصاق as a primary meaning; however, it may also express *المجازاة والتعديّة*, transitivity and ergativity or it may be used to mean عن on as in:

**Example 7:** سَأَلْ سَائِلٌ يَبْذَابُ وَاقِعٌ (1/المعارج)

A questioner questioned concerning the doom about to fall (Pickthall, 1971, p.763).

The ب /ba'a/ in واقِعٌ *the doom about to fall* in (7) means عن /in/ .

Similarly, the preposition من /mina/ may also mean في /fii/ as in:

**Example 8:** إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ (9/الجمعة)

when the call is heard for the prayer of the day of congregation (Pickthall, 1971, p.741).

The clause من يوم الجمعة *of the day of congregation* [congregation means Friday according to the authors' translation] in (8) means في يومه or it may be used alternative with إلى (i.e. في /fii/ and إلى /la/) can be used interchangeably) as in:

**Example 9:** اقْتَرَبْتُ مِنْهُ

I am close to him.

Because of this, it seems that a preposition has many different meanings. Thus, this issue has been a matter of partial disagreement between Al-Basrah and Al-Kufa schools. The first school observes that each particle has one real (specialised) meaning. The second school maintains that it is possible for each particle (prepositions or others) to be used alternatively. They even assert that a particle has more than one meaning. It has a real (specialised) meaning and an alternative or extensional meaning (cf. Ibn Hisham, 1996; Al-Siyuti, 1327 H.). In line with al-Kufa school's viewpoint, Arab grammarians such as Sibawaihi, Al-Rummani, Ibn Jenni and Al-Maliqi have agreed that the meanings of particles and prepositions are dependent on the context in which they are used. Nahar (1987, p.62) further illustrates that most Arab grammarians did not determine the exact meaning of each particle independently due to its context dependent nature; therefore, there are numerous numbers of meanings to each particle.

Thus, as Al-Samarra'i (1991) proposes, that particles that are not used alternatively rather their meanings may be approached to each other. Each preposition has its own meaning, function or use depending on the context.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of analysing and describing causal meanings of some particles and prepositions in Arabic, the researchers have adopted an eclectic model made up of a number of scholars such as Al-Muradi (1975), Faris and Zakeria (1985), Nahar (1987) and Al-Samarra'i (1991). They do not enumerate or collect those particles and prepositions randomly without a clear aim, rather they adopt a systematic and an analytic way in their studies. They review particles and prepositions from different perspectives and follow different ways of classification. For example, Al-Muradi (1975) classifies particles according to whether they are monolateral, bilateral, and so on. Then, he describes each



particle in a separate section illustrating its meaning with examples, mentioning that a particle may have a principal meaning and other interchangeable meanings which may be understood out of context.

Faris and Zakeria (1985) depend on the alphabetical order of Arabic particles and prepositions. They give a definition to each one and a determination of its function supported with illustrated examples. Nahar (1986) further discusses causal constructions in Arabic (vis. Explicit causality) syntactically and semantically. He classifies the devices of causation into (التعليل بالمصدر الصريح (المفعول) لأجله, causation with object of purpose; التعليل بالجملة, causation throughout a sentence. Then, he distinguishes between the particles that introduce the noun, particles that introduce the verb, and particles which are used for both contexts. Finally, Al-Samarra'i (1991) clarifies Arabic causality through two major means, vis. *Arabic particles* or *prepositions* and *object of purpose*. He states that although all causal particles are used to refer to causality, each one of them has its specific meaning.

#### 4. Methodology

For the purpose of the present study, a number of selected Qur'anic verses to investigate Arabic particles and prepositions have been selected. . The particles and prepositions have been arranged according to the Arabic alphabetical order with a brief explanation for each particle. The use of words in a text (a verse) in a perfect tightly consistence construction is Qur'anic expression property so that the meaning of each word fits its syntactic position in a way that no other word might replace it. This absolute highly relevant and strong construction which relates an expression to its meaning is realised through the rhetoric of the Qur'anic context. Al-Samarra'i (1991) maintains that there is no use of two different constructions of the same linguistic element having exactly one identical semantic sense in the Qur'an, rather there must be a special use, function or semantic reference for each utterance or expression in certain Qur'anic text. This certifies that a particle has a context – dependent meaning.

#### 5. Analysis and Discussion

Arabic particles and prepositions which have causal meanings in addition to their principle meanings are analysed and discussed in the following two subsections:

##### 5.1 Arabic Particles and Causal Meaning

There are certain Arabic particles which have a causal meaning in addition to their principle meaning as those which are used as coordinating conjunctions, subjunctive or adverbial particles. They can be listed as follows:

###### 5.1.1 إِذْ: when, since, after, because

It is an adverbial particle of past in its basic use as in:

**Text 1:** إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ (40/التوبة)

If Ye help him not, still Allah helped him when those who disbelieve drove him forth, the second of two, when they two were in the cave (Pickthall, 1971, p.246).

The adverbial clause إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ in (Text 1) means عندما أخرجهُ with reference to the past.

Haywood and Nahmad (1965, p.439) clarify إِذْ as: "a separable conjunction" It can be used to express causality, to mean because, بسبب or other words in the same sense such as: لَأَجْلِ ذَلِكَ and لِأَنَّ ,because of . It may be followed by a nominal or a verbal sentence, as in:

**Text 2:** وَلَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ إِذْ ظَلَمْتُمْ (39/الزخرف)

And it profiteth you not this day, because Ye did wrong (Pickthall, 1971, p.303).

Nahar (1987, p.71) states that إِذْ in (197.b) means لَأَجْلِ ظَلَمْتُمْ. It also means بسبب ظلمكم .

Then, لِ obviously is used to indicate causality with reference to time (cf. Ibn Hisham, 1989; Ibn Jinni, 1990; and Al-Muradi, 1975).

### 5.1.2 أَنَّ: **that, so that, in order that**

It is a separable conjunction which introduces a complementary clause. According to Haywood and Nahmed (1965) أَنَّ, is followed "with a verbal sentence the verb being occasionally in the perfect nearly always in the imperfect subjunctive كأن equals to *as though*; لأن equals to *because*". Furthermore, ألا (*that not*) which is compound of أَنَّ + لا. لئلا (*in order not or so that not*) also compound of لأن + لا (cf. Wright, 1974).

أَنَّ *that* can be used to introduce a verbal sentence acting as a subjunctive particle, as in the following Quranic verse:

**Text 3:** يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ أَنْ تَضِلُّوا (النساء/176)

Allah expoundeth unto you, so that Ye err not (Pickthall, 1971, p.133).

Nahar (1987) certifies that the particle أَنَّ is used to indicate causality acting as a linking particle as in:

**Text 4:** جنت أن أعطي

I came so that to give.

Syntactically, the particle أَنَّ, in its medial position links *came* جنت clause and أعطي *give*. Semantically, it indicates the cause of جنت *came* (i.e. the cause of المجيء, coming), which is للاعطاء, to give. أَنَّ implies the meaning of the causal particle اللام.

### 5.1.3 إِنَّ: **truly, certainly, surely, because**

The basic use of إِنَّ is for assertion. It introduces a nominal sentence as in:

**Text 5:** إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَعَّةٍ مَبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ (96 / آل عمران)

Lo! The first Sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Becca, a blessed place, guidance to the peoples (Pickthall, 1971, p.77).

This sentence (i.e., the sentence introduced with إِنَّ) may be considered as an answer to a question asks about a cause or a reason, as indicated in the following Glorious Qur'anic verse:

**Text 6:** وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ (20/ المزل)

And seek forgiveness of Allah. Lo! Allah is forgiving, merciful (Pickthall, 1971, p.774)

إِنَّ in (Text 6) indicates causality. It introduces an answer (understood as لإن الله.....) of a question which asks about the reason or the cause of seeking of Allah forgiveness.

### 5.1.5 حتى: **till, up to, so that, to, in order that, so as, for, etc...**

It is originally a separable particle (Wright, 1974) as in:

**Text 7:** سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ (5 / القدر)

that night is peace until the rising of the dawn) (Pickthall, 197, p.814).

In this verse, حتى *until* in (Text 7) has the meaning of إلى, till or until to express temporal limit.

Faris and Zakeria (1985:88) state that the particle حتى which is followed by a present verb in the subjunctive case may have three meanings: إلى أن, *till*; إلا, *except* and كي, *so that* or *that*. The last one (حتى كي): connects two clauses with a causal meaning as illustrated in the following example:

**Text 8:** (البقرة/193) وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for Allah. But if they desist, then let there be no hostility except against wrong-doers (Pickthall, 1971, p.37).

They mention that حتى *until* in the above Qur'anic verse means كي *in order to*. حتى *until* connects وقاتلوهم clause *fight them* with لا تكون فتنة clause *persecution is no more*. It introduces a subordinate clause of purpose with a reference to the futurity. Thus, the use of حتى *until* but to certain context in which it indicates causation, according to its meaning as equivalent to كي *in order to*.

### 5.1.6 الفاء : next, so that

The particle الفاء *next* is used to mean succession (التعقيب والترتيب) at an interval (Wright, 1974) as in:

**Text 9:** (فاطر/36) لَا يُفْضَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوتُوا

Neither will it have a complete killing effect on them so that they die nor shall its torment be lightened for them (Pickthall, 1971, p.504).

Al-Zajaj (N.D, p.195) say that it is possible to introduce a predicate with الفاء *so that* if it contains a request verb or if there is a negative case as الفاء *so that* in (Text 9) which introduces the result they die, لَا يُفْضَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ of the reason فَيَمُوتُوا. Neither will it have a complete killing effect on them. Thus the particle الفاء is used to indicate a causal meaning. The verb (فَيَمُوتُوا) is in the subjunctive mode because in Arabic syntax whenever a verb is used in such case (vis. Introduced with causal fa'a), it should follow the grammatical rule of subjectivity. الفاء *so that* here is used to express causal meaning since it is preceded and introduced by a negative sentence لَا يُفْضَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ started with negative particle لَا *not*.

### 5.1.7 كي : in order that, that, so that

The separable particle كي *in order to* has two phases. The first is a subjunctive particle equivalent to the subjunctive particle أَنْ. The second is a preposition used as a causal particle (Ibn Hisham, 1998, p.182) and (Nahar, 1978, p.75) as in:

**Text 11:** (القصص/13) فَرَدَدْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ أُمِّهِ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ

So did we restore him to his mother, that her eye might be comforted, and that she not grieve (Pickthall, 1971, p.443).

**Text 12:** (الاحزاب/50) لِكَيْلَا يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا

In order that there should be no difficulty on you. And Allah is Ever Oft – Forgiving, Most Merciful (Pickthall, 1971, p.488).

This verse also involves a purpose or reason relation, but with a negative meaning. These relations are displayed explicitly by لكيلا (a compound form of لكي and لا). كيلا (a compound form of كي and لا), and لئلا (a compound form of لأن and لا) may be understood indirectly, in the way of illustration, to have the same meaning.

### 5.1.8 اللام (...-): to, for, because

اللام *to* is an inseparable particle and its various meanings are: Specification to indicate the right of property to show that a person has a right to it, transitivity or causality; that is, to show the purpose for which, and the reason why anything is done. Expressing causal meaning can be shown in the following verse:

**Text 13:** (9/ الانسان) إِنَّمَا نَطَعْنَكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ

we feed you seeking Allah's countenance only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you (Pickthall, 1971, p.688).

لام التعليل may introduce both nouns and verbs. Semantically speaking, it indicates the relationship of the action to its purpose and cause. Al-Muradi (1975, p. 145) suggests that اللام in (Text 13) means من اجل (i.e. من اجل وجه الله). That is causality with اللام expresses specification. In other words, what follows اللام because the is the cause precisely and not any other causes.

### 5.1.9 لعل : perhaps, in order to, to, so as

لعل perhaps is one of إن that set (a set of particles used to introduce nouns) .It introduces its subject in the accusative case. Nahar (1987, p.69-70) argues that لعل perhaps principle or original use is to indicate a hope or a wish with the meaning of perhaps. Ibn Ya'ish (D. 686 H.) (1963: 85-86) emphasises that لعل perhaps in the Qur'an means كي in order to, saying that (and not perhaps) whenever it is used in the Qur'an; this is because there is no doubt or probability in (Allah's Most Griseous Most High words) although it is still uttered publicly the same people uttered it as (لعل); yet, it positively means كي with sense of certain cause as in (Text 14)

**Text 14:** فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَى (44 / طه)

And speak to him mildly, perhaps he may accept admonition or fear Allah (Pickthall, 1971, p.354).

### 5.1.10 الواو: and

الواو and is a separable particle. Zakeria and Faris (1985: 244) maintain that الواو has various uses such as: subjunctive, coordinative, a preposition and oath, واو القسم ; as in:

**Text 15:** والله (by God!) (Wright, 1974, p. 175).

**Text 16:** وصل الأب وفرح الأطفال

The father arrived and children got happy. Abdullah (1999, p.68)

الواو, and in (Text 16) وفرح الأطفال expresses the meaning of a result of the content of the preceding clause وصل الأب, the father arrived. Then, Abdullah (1999) adds that the content of (16) can be interpreted in terms of cause represented by the first clause and effect represented by the second one.

In addition, Al-Kharezanji (D. 348 H. as cited in Nahar, 1987, p.78) affirms that الواو has a causal meaning in:

**Text 17:** أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمِ الصَّابِرِينَ (142/آل عمران)

or deemed ye that ye would enter paradise while yet Allah knoweth not those of you who really strive, nor knoweth those (of you) who are steady? (Pickthall, 1971, p.89).

He suggests that الواو in ويعلم الذين while yet Allah knoweth means ليعلم الذين i.e. الواو and here it is equivalent to اللام because.

## 5.2 Arabic Prepositions and Causal Meaning.

Arabic prepositions have many interchangeable meanings due to their context dependent nature. This subsection presents the prepositions which can be regarded as causal connectors besides their basic grammatical nature as prepositions as follows:

### 5.2.1 الباء: by, in, with, because of, on account, etc...

It is an inseparable preposition. It introduces a nominal sentence (or a clause) to express various meanings such as: in or at (place) بِبياب الـ... , (Transitivity) بِذهبت بـ... , (instrument) بِالسكين *with knife* , or accompaniment with بِقَوْمِهِ *with his relatives*, (Oath) بِأقسم بالله *I swear by Allah*, cause or reason: on account, by (cf. Aziz, 1989: 187) as in:

**Text 18:** قد ظلمت نفسك بِقَوْلِكَ هذا

By Saying So, you have done yourself injustice.

However, Al-Muradi (1975, p.103) as well as other Arab linguists and grammarians consider الباء as one of the causal particles or connectors. Ibn Malik (as cited in Nahar, 1987, p.66) distinguishes between causal بِ *ba'a* and instrumental بِ *ba'a*. The former introduces the cause of a verb denoting an event or an act and it can be replaced by causal لَام *lam*, whereas the latter introduces a noun of instrument with or by which the act is performed as illustrated in the following examples:

**Text 19:** يتوفيق الله حججت

By God's help I have performed the pilgrimage (to Mekka) (Wright, 1974, p.160).

**Text 20:** قتله بِالسيف

He slew him with the sword (Wright, 1974, p.160).

This preposition can be used to express a causal meaning as in the following Qur'anic verses:

**Text 21:** إنكم ظلمتم أنفسكم بِلتخاذكم العجل (البقرة/54)

Ye have wronged yourselves by your choosing of the calf (for worship) (Pickthall, 1971, p.20)

**Text 22:** فكلنا أخذنا بِذنوبه (العنكبوت/40)

We took each one in his sin (Pickthall, 1971, p.103).

### 5.2.2 على : on, in spite of, for, on account of

على *on* is a separable preposition. It is basically used to refer to superiority الاستعلاء, simple position: on. Al- Mubarrid (1994:426) states that it is used for الاستعلاء really (actually) or rhetorically (unreal). Arab grammarians such as Ibn Hisham (1998, p.143) and Al-Muradi (1975, p.455) assert the causal use of على *on*. They exemplify its causal meaning with the following Qur'anic verse:

**Text 23:** وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمْ (البقرة/185)

and that Ye should magnify Allah for having guided you, and that perad venture Ye may be thankful (Pickthall, 1971, p.35)

على *on* in (23) has the meaning of لـ... , for that is to say على ما هداكم means for having guided لهدائه *إياكم*. It expresses cause or reason. In other contexts, it may have the meaning of contrast or concession, على الرغم من ; in spite of as in:

**Text 24:** انه نشيط على كبر سنه

He is active in spite of his old age (Aziz, 1989, p.189).

It is noted in (23) that على *on* indicates causality, but with reference the position of superiority الاستعلاء.

### 5.2.3 عن : from, about, for, because of, etc...

It is basically a separable preposition. Aziz (1989) presents various meanings of عن from such as a place-negative sense: away from, simple position, subject matter: about or cause, reason: for, because of, etc... as in the following example:

**Text 25:** فعل ذلك عن كراهية

He did that because of hatred.

It is also used to indicate causality as most of Al-Kufa grammarians as stated by Nahar (1987, p.67) declare its meaning through the following example:

**Text 26:** وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَن مَّوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَّهَا إِيَّاهُ (114/ التوبة)

The prayer of Abraham for the forgiveness of his father was only because of a promise he had promised him (Pickthall, 1971, p.261).

عن from in the above example (26) in عن موعده means لموعدة because of a promise. It indicates the relation of cause or reason موعدة (a promise he had) to a result الاستغفار (the prayer for the forgiveness). The preposition عن indicates causality but with the meaning of المجاورة, a way from. (I.e.) the cause is وجاوز away or far from the result.

#### 5.2.4 في : in, at, into, because of, etc...

It is a separable preposition. It has different adverbial uses and meanings such as in, at a place or time, or into place, etc... (Wright, 1974, p.150). Al-Muradi (1975: 266) states that الظرفي adverbial meaning is its principle use. Yet, he mentions the significance of في in indicating causality as illustrated in the following example:

**Text 27:** لآلمه في ذلك

He blamed him because of it (Wright, 1974, p. 155).

في in (27) means بسبب ذلك because of it. It is equivalent to الباء. Al-Samarra'i (1991, p.89) illustrates that الفاء *fa'a* is used as a causal connector with an adverbial meaning as follows:

**Text 28:** لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (14/النور)

an awful doom had overtaken you for that where of ye murmured (Pickthall, 1971, p. 457).

Then he explains that في in is used to indicate the meaning of cause for or because of but with reference to an adverb of place in or where (i.e. العذاب an awful doom is inside الإفاضة murmured (as a place) and/ or الإفاضة: murmured contains العذاب).

#### 5.2.5 الكاف : like as or as

الكاف like as is an attached preposition or it may be synonymous with مثل likeness (Haywood and Nahmad, 1965: 354) as in the following example which indicates the principle meaning of الكاف like as:

**Text 29:** سريع كالبرق

(quick like lightning).

There are three forms of the causal كاف like as. The first form is بـ (ما الزائدة), attached to an additional ما *ma* as in:

**Text 30:** وَادْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَاكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمَنِ الضَّالِّينَ (198/البقرة)

Remember him as he hath guided you, although before ye were of those a stray (Pickthall, 1971, p. 38).



لِ in (30) كَمَا means ... لِ, as or for; لِهَدَايَتِهِ إِيَّاكُمْ. The second form is unattached to an additional ma as in:

**Text 31:** وَيَكَاَنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ (82/القصص)

Ah, welladay ! the disbelievers never prosper) (ibid: 518).

That is أعجب لِعَدَمِ فَلَا حَمَمَ لِ كَاَنَّهُ means لِأَنَّهُ, because. It indicates the cause of أعجب. The third form is المقرونة بـ(ما المصدرية), attached to accusative ما as for instance:

**Text 32:** لَمَّا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا (151/البقرة)

even as we have sent unto you a messenger from among you (Pickthall, 1971, p. 28).

لَمَّا in كَمَا in (212.d) means لِأَجْلِ (i.e. إِرسالي فيكم رسولاً). It indicates a reason or a cause.

### 5.2.6 مِنْ : from, of , on account of, because of

مِنْ is a separable preposition. Wright (1974) mentions that مِنْ originally indicates motion proceeding from or out of, as departure from a place as:

**Text 33:** سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى (1/الاسراء)

I declare the glory of him who transported his servant by night from the sacred temple (at Mekka) (Pickthall, 1971, p. 99).

Arab grammarians say that مِنْ when used in the above signification is employed لابتداء الغاية في المكان to denote the commencement of the limit in place and time, or simply it denotes الابتداء commencement. Ibn Hisham (1998); Faris and Zakeria (1985); Nahar (1987); Al-Samarra'i (1991) and others maintain that the مِنْ from is used to express cause or causality as in:

**Text 34:** مِمَّا خَطَبْتَهُمْ أُغْرِقُوا فَأَدْخَلُوا نَارًا (25/نوح)

Because of their sins they were drowned, then made to enter a fire (Pickthall, 1971, p.768).

## 4. Conclusions

This paper was mainly intended to discuss some of Arabic particles and prepositions which convey causal meanings. It stresses the links between the primary and secondary senses of these particles and prepositions. It presents ten particles and six prepositions with their various meanings. Every preposition entails a number of senses, one is primary and the others are secondary. However, these primary senses represent the linking frame that comprises the other secondary senses within its range. Basically, Arabic particles and prepositions alternate with one another for rhetorical purposes. The paper has showed that Arabic particles through manifesting the linguistically and philosophical views expressed by different Arab grammarians and philosophers have come up with the following influential points:

1. The significant feature of Arabic particles and prepositions – separable and inseparable – lies in their interchangeability, which reveals the possibility of a wide variety of causal meaning and other meanings.
2. In expressing causal meaning, there are kinds of causal relations that determine it. Arabic particles are used to refer to a number of them as in:
  - A. الكاف like as, اللام لام, إِذْ when, لِأَنَّ because, أَنَّ that are used to indicate the causal meaning of cause-reason relation.
  - B. Causal fa'a الفاء السببية is used to express the meaning of cause-result relation.
  - C. الواو and and إِنَّ that are used to indicate the meaning of cause-concession relation.

3. The adverbial clause introduced with إِذ is used to indicate causal meaning but with the sense of past reference.
4. Arabic conditional sentences present the fact of relatedness between conditionality and causal meaning implicitly, therefore expressing causal meaning in this case can be interpreted and understood out of context.
5. Arabic particles have more specification in their causal use i.e. a particle expresses causal meaning, ut with a reference to its principle basic meaning used before, such as حَتَّى until introduces a clause of purpose with a reference to the futurity. It expresses causal meaning, but with certain specification (this fact may distinguish between causal meanings expressed with certain particle from another one).
6. Arabic causality has the aspect of forward directionality of its causal relations, but it can be considered within temporal sequence and/ or natural sequence.
7. Some of the particles used in the Qur'an basically have assertion meaning like أَنَّ but others are not like لَعَلَّ perhaps, however in the Qur'anic verse, it is used with an assertion meaning only.
8. In Arabic, causal meaning introduced in the Qur'an through using explicit particles is syntactically dependent whereas, causal meaning understood through the context implicitly is semantically dependent.
9. Arabic causal connector has more specification on its causal use (i.e. a particle or a preposition express causality but with a reference to the principle basic meaning of the particle used, such as عَلَى on which express causality but with certain specification (as for instance عَلَى expresses causal meaning with reference of superiority الاستعلاء; on, upon or over).

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## **Towards an Action Research Approach to ELT in Morocco: Why, and how ?**

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### **Abstract**

While the practice of carrying out action research of various scopes has lately been the academic tradition in English language classrooms in many international contexts, most Moroccan teachers of English devote themselves to the teaching routine, but seldom reflect on the issues underlying the teaching/ learning process. Also, the new educational reform, just like the previous ones, stresses the need to change just teaching methods and textbooks. However, any attempt to change education cannot be achieved without teacher change. The aim of the present paper is to argue for the need to adopt an action research approach to English language teaching in the Moroccan educational system.

**Keywords:** action research, teacher-research, practitioner-research, reflective practice, professional development.

## 1. Introduction

As a matter of fact, the public perception of teaching in Morocco is that it is a simple task, merely requiring the teacher to present information to students, and test them to see that they have learned it. As teachers know, teaching is a much more complex task. The problem with classroom research being conducted by outside researchers is that classrooms are very complicated specific contexts, replete with their own routines and expectations which are difficult for outside observers to understand. According to Pica (1996, p. 59), classrooms are complicated “social communities” because teachers are confronted by a diversity of students who differ markedly in what they bring to the classroom in terms of their ability level, gender, learning style, motivation and attitude toward the teaching/learning process. Therefore, Stringer (2014, p.14) maintains that there is no “one-size-fits-all” formula that teachers can apply to their teaching in all situations. Language teachers, hence, may find themselves in need to engage in systematic processes of inquiry as an ongoing feature of their classroom life in order to analyse their teaching practice, and their students’ progress as part of the process of planning classroom activities. The more aware they become of the consequences of their teaching, the more control they get over how to teach.

Given this need for teachers to understand their own classroom situations, action research, or variously identified as teacher-research/ practitioner-research/reflective practice, provides the means for them to build a body of knowledge about the students under their care, and to incorporate it into an effective program of teaching and learning. The term “action research” was adopted to describe a small-scale investigation undertaken by a class teacher. Kemmis (1983,p.179) describes it as a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by teachers in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own educational practices, their understanding of those practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out. With the advent of this type of research, there has been a common focus on practice as inquiry. North (1987, p.37) contends that practice becomes inquiry only when practitioners/ teachers themselves identify a classroom problem and search for possible causes and solutions. This trend of research gives voice to the teacher who is the closest to students. It empowers teachers to take an active, leadership role in their teaching context, reflect on and improve their practice. As such, teachers become less vulnerable to, and less dependent on, external answers to the challenges they face in their specific classroom contexts.

As a matter of fact, action research is widely used in the western context by teachers who use it to improve their practice. In Morocco, however, it hasn’t become a tradition yet for teachers to see action research as an integral part of their responsibilities as professionals dedicated to developing their teaching and themselves. However, high schools in Morocco are changing radically-there are more students, new teaching programs and methods, and increasing debates around standards and effectiveness. In fact, the adoption of the National Charter for Education and Training (NCET), issued in 2000, resulted in drastic reform touching upon many aspects of the educational system in Morocco. Among the many aspects dealt with in the reform is the status of foreign languages in the Moroccan educational system. As a way of meeting national aspirations for openness and communication at the global level, the charter devotes a large space to teaching foreign languages including English. Article 110 in the second part of the charter clearly states the reasons behind enhancing the teaching of foreign languages:

- Considering the country’s geo-strategic position, as a civilization crossroads;
- Considering the neighborhood bonds between the Maghreb, African and European dimensions;



-Considering the country's insertion into the tendency to communication and open approach at a global level.

(NCET, Part II, Art.110)

In order to facilitate the initiation of learners to foreign languages as well as their command, the reform stresses the need to revise and adapt the programs and methods, the school manuals and the didactic supports (NCET, Part II, Art. 106). Moreover, the following orientations are also to be implemented:

-The teaching of each foreign language shall be connected with the teaching of cultural, technological or scientific modules, in the same language and within the schedule limits foreseen for it, in order to allow its functional use and its constant practical exercise, and, therefore, the consolidation, the maintenance and the improvement of the linguistic communication competences, in the strict sense;

-The upgrading of language teachers shall be undertaken in a systematic and planned manner, and so shall be undertaken the regular assessment of language acquisition.

-A foreign language ten-year development plan shall have to be drawn by June 2000. This plan ought to define the different aspects regarding its implementation, based on the language objectives stipulated in Article 112:

-creation of a training body for teachers;

-recruitment and training of teachers, improvement of the training of active teachers by recurring to continuing education, and elaboration of adequate pedagogical methods and didactic tools;

-preparation of the national assessment tests, and the implementation schedule and the financial means that are to be used.

(NCET, Part II, Art.117)

Reading the above sections in the Charter devoted to languages clearly indicates that this language policy focuses on the improvement of the quality of education and training. The teacher has therefore been called upon to adapt to this new situation. In fact, practitioners have always been held publicly accountable for student achievement results. Paradoxically, however, they are denied responsibility for making decisions in the operations of the teaching learning process.

Recent reform related to teaching languages, like the previous ones, reinforces a traditional paradigm in academic staff development that emphasizes the practice and perfection of only teaching methods and techniques. In fact, this paradigm is rooted in a training tradition of skills and objectives, outcomes, prediction and control of what is to be learnt and how. However, modern approaches to teaching and staff development center the role of teacher reflection in the teaching/learning process. Action research/teacher research and teacher inquiry is part of a new vision of teacher education and professional development. It suggests that what educators need are opportunities to explore and question their own and others' interpretations, practices, and ideologies.

According to Scheidler (1994, p. 45-56), any attempt to reform education cannot be achieved without teacher change. And the key to substantial change is professional development. Moroccan teachers need to adopt a self-reflective attitude to their work, they need to explore and test new ideas, methods and materials, to assess how effective the new approaches are, to share feedback with fellow team members, and to make decisions about which new approaches to include in the curriculum, instruction and assessment plans. According to Fullan (2000, p. 34) teachers should be key players in the change process and not observers on the sideline watching the process moving back and forth.



In line with this argument, this paper highlights the need for a new professionalism in ELT in Morocco. This paper also attempts to propose an action research approach to ELT in Morocco to assist teachers to achieve the professional development that enables them to meet the demands of change rather than fail to participate in the process. And finally, it calls for the need to promote teacher motivation to practise action research and argues for turning teacher training into teacher development.

## **2. The need for a new professionalism in ELT in Morocco**

The nature of teacher professionalism is open to varying interpretations. In analyzing teacher professionalism, Hoyle (1980, p. 9) differentiates broadly between “restricted” and “extended”, or also called, “new” professionals. The former could be described as practitioners who prepare their lessons and care about their students. However, they are limited in outlook, failing to think beyond their classroom. They do not consider the broader purposes of education as relevant to them. Extended professionals constantly question and try to link theory to practice, seeking to improve their performance by engaging in professional development activities. In this way they are continually developing as teachers and placing their classroom work in wider educational context. Hoyle emphasizes that this model of professionalism should be the aim of all teachers.

However, according to McNiff & Whitehead (2011, p.2) the literature tends to reinforce the portrayal of practitioners as doers who are competent to be involved in improving practice, but not as thinkers who are competent to be involved in debates about knowledge. Consequently, in wider debates concerning educational policy practitioners tend to be excluded on the assumption that they are good at practice, and they should leave it to official theorists to explain what, how and why people should learn, and how they should use their knowledge.

Advocators of action research, like Burton & Bartlett (2005, p.3), criticise this “narrow” view of teacher professionalism because education involves much more than the development of knowledge and skills. They argue for an “extended” view of professionalism in education that acknowledges and celebrates self-study and reflection. Thus, they advocate a key role in critical professionalism for inquiry into practice by teachers themselves through action research. Implicit in this idea is the concept of the teacher as researcher. This image of the teacher criticizes the notion of teacher as technician- someone who has mastered certain skills for classroom control, and learnt techniques for teaching a particular subject, but accountable to others for ideas developed elsewhere. Teaching as such is, unfortunately, a form of alienated labor, with teachers comprising a sub group lacking in professional autonomy, denied control over their form of work, subject to external monitoring and relegated to a purely instrumental role. It is unsurprising, then, that the image of the teacher as researcher is unfamiliar, for it embodies features that value responsibility, critical reflection, and the exercise of professional judgment. The teacher-researcher image is a powerful one. It embodies a number of characteristics that reflect on the individual teacher’s capacity to be autonomous in professional judgment. This image challenges the one within the restricted view of professionalism. According to Becker (1962), as cited in Burton & Bartlett (op.cit, p. 7), a restricted view of the teaching force embodied certain characteristics that describe professional behavior. These include subscription to an exclusive, specialized body of knowledge partly learned in higher education, a code of professional conduct and ethics with a strong emphasis on service and high degree of self-regulation by the professional body itself over entry, qualifications, training and members’ conduct. The problem with this approach is that it tells teachers how to be good at their job, and does not get them recognized as competent to make decisions about their job, or further, about directions their profession should take.

### 3. Action research as a form of teacher professional development

The need for ongoing teacher education has been a recurring theme in language teaching circles recently and has been given renewed focus as a result of the emergence of teacher-led initiatives such as action research. Mc Niff (2009, p. 5) emphasises that the professional development of teachers is a challenge facing contemporary education. Teachers have much knowledge about the nature of learning; created from their own experiences as learners and the input they receive through their tertiary training. This creates, as Nicol (1997, p. 97) describes, a “wealth of knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning”. However, these beliefs, while well-formed and powerful are often resistant to responding to curriculum change. Teachers are expected, by the community at large, to keep abreast of current thinking with regard to the teaching of literacy practices and accommodate for this thinking within their classroom practice. Teacher professional development needs to be responsive to this call. Action research/teacher research and teacher inquiry is part of a new vision of professional development. It suggests that what educators need are opportunities to explore and question their own practices.

According to Richards et.al (2005, p. 3-4) two broad kinds of goals within the scope of teacher education are often identified, training and development. Training refers to activities directly focused on a teacher’s present responsibilities and is typically aimed at short-term and immediate goals. Development, however, serves a long-term goal and seeks to facilitate the growth of teachers’ understanding of teaching and themselves as teachers. The need for ongoing renewal of professional skills and knowledge is not a reflection of inadequate training but simply a response to the fact that not everything teachers need to know can be provided at pre-service level, as well as the fact that the knowledge base of teaching constantly changes. Also, experience is insufficient as a basis for development. While experience is a key component of teacher development, in itself it may be insufficient as a basis for professional growth. Many aspects of teaching occur day in and day out, and teachers develop routines and strategies for handling these recurring dimensions of teaching. However, research suggests that, for many experienced teachers, many classroom routines and strategies are applied almost automatically and do not involve a great deal of conscious thought or reflection. Experience is the starting point for teacher development, but in order for experience to play a productive role, it is necessary to examine such experience systematically. The idea of self-reflection is central here. Critical reflection can trigger a deeper understanding of teaching. It involves examining teaching experiences as a basis for evaluation and decision making and a source for change. Teachers who are better informed as to the nature of their teaching are able to evaluate their stage of professional growth and what aspects of their teaching they need to change. In this respect, when each lesson is looked on as an empirical investigation into factors affecting teaching and learning and when reflections on the findings from each day’s work inform the next day’s instruction, teachers can foster continuous growth and development.

No-one would deny that ELT is an innovative field; teaching methods and materials are being changed continuously to achieve better standards of language proficiency. In relation to the Moroccan context, the adoption of the National Charter for Education and Training (NCET), issued in 2000, resulted in drastic reform touching upon many aspects of ELT in Morocco. Teachers are called, therefore, to adapt to the new situation because they are made accountable for student achievement to the community as a whole. Teachers have two options: they can either shelter behind a long-established tradition of passivity. Alternatively, they can take up the challenge to explain what they believe, why they believe it and how all this relates to the way

they operate in the classroom. While the formal option may have obvious attractions for the teacher, it carries a great danger. If teachers fail to enter and influence the debate, decisions of great educational importance may be taken by those with less informed understanding, with negative consequences for teachers and learners alike. If, on the other hand, teachers can argue for what they do and why they do it, they will further the professional development they need to be up to any change or reform rather than staying passive on the side line

#### **4. Enhancing Moroccan teachers' motivation to practise action research**

In Morocco, owing to the fact that action research is still at its dawn, teachers' self-motivation in launching action research projects need to be implanted and promoted in every EFL educational level in Morocco. For this, action-research workshops or training courses are essential to build up a research atmosphere and practice to those who are in the teaching profession particularly research novices.

Also, practitioners have the right to have their work formally recognised. This can take the form of professional certificates and awards. Most award-bearing courses internationally acknowledge that personal inquiry and forms of self study are as equally valuable forms of research as traditional empirical investigations. This recognition of the value of practitioner research is accompanied by a growing awareness of the need for increased access to opportunity for all and accreditation.

Finally, with the issuing of the new educational reforms in Morocco, there have been consistent national investments in changing teaching methods and materials in order to improve teaching pedagogies and skill sets, and thereby help raise students' levels of achievement. In spite of these reforms there are still increasing debates around standards and effectiveness. This is because any attempt to reform education cannot be achieved without teacher change. And the key to genuine change is professional development. The Moroccan ministry of education needs to invest in human resources. There should be a budget allocated to action research to cover the expenses required by teachers' research projects.

#### **5. The need for turning teacher training into teacher development**

Teacher pre-service training in Morocco is a combination of the transmission and the experiential models. Behind many of the best-known theoretical approaches to language teaching of the past three decades lies the assumption that there is one set of pedagogical principles which apply to all teachers in all learning situations. For followers of these approaches, it is the job of the teacher to match his/her teaching style to the principles of the method rather than for the method to be flexible enough to adjust itself to the distinct teaching styles and personalities of individual teachers. Not surprisingly, then, the dominant paradigm in academic staff development emphasizes the practice and perfection of only teaching methods and techniques. In this respect, the transmission model of training works on the assumption that role of the trainee is largely receptive. The Moroccan staff development program for ESL teachers is also experiential in the sense that teacher education results from close observation and analysis of what happens in the specific classroom environment during the practicum period.

In the literature, there has been recently a substantial growth of interest in the notion of teacher development instead of teacher training. The developmental model differs from the traditional transmission and the experiential models of teacher education in that it extends the concept of teacher education beyond pre-service training into the development of the qualified teacher as a practitioner and an individual. Teacher education is seen as open-ended and is not

considered complete when the pre-service training course ends. It should lead to a lifelong concern with developing and improving the teacher's professional skills and self-awareness.

The aim of teacher development is to encourage teachers to reflect on their teaching and become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. The reflective practitioner is a teacher who wishes to discover more about his/her own teaching in order to facilitate personal and professional growth. Accordingly, teacher development is an active process, initiated by the teacher, not imposed by others.

Given that a major aim of teacher education is the development of a reflective practitioner who seeks to develop both as a professional teacher and an individual, action research is an important component in achieving this goal. The inclusion of an action research element within an in-service training programme can make a significant contribution to the developmental aspect of in-service teacher education in Morocco.

## 6. Conclusion

The influence of action research around the world is significant. There is a real awareness that if governments wish their citizens to become productive and adaptive workforces, professional learning has to be given the highest priority. The Moroccan educational system needs to be a context that supports a culture of inquiry, and acknowledges the voices and knowledge of teachers. Also, individual and collective change begins in the individual mind; to change in an educational and sustainable way teachers have to see the sense of changing and want to change. This requires courage and tenacity.

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## Thesis Statement in English Argumentative Essays by Arab Students: A Study of Contrastive Rhetoric

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### Abstract

This contrastive rhetoric study follows Petrić's (2005) work and investigates the thesis statement element in English argumentative essays written by eight Saudi students studying at an English language institute in the United States which offers intensive English programs that help students meet the academic programs requirement of language proficiency. The paper compares students' argumentative essays written before and after a workshop on writing. The workshop is given to highlight the cultural differences between English and Arabic argumentative writing. The findings indicate that the texts written after the workshop reflected a greater inclination towards the conventional use of the thesis statement in the English argumentative essays. Additionally, they adhered to one option from the two given in the prompt. The paper concludes by arguing for the importance of addressing the cultural differences in the writing classroom.

**Keywords:** Arabic rhetoric; Contrastive rhetoric; ESL writing; Writing instruction



## Introduction

Contrastive rhetoric has taken multiple paths since it was initiated by Kaplan (1966). Several researchers (Connor 1996, 2002; Hinds, 1987) have extended Kaplan's (1966) ideas, and defended his original thoughts. A major scholar in the field Ulla Connor (2002) accomplished a pivotal work tracing its history and developments. Since it is involved with cultural aspects of language production, several scholars from all over the world (Kobayashi, 1984; Kubota, 1998; Liu 2007; Mohamed-Sayidina, 2010) have contributed significant works examining the similarities and differences between their own languages and English. Kaplan (1966) argued that L2 writing is significantly influenced by transfer of L1 rhetoric.

Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric claim invigorated the idea of this research and thus it seeks to elicit the cultural differences in English argumentative essays written by Arabic speakers. As a first step to conduct further investigations on examining the bond between Arabic and English argumentation, this study focuses on the thesis statement element of the academic papers due to the crucial role it plays in the argumentative writing in English. It follows Petrić's (2005) study where she examined the contrastive rhetoric in writing pedagogy in a monolingual class of Russian students. She focused on the use of thesis statement in two argumentative essays written by the students before and after a six-day writing course. The comparison of the two groups of essays reflected that essays written after the course showed higher presence of thesis statements, more uniformity in the position of the thesis statements, especially in the conventional position, and less variety in the formulation of thesis statements. This paper applies Petrić's (2005) assessment criteria—the occurrence, placement, and the linguistic and rhetorical realization of the thesis statement. By focusing on the thesis statement in eight Saudi students' argumentative essays written before and after a workshop on writing, this study specifically aims to examine the role of teaching the cultural differences in writing. In general, it aims to examine the validity of teaching the cultural differences in the academic writing classroom. In addition, it discusses some important issues pertinent to contrastive rhetoric such as the belief that the rhetorical patterns used in writing in the native language interfere while writing in a different language.\

## Literature review

### *Contrastive rhetoric definitions and developments*

The American applied linguist Robert Kaplan started the contrastive rhetoric research in 1966 which mainly underscores the cultural differences in writing. Connor defined contrastive rhetoric as “an area of research in second language acquisition that identifies problems in composition encountered by second language writers and, by referring to the rhetorical strategies of the first language, attempts to explain them” (p. 5). In explaining the research in its early stages, Connor (2002) gave a clear synopsis of Kaplan's (1966) method by stating,

Kaplan's (1966) pioneering study analyzed the organization of paragraphs in ESL student essays and identified five types of paragraph development, each reflecting distinctive rhetorical tendencies. Kaplan claimed that Anglo-European expository essays are developed linearly whereas essays in Semitic languages use parallel coordinate clauses; those in Oriental languages prefer an indirect approach, coming to the point in the end; and those in Romance languages and in Russian include material that, from a linear point of view, is irrelevant. (p.494)

It is clear then that Kaplan (1966) has considered that “language and writing are cultural phenomena” which means that “each language has rhetorical conventions unique to it” (Connor, 1996, p. 5). Overtly, this scholarship on contrastive rhetoric helped to attract researchers’ attention to focus on writing. Connor (1996) argued that contrastive rhetoric was “the first serious attempt by applied linguists in the United States to explain second language writing” because, according to her, the emphasis was confined to “teaching spoken language during the dominance of audio-lingual methodology” (p. 5). Regarding the interference issue, Connor (2002) has cogently showed that “the linguistic patterns and rhetorical conventions of the L1” that are transferred to L2 are different from the “potential interference at the level of syntax and phonology” because the first one “manifests itself in the writer’s choice of rhetorical strategies and content” (p. 494).

Similar to any other research, contrastive rhetoric has developed since it was initiated by Kaplan (1966). In her essay “New Directions in Contrastive Rhetoric,” Connor (2002) cited Hinds (1987) as one of the chief scholars who contributed to the development of contrastive rhetoric. Overtly, Hinds (1987) earned widespread recognition for his two notions “reader’s responsibility” and “writer’s responsibility” which came as a result of his comparison between English and Japanese texts (p. 141). He argued that in English the writer has more responsibility in making the message clear and the communication successful while in Japanese culture it is the opposite. Specifically, Hinds (1987) stated,

For English readers, unity is important because readers expect, and require, landmarks along the way. Transition statements are very important. It is the writer’s task to provide appropriate transition statements so that the reader can piece together the thread of the writer’s logic which binds the composition together. In Japanese, on the other hand, the landmarks may be absent or attenuated since it is the reader’s responsibility to determine the relationship between any one part of an essay and the essay as a whole. This is not to say that there are no transition statements in Japanese. There are. It is only to say that these transition devices may be more subtle and require a more active role for the reader. (146)

Like Hinds, contrastive rhetoricians in the 1980s “included linguistic text analysis as a tool to describe the conventions of writing in English and to provide analytical techniques with which to compare writing in students’ L1 and L2” (Connor, 2002, p. 496).

It is important to note that most of the criticism on contrastive rhetoric resulted from the blurry term “culture” (Connor, 2002; Petrić, 2005). Connor pointed out that many critics had discouraged the scholarship of contrastive rhetoric because of its involvement with culture where issues such as stereotypes are raised (p. 504). To refute such a claim, Connor argued that the differences in writing did not result from “natural culture” only but from “multiple sources, including L1, national culture, L1 educational background, disciplinary culture, genre characteristics, and mismatched expectations between readers and writers (p. 504). Petrić (2005) clarified the issue by stating,

Atkinson (1999) traces a move from the perceived view of culture as a static and homogenous national entity, which has been criticised for its tendency to view students as cultural types ... towards views influenced by post-modern theories, which avoid the term “culture” in favour of “identity,” “discourse,” and “agency”. As a solution, Atkinson argues for a “middleground approach to

culture” which “takes into account the cultural in the individual, and the individual in the cultural.” (p. 214)

### *The thesis statement*

The thesis statement is one of the most important elements in writing. Researchers (Kobayashi, 1984; Kubota, 1998; Liu, 2007; Petrić, 2005; Uysal, 2008) have focused on due to its function as a cultural component. Two researchers (Kobayashi, 1984; Kubota, 1998) have compared rhetorical conventions regarding the placement of thesis statements in English and Japanese written texts. Kobayashi (1984) questioned the “differences in U.S. and Japanese students' use of rhetorical patterns in their first language writing and Japanese students' use of their first language patterns in English writing” (p. 737). The researcher instructed each student “to write three compositions, two semi-controlled compositions based on pictures and one free composition on an assigned topic-involving narrative and expository modes” (p. 737). The results showed that U.S. students preferred the deductive method while the Japanese chose the opposite. Regarding the results of Japanese students writing in English and writing in Japanese, the study showed that there was a clear similarity between the two. The researcher explained these results as a clear “tendency for Japanese ESL learners to use first language patterns and general statement types when writing in English” (p. 738).

Unlike Kobayashi (1984), Kubota (1998) found no significant difference in terms of “transfer” between English and Japanese written texts (p. 83). The researcher compared two collections of essays one in Japanese and one in English written by Japanese students in which half of them wrote on an expository topic and half on a persuasive topic. The analysis focused on the placement of the thesis statement, organization of the essay, and language use. The results showed a clear similarity between the two essays. For example, “no negative transfer of L1-specific pattern was observed. Instead, the kind of negative transfer was mainly that of poor organization. There were many instances of positive transfer” (p. 83). Kubota interpreted that as a result of “L1 writing ability, L2 proficiency, experiences, and perceptions about L1 and L2” (p. 76). Definitely, these factors that the author has pointed out are very important as ESL writers' backgrounds have different levels. It is hard to group all ESL learners under one category, even if they are from the same country. Furthermore, Kubota's new ideas are a valuable addition to the contrastive rhetoric scholarship. This definitely confirms Connor's (2002) claims that most criticism on contrastive rhetoric addresses Kaplan's (1966) original proposal and ignores the developments in the field.

While the previous works were found to be helpful for this study as they examined the thesis statements, the following three studies are more important because they explored the same type of papers selected for this study—argumentative. Liu (2007), who examined argumentative essays written by Chinese and American high school students, arrived at the same conclusion that was indicated by Kubota (1998) when he found no significant distinction in his examined papers. Specifically, Liu found that the three typical locations of thesis statement—in the introduction, middle, and conclusion—were all present in both groups, and the differences were minor. Thus, he concluded that “contemporary Chinese argumentative writing of foreign language school students is closer to the ‘Anglo-American’ rhetorical style than previously assumed” (p. 129).

Unlike the case in Kobayashi (1984), Uysal's (2008) comparison between Turkish and English essays showed that students who wrote English essays preferred the inductive method. The researcher collected two argumentative essays written by eighteen Turkish students studying

in the United States. The participants were asked to write one essay in English and one in Turkish, and the findings showed that the participants preferred using deductive patterns in Turkish (72%) essays while in English essays, participants chose inductive patterns (39%) “or collections (33%) rather than initial thesis statements (28%)” (p. 191). Only five participants used the same thesis statement in the same position in both essays. When participants were asked during the interviews about the reasons that made them change the location of the thesis statement, they maintained that they were familiar with the writing convention in English. Thus, the researcher argued that although her research “provided support for the claims of CR” the “L2 level, writer–topic interaction, emotional state, and audience played a role in the positioning of thesis statements” (p. 192).

Although both Kobayashi (1984) and Uysal (2008) have focused on the thesis statement, their exploration of inductive and deductive patterns is worth investigating. In Kobayashi’s (1984) study, the English essays reflected the deductive pattern while Japanese essays followed the inductive method. But, in Uysal’s (2008) study, English essays used the inductive organization while Turkish papers followed the deductive pattern. Uysal pointed out that the idea of having two different patterns by the same students should warn researchers against examining the L2 papers only. She supported the argument by this example: “if we had just examined L2 essays for the location of thesis statements, we could have falsely concluded that Turkish writers write inductively, despite the fact that the participants used deductive organization in their L1 essays” (p. 196).

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to enter into a discussion on the relationship between the type of reasoning (inductive or deductive) and the thesis statement, it is important to note that the *prompt* might play an effective role in this relationship. Overtly, it is known that the deductive organization indicates that the writer starts the essay with a specific and solid thesis statement and then expands it throughout the essay by adding examples and details. Yet, in the inductive organization, it is the opposite; writers begin with a general thesis statement (which seems to function more like a hypothesis) and then narrows it down into specific idea(s) at the end of the essay. So, if the previous description was accurate, it would be typical to see argumentative essays that respond to a given prompt to follow the deductive reasoning. However, in Uysal’s study both essays (English and Turkish) were written in response to given prompts. Here, Uysal’s notion of the role of the first language becomes more valid. In other words, it can be argued that when students write essays in their first language while responding to prompts, they more likely would use the deductive patterns; because it is more logical as they have clear statements in front of them and their task is merely to write a thesis statement on whether they agree or disagree. It would be odd if they choose the inductive patterns (as Turkish in their second language did in Uysal’s study).

### ***Rhetorical writing patterns between Arabic and English***

Arabic rhetoric was extensively investigated in the field of contrastive rhetoric (Connor, 1996, 2002; Hatim, 1990; Kaplan, 1966; Koch, 1983; Mohamed-Sayidina, 2010). Kaplan (1966) was specifically interested in the paragraph structure where he showed that it has “a complex series of parallel constructions, both positive and negative” (p. 15). Particularly, he identified four types of parallelisms: synonymous, synthetic, antithetic, and climatic. He maintained that the occurrence of this parallel construction appears to be “archaic or awkward” to the English reader as the style in English “is often gauged by degree of subordination rather than by coordination” (pp. 15 - 16).

Kaplan's findings were verified by Koch (1983) whose study was particularly focused on Arabic rhetoric. Koch found that the argument in Arabic discourse comes through presentation where writers repeat, paraphrase, and doubled down on their ideas. Also, she added that "[r]everse paraphrase seems to be one of the most frequent and most basic mechanisms in the statement of an argumentative thesis, and it occurs even in the most stripped-down, summary arguments" (p. 51). The author concluded by explaining her philosophy on presentation stating that "presentation is a dominant mode of argumentation in hierarchal societies, where truths are not [a] matter for individual decision. In a democracy, there is room for doubt about the truth, and thus for proof; in a core autocratic society there is not" (p. 55). This conclusion was supported by Connor (2002) who examined Arabic argumentation through several works chiefly written by Arab researchers. For example, she reviewed Hatim's (1990) study showing that "Hatim admits that Arabic argumentation may be heavy on *through-argumentation* (i.e., thesis to be supported, substantiation, and conclusion), unlike Western argumentation which... is characterized by counterarguments (i.e., thesis to be opposed, opposition, substantiation of counterclaim, and conclusion)" (Hatim, 1990, p. 500).

Other scholars (Abu Rass, 2011, 2014; Al-Zubaidi, 2012; Bacha, 2010; Mohamed-Sayidina, 2010) have incorporated a large body of research into the field of contrastive rhetoric by examining the cultural differences between Arabic and English. Abu Rass (2011) found that Arab students in their writings "have the tendency for exaggeration, assertion and group orientation. They also demonstrate their unity of belief, their tendency towards dichotomous thinking and their belief in a one right way or a single true path" (p. 210). Mohamed-Sayidina's (2010) research can be added to Petrić's (2005) and Uysal's (2008) although the last two were about different languages. Mohamed-Sayidina's (2010) study on ESL writing by Arabic speakers confirmed the issue of interference. She examined fifty research papers focusing on the types of transition words, and found that additive transition words were more commonly used comparing to the other types, like adversative, temporal, causative (p. 263). Surprisingly, the use of adversative transitions was significantly low. The author concluded by connecting her findings to the nature of Arabic culture, which according to her, does not "[tolerate] dissent and adversative opinions" (p. 264). Like Koch (1983), Mohamed-Sayidina (2010) confirmed the dependency of written language on the oral style as she found a high use of repetition of nouns of the same type which, according her, "may be a reflection of this cultural tendency to 'stick' to the same things as an expression of solidarity and loyalty" (p. 264).

Since Arab ESL students writing in English transfer L1 rhetorical patterns into their English writing (Mohamed-Sayidina, 2010) a pedagogical model was needed to facilitate the educators' task to assist their Arab ESL students. This task was exquisitely accomplished by Bacha (2010) who based her instructional approach on an experiment she made in order to elicit the students' specific needs. She gave Arabic students studying in Lebanon a pre-test and a post-test with a four-week course in between. Bacha's approach followed five steps: building the context, modeling and deconstructing texts, constructing texts jointly, constructing texts independently and linking related texts. The results of the second essay showed "qualitative development in the organization of the argumentative essay" (p. 235). The first essays reflected weak argumentation skills among Arab students which, according to the author, "confirms the rhetoric argument and the characteristics of L1 Arabic argumentative writing which is anecdotal and descriptive" (p. 235).

It seems then that the use of oral traits in written Arabic that the researchers have discerned is behind the zigzag pattern of the Arab ESL paragraphs that Kaplan (1966) has identified. In



other words, those scholars found many traits in Arabic written texts that are typically found in oral discourse such as repetition, paraphrasing, and description (Bacha, 2010, Koch, 1983). Also, Koch's (1983) idea of "presentation" which, according to her, is frequently apparent in "hierarchical societies, where truths are not matter for individual decision" might explain the reason why rhetoric of most collective societies (like Arabic and Asian ones) appeared in Kaplan's (1966) diagram in a zigzag and circular manner, while the rhetoric of individualistic cultures (e.g. the Anglo-American society) had a linear pattern (Koch, 1983, p. 55). Definitely, this claim is worth investigating as other societies that were known to be individualistic, e.g. the European, had also a zigzag pattern in Kaplan's (1966) proposal.

It is clear that Arabic rhetoric as described above makes Arab writers' arguments look like descriptions more than arguments in the American sense. Hatim's (1990) idea of counterargument that he discovered in English essays is very brilliant. He seems to suggest that the English writer thinks of the reader (or the critic) while Arab writers pay little attention to this issue as they find it enough to provide clear and thorough ideas. If this was true, then it would be difficult for Arab ESL students, especially at the beginner level, to produce English argumentative essays as preferred by professors in American academic programs. So, it is apparent that the obstacles that face ESL students, e.g., language proficiency and L1 writing ability, which were already pointed out by the researchers, (Kobayashi, 1984; Kubota, 1998; Uysal (2008)) should be expanded to include *rhetoric*. Finally, it is very interesting to note how the discussion above focuses on rhetoric and discourse rather than on the sentence-level; this is definitely one of the advantages of Kaplan's (1966) pivotal work, as pointed out by Connor (1996).

## Methodology

### *Participants*

The participants of the study were eight Saudi students whose native language is Arabic. They were attending an English Language Institute located at a university in the United States. The mission of the institute is to offer intensive English programs for students who need to improve their English language skills and meet the requirements of the academic programs at the university which require a certain level of language proficiency. According to their teachers, the students' levels at the time of collecting the data range from high-beginner to mid-intermediate.

### *Comparison and analysis criteria*

Since the focus of this study is on the use of thesis statement in students' argumentative essays, it is important to note its typical nature and position in English argumentative essays. The criteria that will be used to conduct the comparison and analysis in this study are the same ones suggested by Petrić (2005) which consist of (a) the placement of the thesis statement, and (b) the linguistic and rhetorical realization of the thesis statement.

a) The placement of the thesis statement in English argumentative writing.

It is traditionally known that the thesis statement in English argumentative essays is located at the end of the introductory paragraph (Bean, 2001; Petrić, 2005; Skwire, 1979). Several critics (Haluska, 2006; Ji, 2008) paid little attention to the location and focused instead on its structure and function. Similar to Kaplan (1966), Ji (2008), for instance, considered that the thesis statement is the distinctive characteristic of the English linear rhetorical pattern. This present study emphasizes the importance of placing the thesis statement at the end of the introductory paragraph. This placement is what will be labeled *conventional* in this paper.



## b) The linguistic and rhetorical realization of the thesis statement.

For the purpose of this study, the thesis statement is defined as “the main idea that controls the whole essay;” so, this proposed definition is what will be meant when the phrase *thesis statement* is mentioned in this paper. Many scholars (Bean, 2001; Haluska, 2006; Ji, 2008; Petrić, 2005) highlighted its role as an important organizer of the paper because it enables the reader to follow the writer’s argument and development.

Since there is no specific wording for the thesis statement, the suggested scheme to identify it is through searching for the idea that appears to be dominant throughout the examined essay. Petrić (2005) proposed two categories, which will be implemented in this study but will not be adhered to as other expressions might be used by participants. Petrić’s categories show that the thesis statement might be used as:

- a) the main thought and purpose of the essay (e.g. “I will argue;” “this essay examines”);
- b) an expression of opinion (e.g. “I believe;” “in my opinion”).

Petrić noted that the first category has more “rhetorical value” because it tells both the writer’s opinion and the purpose of the essay (p. 224).

As noted above, these criteria are what will be referred to when the phrase *the conventional use of thesis statement in English argumentative essays* is mentioned in this study. Also, the essays selected for this study will be judged based on their meeting of these conventions.

#### ***Procedure***

Students were asked to write an argumentative essay responding to a given prompt. After they had returned their first essays, the teacher gave them a one-hour workshop on writing where he explicitly familiarized them with the conventional framework of the argumentative essay in English. At the end of the workshop, the teacher wrote a prompt and asked the students to write an argumentative essay in response. Both the pretest and the posttest were compared by focusing only on the thesis statement.

#### ***The workshop on writing***

The workshop aimed to check the validity of introducing the cultural differences in writing in an explicit way. Thus, the strategy of the workshop was to introduce those differences in the most serious and careful way in order not to make the students think that they were mere general and scattered thoughts by the teacher. The workshop took one hour during the class time. At the beginning of the workshop, the teacher, who shares with the students the mother tongue but communicates with them in English, told the students that he was unsatisfied with their first essays, and asked them to pay attention to the characteristics in English argumentative writing.

During the first fifteen minutes, the teacher asked the students to name the similarities and differences between Arabic and English argumentative styles. The students, vaguely and generally, mentioned several, yet insignificant features. They pointed out that in Arabic, there should be “a good title,” “a good word choice,” “many ideas,” and more importantly, according to them, the writer has to be “respectable to readers and people in general.” While talking about the English argumentative essays, the students stated that they should “include more quotes,” and “they are longer.” Clearly, it can be observed that the students did not have the basic knowledge regarding the nature of argumentative writing neither in English nor in their native language. For example, they did not tackle how the argument can be presented or developed in writing.

During the next half an hour of the workshop time, and in order to explain the nature of argumentative essays in English, the teacher told the students that he would focus on explaining the idea that should control the whole essay. He highlighted the problem in their first essays

where the essays tackled the two options given in the prompt, instead of choosing and developing one option and arguing for it. He explained that each argumentative essay must include a specific and a clear claim which had to be summed up in a sentence or two, and that was known to be called thesis statement.

Furthermore, the teacher explained the importance of having an introduction where the thesis statement should be placed at the end. In order to achieve that, the teacher emphasized the importance of establishing a frame of reference to the reader which starts by introducing the general topic of the essay followed by stating some existing arguments, if necessary. Then, the topic has to be narrowed down to one idea which has to be developed throughout the essay. He suggested some linguistic and rhetorical features that usually help in building the thesis such as the purpose of the essay, and the position the writer is taking. For the conclusion, the students were told to restate the thesis, but not to repeat it, because the conventional main purpose of the conclusion is to wrap up what the writer has mentioned.

For the last fifteen minutes of the workshop meeting, the teacher provided the students with copies of some academic argumentative essays written by native English speakers and asked them to work in groups to underline the thesis statement of each paper. At the end, the teacher gave the students a prompt and asked them to write an argumentative essay, and reminded them to apply all what they had learned in the class (the complete lesson plan is stated in Appendix 1).

## Results

As noted above, the comparison made in this study focuses on the thesis statement, with particular attention paid to the occurrence, position, and the linguistic and rhetorical realization of the thesis statement. Concerning the last segment, the students' linguistic and rhetorical usages of the thesis statement were compared to the conventional linguistic and rhetorical features in English argumentative essays as described above. Table 1 summarizes the findings of the position of thesis statements.

**Table 1. *The position of the thesis statement in the essays***

Position of thesis statement in the essays ( $N=8$ )		
Position of the thesis statement	1 <sup>st</sup> Essay	2 <sup>nd</sup> Essay
1 <sup>st</sup> sentence of the essay	0	2
Last sentence of the introduction	0	4
Main body	3	1
Conclusion	1	0
No thesis statement	4	1

***The presence of the thesis statement***

As Table 1 indicates, only four students wrote thesis statements in the first essay while seven appeared in the second. As pointed out earlier, these findings are not surprising because Saudi ESL students at the English language institutes had no experience in writing academic papers neither in Arabic nor in English. They had no experience in writing academic papers because the academic institutions in Saudi Arabia focus on giving examinations rather than writing academic papers. Again, these findings are not surprising because Arabic rhetoric, as described in the literature review section, favors giving full descriptions instead of picking one idea and sticking to it, which the thesis statement is all about. This idea is supported by some researchers (Bacha 2010; Connor 2002; Hatim 1990; Kaplan 1966; Koch 1983) who have argued that Arabic argumentation tends to be thorough which might compel writers to support their claims with examples instead of defending it by refuting the opposing arguments. This description of Arabic argumentation can be easily discerned in the students' writing of the first essay. Surely, the previous account was on the nature of argumentation in general but it could be related to the study of the thesis statement because its function in the argumentative essays is vital as it compels writers to narrow down their ideas. Yet, with arguments that require profound explanation and intensive use of examples, writers find it problematic to unite all of their ideas in one sentence. So, it appears that writers of this later type make it the reader's responsibility (Hinds, 1987) to fully read and comprehend the ideas and arguments presented in the text.

In this study, the students who wrote essays without thesis statements gave full analysis of the two opinions provided in the prompt. For example, to respond to the first prompt: "Parents should control what their children watch in T.V. Do you agree or disagree?" students gave long lists for the advantages and the disadvantages of enabling children to watch TV. Here is one example where the student presented several examples of the pros in one paragraph and the cons in another, and concluded by this statement:

***Data Extracted 1***

As a conclusion it can be said that television as a tool has nothing wrong with it, but how is allowed to be used in the house plays an important role.

This vague statement might work as a thesis statement if the writer supported it (in any part of the paper) but since the rest of the paper was devoted to explain the two options, it is hard to conclude that this essay is argumentative.

***The placement of the thesis statement***

It should be clarified here that the comparison in this section and the following one will be between four essays in the first group to seven essays in the second as the essays that did not have thesis statements were excluded.<sup>1</sup>

It is clear that the absence of writing a thesis statement at the end of the introduction in the first essay reflects the students' unawareness of its conventional position in English argumentative writing. Also, its presence four times in that location indicates that the students had benefited from the workshop. Regarding the other positions, particularly with writing no thesis statement as a first sentence of the essay in the first group and using it two times in the second seems to suggest that students have inaccurately interpreted the teacher's advice in the workshop as he stressed the importance of introducing the idea of the essay in the introduction.

***Linguistic and rhetorical realization of the thesis statement***

The findings of this section are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2. *The linguistic and rhetorical features of the thesis statement***

Position of thesis statement	1 <sup>st</sup> Essay	Linguistic & Rhetorical Features	2 <sup>nd</sup> Essay	Linguistic & Rhetorical Features
First sentence of the essay	0	-	2	Writer's opinion (2)
Last sentence of the Intro	0	-	4	Thesis Strategy (1) Writer's opinion (3)
Main body	3	General idea (3)	1	General idea (1)
Conclusion	1	Writer's opinion (1)	0	-

***The first essay***

All the students in their writing of the first essay failed to employ the strong rhetorical patterns: the main thought or the purpose of the essay. Instead, only the following statement reflected the linguistic feature of expressing the opinion of the writer:

*Data Extracted 2*

My opinion is I agree that watching T.V. is important for teach children some things and to spend nice or happy time but they must be under the supervision or control parents

The three thesis statements that were identified in the middle of the essay functioned as general ideas. They do not have any of the rhetorical features of the conventional thesis statement in English writing. Here are the three excerpts:

*Data Extracted 3*

There is a big advantage, some programs are especially for adults, and children can't watch those programs. The families can stay with their children and teach them how they can use the TV programming for educational purposes.

*Data Extracted 4*

It is important for children to watch television under their parents' supervision.

*Data Extracted 5*

If the parents do not check the programs which their children watch, the kids could watch programs not suitable for their age.

It should be noted that the issue with the previous statements was not only with their defiance of the conventional usage in English essays, but more significantly their failure of

controlling the whole essays. When the conventional use of the thesis statement was recommended, it was because of its strong pattern to control the whole essay. For example, when a thesis statement starts with “In this paper I am going to argue that parents must not allow their children to watch TV alone...” this kind of statement enforces the writer to stay within this claim. However, when a writer offers a statement like the previous one, the writer seems to have no control of the paper, and thus would jump from one idea to another. Therefore, suggesting the conventional place (the last sentence in the introduction) is vital for students as it helps them write well-formulated argumentative essays.

### *The second essay*

The essays written after the workshop showed a significant improvement. For example, instead of explaining the pros and cons of each option provided in the prompt, like the case in the first essays, the second essays were more focused as they adhered to one option. Yet, the arguments remained weak as they leaned toward explaining the situation rather than convincing the audience. This tendency was also found in Bacha (2010) who wrote, “the rhetoric argument and the characteristics of L1 Arabic argumentative writing ... is anecdotal and descriptive” (p. 235). Regarding the implementation of the linguistic and rhetorical features, there was a notable development despite their weak structures and awkward nature.

The two thesis statements that were found in the beginning of the essays started by expressing the opinion—the second and weaker rhetorical choice, according to Petrić (2005). Here are the two statements responding to the prompt “People with prosthetic (artificial) legs should be allowed to participate in the Olympic Games. Do you agree or disagree?”

#### *Data Extracted 6*

I think it is OK if someone has artificial leg and wants to participate in the Olympics because they do not avoid any handicap to participate in any event but a society should encourage them to be a part in the world.

#### *Data Extracted 7*

In my opinion I think it is unfair for whom have artificial legs participate in Olympic for many reasons.

Despite their weakness and grammatical errors, it is clear that they indicate a clear standpoint. In the first one, the student tries to show that such a ban is a cultural issue. According to the student, the main reason is simply because the sports organizations (“they” in the student’s writing) do not prevent such thing. Hence, it seems to the student that the question or the issue should not be raised. It is known in Arabic culture that if something wrong is happening and remains private, people and media should not discuss it in public in order not to exacerbate the situation by attracting attention to it.

The use of “In my opinion” and “I think” in the second statement indicates that the student has tried to apply some of the suggestions of the possible ways of formulating the thesis statement that were given in the workshop. Similar to the essays written after the workshop, this essay manifests the students’ adherence to one side of the argument. In the conclusion of this essay, the student supported the first claim by writing:

#### *Data Extracted 8*

At the end, I don't agree with that because he can make success with whom have the same artificial legs that could be fair.

It is interesting to note the opinion's shift from "think" to "agree." This feature is common in Arabic writing where writers refuse to impose their opinion from the beginning. Instead, they start with a hypothesis to enable readers to see how they can turn the hypothesis into a fact in the conclusion. However, it is always hard to draw conclusions from a single case as it might be only a matter of coincidence. Also, as found in the previous essay, the use of "unfair" in the opening and "fair" in the closing is another indication of the student's realization of the importance of adhering to the same claim.

The four thesis statements that were found in the last sentence of the introductions had mingled the use of the linguistic and rhetorical expressions that were suggested in the workshop. Only one statement, "the essay shows" highlighted the purpose of the essay and met Petric's (2005) idea of strong rhetoric. The other three showed the writer's opinion, "I think," "In my opinion," and "To me."

The one found in the main body of the essay functioned only as a general idea in which the writer argued that,

*Data Extracted 9*

It is unfair because the medicine can do what you like and imagine.

## Discussion

The findings indicate that the students' first essays showed many features that were proven to be typical in Arabic writing. Students repeat, paraphrase, and double down on their ideas (Koch, 1983). Their writing was too far from the conventional writing in English; particularly—as this study is concerned—from the typical thesis statement in English. There was a heavy reliance on giving loose topic sentences instead of specified statements. Some of these notes can advocate the argument of transferring as known in the contrastive rhetoric scholarship. However, the limited scope and data in this study along with the lack of literature offer an inadequate support for such assumption. Moreover, the students' level and number cannot give reliable representation of the Arabic culture, as most of them just finished high school, and had no experience in academic writing at the university level. More importantly, the system of education in Saudi Arabia relies on the examination rather than writing papers. All these factors, unfortunately, give no clear idea whether the students' writing in this study was affected by their cultural rhetorical patterns or whether it was a mere outcome of their low-level of language proficiency.

What this research can argue for is the role of teaching cultural differences in writing classroom. To fully show the productive function of the given workshop, here are the findings of the comparison that show that the essays written after the workshop reflect

- (1) higher occurrence of thesis statements (7 essays (87.5%) opposed to 4 (50%));
- (2) more adherence to the conventional position (4 essays (50%) opposed to 0);
- (3) more use of the linguistic and rhetorical features (the purpose of thesis statement:



1 opposed to 0; the writer's opinion 5 opposed to 1).

More importantly, the distinctive feature found in the second set of essays is the students' commitment to choosing and developing one option from the two given in the prompt. This adherence definitely further supports the role of addressing the cultural differences in the academic writing classroom. Petrić (2005) reached the same conclusion, although the students' improvement in her study was more significant probably due to the apparent high level of her students as compared to those in the present study.

### **Conclusion**

The investigation of the usage of the thesis statement in argumentative essays written by Arab students studying in U.S.A. adds to the growing body of research on the scholarship. Due to the lack of studies on the use of thesis statement in Arab ESL essays, the analysis process in this study implements previous studies on thesis statements in contrastive rhetoric field in other languages and links them to the studies found on Arabic rhetoric. The specific goal behind the comparison between the essays written before and after the workshop was not to draw conclusions on the nature of Arabic argumentative styles rather it was to examine the role of addressing cultural differences in the academic writing classroom based on the element of the thesis statement.

The study has pedagogical implications and commendations for teachers teaching EFL/ESL students. The teacher should ask students, either verbally or in writing, to tell about their knowledge of writing in their native language, and it is the teacher's responsibility to point out the differences. Overtly, the objective of this is not to check the students' knowledge but to enable them to point out the differences. This makes it applicable even when the teacher does not speak the same language of students.

In fact, many ESL students, especially in English Language Institutes that prepare students for academic programs, as in the case with the students in this study, face the jeopardy of having their visas terminated if they do not achieve a certain level of language proficiency in a certain period of time. Those students along with others who enter these institutes to be prepared for the academic programs are in need of teachers who explicitly tell them that they have to improve their style of writing in order to succeed in academic life. The participants in this study had been familiarized with the rules of writing such as the thesis statement for about two semesters. Yet, when the role of the thesis statement was given as a tool of comparison for argumentative writing in their L1, students were surprised and maintained that they had never heard of it or even its purpose. According to the instructor, some students found it difficult to stick to one idea as they believed that good writing should explore all possible arguments and develop them. This belief can be linked to the common notion that "academic writing is universal" as Petrić's students also expected (p. 220).

### **About the Author**

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## Appendix A

**A workshop on writing: cultural differences in writing between Arabic and English language.****Background and Rationale:**

This lesson is designed for high-beginner to low-intermediate level adult Saudi students learning English at an English language institute in the United States.

In most academic programs in Saudi Arabia, students are required to take examinations rather than to write academic papers. Therefore, it is necessary for writing teachers to help their Saudi students to be familiarized with the academic papers writing conventions, especially argumentative essays as most academic programs in the U.S.A demand.

Past argumentative essays written by the students of this class lacked the use of the thesis statement. When a few were employed, they were too far from the conventional use in English argumentative essays; e.g., their position was not in the introductory paragraph and their function was neither to show the purpose of the essay nor the opinion of the writer. Thus, this workshop was designed to address the cultural differences in the academic writing classroom as many scholars have pointed its usefulness. The focus of the cultural elements will be on the thesis statement. The essays which will be given after the workshop will be compared to those given before it in order to point out the effectiveness of teaching the cultural differences in the classroom.

**Objectives:**

- 1- Students will become aware of the importance of using a thesis statement in their writing.
- 2- Students will become aware of the thesis statement's conventional position in English argumentative essays.
- 3- Students will become able to apply the conventional linguistic and rhetorical patterns of the thesis statement.

Objectives	Teacher's Role	Student's Role	Time (min.)
Students will be introduced with the topic.	<p>Teacher greets the students</p> <p>Teacher introduces the topic of thesis statement and explains why it is important for them to learn it.</p> <p>He tells them that they will learn the way argumentative essays are written in English by comparing them to Arabic writing.</p>	Students listen to the teacher, and have a chance to ask about the teacher's opinion of their past essays.	2
Students will be able to share their opinions of the differences between English and Arabic writing	<p>Teacher asks students to name the similarities and differences between English and Arabic writing.</p> <p>Teacher guides the students' answers, and helps them to maintain focus on writing issues.</p>	Students have a chance to tell whatever comes to their minds of the differences they observed in the past.	15
Students will be familiarized with the general nature of argumentative essays.	Teacher tells the students that the main point of argumentative essays is to stay focused on one issue. He tells them that whenever they have to write an argumentative essay, they have to make a claim and stick to it.	Students should follow the teacher explaining the rationale behind argumentative essays.	5
Students will be introduced to the most important point of the workshop—the thesis statement.	<p>Teacher explains the importance of having an introductory paragraph where a clear and precise claim must be stated. He tells them that this is called the thesis statement in English writing.</p> <p>He tells that it is conventionally placed as the last sentence in the introductory paragraph, and emphasizes the importance of adhering to this position.</p>	Students follow the teacher explaining the conventional usage of the thesis statement in English argumentative essays.	10
Students will be given another chance to reflect on the cultural differences.	Teacher asks students if they can tell any difference between English introductory paragraphs and Arabic ones.	Students provide teachers with differences they can think of. They can help each other remembering any	3

		difference.	
Students will learn how the thesis statement is formulated.	<p>Teacher tells students that there are specific linguistic and rhetorical patterns of formulating the TS. He tells them that each stems from the rationale of the TS.</p> <p>Teacher explains that if the point is to tell the reader the purpose of the essay, they can use expressions, such as, “In this paper, I am going to argue..;” “This essay shows...”</p> <p>He tells them that if they want to express their main thought, they can use expressions, such as, “In my opinion...,” “I believe....,” “I think...”</p> <p>Teacher explains how they can develop their claim throughout the essay; and he briefly explains the role of the conclusion.</p> <p>Teacher asks students if they have questions</p>	<p>Students follow the teacher explaining these important criteria of the TS.</p> <p>They write down the rhetorical and linguistic patterns of the TS.</p> <p>They have a chance to ask question.</p>	15
Students will be able to highlight the TSs in the given papers, so they can double check that they fully understood the teacher’s explanations.	<p>Teacher passes four academic papers written by native speakers of English, and asks each pair of students to underline the thesis statement of each paper. (Each paper has four pages).</p> <p>Teacher checks students’ answers.</p> <p>Teacher reminds students of the homework which is about a prompt that contains two options in which students have to write an argumentative essay in response.</p> <p>Teacher answers students’ questions</p>	<p>In pairs, students read the TSs and share the rest of the class with their findings.</p> <p>They write down the prompt and ask questions if they have.</p>	10

## **Translation Analysis on Utterances Used in Daily Communication (A Pragmatic View Based on the English and Indonesian Cultural Perspectives)**

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### **Abstract**

Communication is our daily need. We cannot avoid this in our life because we are human beings living interdependently one another. Many miscommunications happen every day particularly the use of English utterances in Indonesian daily-life. This paper focuses on translation analysis of English utterances used in daily Indonesian communication based on the pragmatic aspects. The research method used is qualitative research with content analysis. There were 40 English utterances as the research data taken from some media and daily talks in Indonesian context. The data were analyzed descriptively by comparing the source text and the target text according to both English and Indonesian cultural perspectives. The research findings show that the 40 English utterances translated into Indonesian language based on the pragmatic aspect dominantly contained implicit meaning (52.5%), followed by co-text and context (22.5%), deixis (12.5%), speech acts (12.5%), and politeness (0%). It can be concluded that more than half of English utterances uttered in Indonesian daily-life communication translated into Indonesian language contain the implicit meaning. So, it needs a wise way of translating English utterances into Indonesian utterance to avoid misunderstanding and misleading in daily-life communication.

**Keywords:** translation analysis, pragmatic aspects, cultural perspectives



**Introduction**

This paper presents and discusses just how the pragmatic cases arise in translation and how utterances of the source language are translated in accordance with the text, co-text and context, deixis, speech acts, and politeness of the target language.

In everyday life we cannot escape from the communication with other people in our environment both in spoken or written form. Understanding the meaning either expressed or implied in a statement of language is an activity closely related to daily-life, from waking up to going to bed. There are so many spoken or written cues we shall apprehend their meaning almost all days. Every time we read the morning newspaper headlines, listen to the news from the radio or television and chat with family members at the dinner table in the morning, we always do communication unidirectionally or bidirectionally. Thus in this situation we really do a process of understanding the meaning of a language.

Activities to understand the meaning of utterances spoken or conveyed by the speakers can be an interesting research on pragmatics. The pragmatics itself studies the use of language in communication, particularly the relationship between the sentences and the contexts or situations in which they are used by the speakers or writers (Richards, Platt & Platt, 1992, p. 284). In this case Richards, Platt & Platt more specifically highlighted the language in units of sentences, because they focused more on how the sentences in the form of speech or utterances play a role in communication. They argued that pragmatics includes the study of how to interpret and use the speech (utterance). It is based on the real-world knowledge how the speakers use and understand speech acts and how the sentence structures are influenced by the relationship between the speakers and addressees.

**Literature Review***Translation and Culture*

Some experts of translation defined translation in various views and opinions. The first definition is according to Newmark (1988) who says that translation is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text (p. 5). This definition prioritizes meaning as the main center for translation. It is basically the implicit meaning of cultural elements that need to be understood and conveyed by translators according to the author's intent in the source text. The second opinion comes from Larson (1984) who states that translation is transferring the meaning of the source language into the receptor language (p. 3). This definition states that the aspect of meaning as an important element of the center of attention must be analyzed and understood by translators in order the author's purpose or the original message from the source text can be delivered to readers of the target text. The implicit aspects of culture in the form of physical culture, norms and customs are carried by the existing meaning in the source text, which then have to be transferred by the translators to the target language precisely, clearly, and accurately. The third definition stated by Catford (1978) who states that translation is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language (p. 20). Based on this definition, translation is a process of replacing the text materials of a language which contains different forms of language and culture with the text materials that have a precise and accurate equivalence in another language. The last definition given by Nida (1969) who claims that translation consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalence of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style (p. 12). Based on this definition, translation is a process of natural reproduction of the closest equivalence of the source language to the target language in both its meaning and

style. Basically the meaning and style of the source language contain cultural elements that should be reproduced into the target language with the closest natural equivalent by translators.

From the four definitions of translation above it can be stated that the cultural aspects implicitly contained in the source text in the forms of message, meaning and style are very important for translators to know and understand in the process of translation. Therefore, their role must be taken into account because they will greatly affect on the translation. On the other hand, if translators are not able to understand the cultural elements in the physical forms, ideas, and lifestyles available in the source text, they will have difficulties in doing translation process and producing translation products that are not in accordance with the original message.

On the other hand, in relation to definitions of culture, some experts also give different opinions in defining it. Culture itself includes many things, such as values, traditions, behaviors, hopes, food, and arts. All these things become the talk of many people all the time. Brislin in Wang (2000) presents some characteristics that can be used as a reference. The characteristics of culture are as follows: 1) Culture is the work of a man that becomes a part of the environment, 2) Culture allegations reflect together about life in general. 3) Culture is fundamental so many people do not or are not able to discuss and analyze it, 4) Culture can be real through meaningful clashes, 5) Culture is passed from generation to generation, 6) Culture allows people to fill in the blanks, 7) Cultural values last long, 8) Violation of cultural norms has an emotional impact, and 9) These differences can be illustrated by contrasting cultures (p. 1).

In the relationship between translation and culture, Torop (2009) in Akbari (2013) states that culture operates largely through translational activity, since only by the inclusion of new texts into culture can the culture undergo innovation as well as perceive its specificity (p. 5).

### ***Utterances-based Pragmatic Aspects and Their Translation***

Pragmatics and translation, in the context of transference meaning either intralingual or interlingual translation, like two sides of a coin that cannot be separated. This is because both are interrelated and interconnected. Pragmatics presents the meaning while translation transfers the meaning. Pragmatics examines how the language is presented in the various forms of presentation, while the translation is a process of how all the messages in the form of speech can be understood and interpreted in accordance with the intents and expectations of the speaker or writer. So, a better user of language whether they are speakers, addressees, readers, or translators must have knowledge of pragmatics and translation.

From a translational point of view, Bernardo (2010) states that pragmatics operates in two different phases of the translation task: in the processing of the source text and also at the reverbalization of the target text. In both moments a great awareness of the pragmatically relevant differences is needed so as to achieve an adequate translation that can fulfill its communicative role in the target culture (p. 107). In the context of interlingual translation, it can be said that the translation is very much concerned with maintaining the equivalent meaning and style. Similarly, only with concerning about pragmatic issues, the message or meaning presented by speakers with a wide variety of speech styles can be accepted by the addressees in accordance with the expectations of speakers. In a review of pragmatics, speech language speakers deliver significant source of variation in style with the delivery of the addressees who speak the target language. From this point of view of translation, the speech delivered by the speakers must be understood and translated well in order to obtain the equivalent meaning and style that suit the addressee in the target language.

In relation to the definition of pragmatics, Yule (1998) defines:

Pragmatics as a study of the meaning is expected by the speaker. He said that the study of intended speaker meaning is called pragmatics. Pragmatics discusses how language and meaning are conveyed by the speakers of the language so that they hope that the language they delivered can be understood by listeners, so the purpose of the communication is achieved (p. 127).

Consider the following piece of conversation made by Sacks in (Yule, 1998, p. 127).

*A: I have a fourteen-year-old son.*

*B: Well that's all right.*

*A: I also have a dog.*

*B: Oh I'm sorry.*

How is the above piece of conversation understood by a reader or listener? Readers and listeners who pay attention to the conversation will have different understandings. This is partly caused by the interpretation of utterances presented and strongly influenced by their basic knowledge of the real world. Thus how to understand the speech acts and sentences really depends on the speakers' and the listener's understandings. Having studied more deeply, the real piece of conversation consists of several words delivered by the tenant (A) and homeowners (B). They both (A) and (B) communicate about the requirements of the rent apartment household. The speaker A stated that he had a 14-year-old boy and the speaker B responded positively because the small children were allowed to be carried living in a rented house or apartment. Then in the next utterance the speaker A said that he also had a dog, then in a sudden the speaker B refused, because dogs were not allowed to live in there. The real meaning of conversation above is very difficult for both the reader and listener to catch because it is implicitly stated in the whole utterances. If they do not know the text, co-text and context of the conversation, then they will not understand the meaning. The text in this case is the conversation text, while the co-text and its context are determined by a series of words in the speech that form utterances in the entire speech. This conversation is an example of transactions between the speakers, A as the tenant and B as the owner of a house or apartment at a time in a particular place.

The example of conversation above is one pragmatic case that covers several topics in pragmatics, such as implicit meaning, context, co-text, deixis, speech acts, and politeness. How do the similar pragmatic cases occur in translation? The following paragraphs will discuss, analyze and assess several topics in pragmatics and utterance translation that cover implicit meaning (invisible meaning), context, deixis, speech acts, and politeness in translation (Yule, 1998, pp. 127-134; Verschueren, 1999, pp. 18-37).

### ***1. Implicit Meanings (Invisible Meanings)***

Pragmatics can also be said as the study of the invisible meaning (Yule, 1998, p. 127) or implicit meaning (Verschueren, 1999, p. 25), because it reviews of how we recognize the meaning of speech or utterance that is not seen. Therefore, language users, more particularly translators must be able to explore the hidden meaning in the speech or utterance by investigating the assumptions and expectations using their insight and knowledge of the source language in order they can communicate, divert, or convey it in the target language.

The following case is one of the examples. When the driver saw the 'Heated Attendant Parking' in the parking lot, he thought hard to understand the purpose of the sign posted in the parking area. There are so many hidden meanings in this speech. He tried to translate and interpret the meaning of that notice based on his understanding. The insight and knowledge of the meaning came into his mind and he knew that the parking area was intended for users of the vehicle that

was overheating and needed a shady place to park their car, though there is no word "car" in that statement. Or maybe he thought that it was an area intended for the passengers who overheated after driving and let them who got heat to shelter in that place. What is about your understanding? In Indonesian language we can translate that notice into '*Tempat Parkir Orang yang Kepanasan*' (=The Parking Space for Overheating People).

Another interesting example is an inscription 'Baby & Toddler Sale' installed in the shop window with ornate images of infants and children age under five years new crawling. What about the pedestrians who saw the advertisement written on the shop window or translate that text? Having understood the text, co-text and context, it was known that the inscription written in the window shop had intension to inform that the shop sold the equipments for the babies and children under five, instead of selling baby and toddler. Even it might be translated into "Sale Infant and Young Children". But it did not mean that way. That statement in Indonesian language means '*Jual Alat-alat Bayi dan Anak-anak*' (=Selling Equipments for Babies and Children). How dangerous the translators are, if they do not know the implicit meaning, so why it is important for translator study Pragmatics for their job.

## 2. Co-text and Context

According to Crystal (1985), context is a specific part of speech or text that is attached to the focus of attention. The meaning of this focus is a unit that includes an event, place or time in which an utterance is used. Context determines the meaning of an utterance, or in other words an utterance would have meaning only if it is in a context. It will be discussed later one of the contexts named linguistic context that is usually called co-text (p. 71). The co-text of a word is a set of words that are used in the same phrases or sentences, for example the word 'bank' as a homonym word, is the word that has more than one meaning. What does the word 'bank' mean if is translated into Indonesian language? Its meaning will be various and many. If the co-text of the word 'bank' (1) linguistically is combined with such as the word 'steep' or 'overgrown', it will be different from the word 'bank' (2) in the sentence 'She has to get the bank to cash a check'. The meanings of the word 'bank' (1) and 'bank (2) are very different. The word 'bank' (1) means 'verges of the river' or '*pinggir sungai*' (=riverbank), while the bank (2) means 'the building in which the bank customers deposit or take the money' or '*sebuah gedung tempat orang menabung atau mengambil uang*' (=a place for those who want to deposit or withdrawl their money). In addition, if we look at the writing on the wall 'BANK' displayed a building or we hear the word 'Bank', directly the physical location we see or is in our mind will influence us to translate or interpret the meaning. Thus, physical appearance will be the first thing we refer to the word we know. That is a way of justifying the meaning of word based on the physical context.

## 3. Deixis

Many words in particular simply cannot be translated or interpreted except it is contextualized physically its context, especially the physical context that is known by the speakers (Yule, 1998, p. 129). According to Verschueren (1999), deixis is the speech related to the real world. For examples, the words 'here', 'there' as the spatial or place deixis, the words 'now' and 'yesterday' are the temporal or time deixis, while 'me', 'you', 'him', and 'them' are pronouns deixis (p. 18). Consider the following sentences: "You'll have to bring that back tomorrow", because they are not here now. The sentence is virtually impossible to be understood even translated accurately, because some elements of the sentence are out of context, so that the sentence is not clear. The sentence contains a phrase that refers to the real world out of context that is 'you', 'that',

‘tomorrow’, ‘they’, ‘here’, and ‘now’. We will find it difficult to interpret ‘you’, who is ‘you’ in that sentence? ‘That’, what is the object? ‘Tomorrow’, what day or what time is it? ‘They’, who is referred to? ‘Here’, where is it? ‘Now’, what is the time, date, or year? Those deixis utterances need to be referred firstly to a particular context or the real world in order to give a clear reference to the utterances, so translators can finally translate clearly.

Here is the other example. Did we remember the writing installed at a food stall that says ‘Free Today Tomorrow Pay’. What does that mean? In Indonesian language it is similar to ‘*Sekarang Bayar Besok Gratis*’ (=Pay Today but Free for Tomorrow). A Temporal Deixis ‘Today’ And ‘Tomorrow’ need to be clarified and emphasized first. What is that day? If it is not clear, the readers or hearers will not understand it and may let them alone interpret it properly? What is the reaction if the hearers or readers later? That’s the problem sometimes making translators or addressees confused and misunderstanding.

#### 4. *Speech acts*

Lots of speech acts are performed by speakers during all day. For example, in the breakfast time a man told his sister (addressees): ‘Can you pass me the salt?’ How is addressee’s reaction when she heard the speech? Type of utterances made by the speaker was indirect speech act. Speech act is not a question but a request, so that the expected response from the addressee is not the usual response to the question but the response from a request. The addressee may respond: ‘Here it is’. This is consistent with the expected speech act by the speaker that the hearer should bring salt to the speaker because he needs to be sown a little salt in the food. Although the speech act is in the form of a question but its function is the demand (request), so that the speech act is not a question that asks about the ability of the hearer to fetch salt, but a meaningful request: ‘Will you get me the salt?’ or ‘Bring me the salt’. And the expected response is not ‘Yes’, I can pass the salt’ or ‘No, I cannot’, but ‘Here it is’ it means ‘This is the salt’. In Indonesian language this context is the same, so Indonesian users usually translate that request into ‘*Tolong ambilkan garam!*’ (=Pass me the salt!) And the addressee will respond by saying ‘*Ini garamnya*’ (=Here is the salt). This case will be different from the speech act, ‘Can you ride a bicycle?’. This speech is a real question or an interrogative of which the function is to ask a question, so the response in accordance with the ability of the addressee whether he or she could ride a bike or not and the answer is ‘Yes’ or ‘No’.

What about the following speech act that has a commissive illocutionary utterance like: ‘I promise (hereby) to set fire to your house’. How does the addressee understand or translate that illocutionary? Addressee interpreted that the speaker promised to burn the house of the addressees. Will the speaker really burn the house addressees? Simply a threat is due to uncontrolled emotions that he just promised and there was no action to burn the house of the addressee.

There are many other examples of indirect speech acts and direct speech acts with various categories of illocutionary (assertive, directive, commissive, and declarative) that require an understanding of the addressee or translators when they have to translate an illocutionary which contains a variety of forms and functions. A speech act translation is very useful when an translator wants to translate conversational implicatures or illocutionary acts with deep meanings such as in a novel or short story (Mey, 1993, pp. 109-126; Leech, 1993, pp. 164-166; Yule, 1998, pp. 132-133; Verschueren, 1999, pp. 22-24).

#### 5. *Politeness*



Politeness is closely associated with the face display or speech that is performed when doing communication (Richards, Plate & Plate, 1992, p. 281). Yule (1999) also adds that the politeness is being polite, humble, and kind to others when is recalled (p. 134). This concept is very closed to the face, so there is an assumption that ‘Your face, in a pragmatic science, is the self-image of society (public self-image)’. This means that the appearance of one's face and speech act when communicating would be a material assessment by the public about his or her image. Consider the following two examples of utterances:

**a. Direct speech act: ‘Give me that paper!’**

Speech act is worded that the speaker is at a higher position than the addressee and has a social power, so there is the impression that the speaker is being rude and disrespectful to the addressee. It is possible that when the speaker speaks then he will perform a sour face and shows a pressure or threat. Yule (1999) refers to it as performing a face-threatening act, because the speaker speaks with a rude and threatening face (p. 134). In such cases an interpreter must be careful and observant when translating this kind speech, so it can be translated according to the context (Fasold, 1990, pp.159-166).

**b. Indirect speech act: ‘Could you pass me that paper, please?’**

This kind of speech act eliminates the arrogant and rude impression because it reflects the politeness when speaking. This is such the same utterance of asking or commanding someone to do something but in difference way of speaking. It rather contains subtle request, which shows the self-image of the speaker who appreciates addressee. It indicates that the first speaker is more polite than the second one. He kept the politeness to addressee and so the addressee automatically gave a good self-image on the speakers. This action is known as a face-saving act. In translating this type of speech, the translator must be able to maintain a self-image of the speaker to find the equivalent meaning and style of speech in the source language.

So a translator in translating speech acts that contain politeness which is presented in the form of speech with directive illocutionary should be able to find an appropriate expression or utterance in the target language. So that phrase with the polite tone in the source language can be translated into the same tone in the target language.

## The Study

### *Research Method*

The research method used in this research was descriptive qualitative research (Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2011, p. 15). The research started from the translation analysis on daily utterances used by Indonesian people in their daily-life. Afterwards, detailed analysis was made on how each utterance was translated from English into Indonesian and discussed based on cultural perspectives.

### *The Source of Data*

The source of data was a document taken from some daily conversations and talks, advertisements and announcements found in Indonesian country and the form of data was phrases and sentences. The data consisted of 40 utterances translated from English into Indonesian language.

### *Data Analysis Technique*

The data analysis technique used was content analysis. This is just what its name implies—the analysis of written or visual contents of a document (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990, p. 371). On the



other hand the translation data were analyzed by doing a comparison between English (the source text) and Indonesian (target text) translation and discussed based on the pragmatic aspects and both English and Indonesian cultural perspectives (William and Chesterman, 2002, pp. 6-7)

## Findings and Discussion

### *Findings*

Results of translation analysis based on pragmatic aspects used by the translator in translating the daily utterances in Indonesian daily-life communication are recapitulated in the following table.

**Table 1. Translation analysis of daily utterances based on pragmatic aspects**

NO.	PRAGMATIC ASPECTS	FREQUENCY	%
1	Implicit meaning	21	52.5
2	Co-text and context	9	22.5
3	Deixis	5	12.5
4	Speech acts	5	12.5
5	Politeness	0	0
TOTAL		40	100

Out of the 40 utterance translation, the most dominant pragmatic aspect was implicit meaning (52.5%), followed by co-text and context (22.5%), deixis (12.5%), speech acts (12.5%), and politeness (0%). It means that more than half of utterance translation uttered in Indonesian daily-life communication tended to use implicit meaning than other pragmatic aspects.

### *Discussion*

In this part the findings are discussed based on the pragmatic analysis and English and Indonesian cultural perspectives. The data provided in the box are divided into two columns and three rows. There are three abbreviations for data description (ST=source text, TT=target text, and BT=back-translation) while the data codes are described using the codes, for examples, Data UT-1/IM that means Data of Utterance Translation Number 1 in the category of pragmatic aspect Implicit meaning, Data UT-4/D means Data of Utterance Translation Number 4 in the category of pragmatic aspect Deixis, etc. The first column is the text categories while the second column is translated texts. The first row is the source text or original text (English text), the second row is the target text (Indonesian text), and the third row is the back-translation text). The followings are the examples of data analysis that are described based on the sample categories of the pragmatic aspects.

#### **1. Implicit meaning**

Based on the data analysis the utterances that have implicit meanings are the data number 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34. Two of them are as follows:

#### **Data UT-14/IM**

ST	The lady hit the man with an umbrella.
TT1	<i>Wanita itu memukul laki-laki tersebut dengan menggunakan sebuah payung.</i>
TT2	<i>Wanita itu memukul laki-laki yang memakai payung.</i>
BT1	The lady hit the man by using an umbrella.
BT2	The lady hit the man who is with an umbrella.

Based on the data UT-14/IM it can be seen that the source text has two meanings that are implicitly stated. That utterance seems ambiguous, so readers or listeners are confused and difficult to understand it. Sometimes it can be dangerous for communicators to say or to use that utterance because the information misleads. It needs a clear translation effort to eradicate misunderstanding and miscommunication. So that a translator has to make it clear by translating that utterance into two translation choices: 1) 'The lady hit the man by using an umbrella' and 2) 'The lady hit the man who is with an umbrella'.

#### *Data UT-15/IM*

ST	He gave her cat food.
TT1	<i>Dia memberi makan kucingnya.</i>
TT2	<i>Dia memberinya makanan kucing.</i>
BT1	He fed her cat.
BT2	He gave cat food to her.

The data UT-15/IM is also an example of utterances with implicit meanings. The source text has two meanings that need a clear explanation. The translator must be hard to translate to escape from misunderstanding and misinformation. It is a danger if readers or listeners misinterpret that utterance. To make it clear, the translator has to translate the source text into two translation alternatives: 1) 'He fed her cat' or 2) 'He gave cat food to her'.

## **2. Co-text and Context**

Based on the data analysis the utterances that contain co-text and context are the data number 1, 6, 8, 16, 19, 23, 25, 26, and 27. Two of them are as follows:

#### *Data UT-1/C*

ST	They <u>can</u> fish.
TT1	<i>Mereka dapat memancing ikan.</i>
TT2	<i>Mereka mengawetkan ikan dengan cara pengalengan.</i>
BT1	They are able to fish.
BT2	They preserve fish by canning.

Translating the utterance like in Data UT-1/C is also difficult because it contains the co-text of a word that has more than one meaning. The word 'can' in that sentence has two meanings: 1) be able to = capability (modality) and 2) a process of canning or preserving the food by canning. This forces translators to work hard to serve a clear translation for readers or listeners in order they do not get misinformation and miscommunications. On the other hand the translators or readers and listeners should be able to know the context when and where of the utterance is used.

#### *Data UT-8/C*

ST	Professor Smith caught a <u>fly</u> .
TT1	<i>Profesor Smith sudah menangkap seekor lalat.</i>
TT2	<i>Professor Smith menangkap bola kasti.</i>
BT1	Professor Smith caught a fly.
BT2	Professor Smith caught a ball of baseball.

The Data UT-8/C has also the same problem as the Data UT-1/C. The source text contains the co-text of a word ‘fly’ as a homonym that has more than one meaning. The translators must translate it first into two choices of translation: 1) a small insect with two wings (=‘*lalat*’ in Indonesian language) and 2) a ball which is hit very high but not far in the baseball game (=‘*bola kasti*’ in Indonesian language). Those meanings are really different, so the translators must be able to make it clear through their translation. Beside that the translators or readers and listeners must be able to know in what the context that utterance is used or spoken.

### 3. Deixis

Based on the data analysis the utterances that contain deixis are the data number 4, 5, 7, 35, and 39. Two of them are as follows:

#### Data UT-4/D

ST	My friend promised me to come <u>next week</u> .
TT	<i>Temanku berjanji akan datang pekan depan.</i>
BT	My friend promised that he will come next week.

The data UT-4/D is an example of the utterances that contains deixis. Deixis refers to the real world whether it is a spatial (place) or temporal (time) deixis. The adverb of time ‘next week’ or ‘*pekan depan*’ in Indonesian language is an example of the temporal deixis. This phrase ‘next week’ is translated into ‘*pekan depan*’ literally and does not have ambiguous or implicit meaning.

#### Data UT-7/D

ST	I found a book Gatot Soebroto.
TT	<i>Saya menemukan sebuah buku di jalan Gatot Subroto.</i>
BT	I found a book on Gatot Subroto street.

The data UT-7/D contains the special deixis, that is *Gatot Subroto*. After being analyzed, the phrase ‘*Gatot Subroto*’ in this context means the name of the street in the Indonesian map. It is ‘*Jalan Gatot Subroto*’ (=Gatot Subroto street). The source text does not have a complete sentence. The hidden word ‘street’ after *Gatot Subroto* must be appeared in the sentence, so the translators or readers and listeners could understand the utterance clearly. So, the clear translation could be ‘I found a book on Gatot Subroto street’ (=‘*Saya menemukan sebuah buku di jalan Gatot Subroto*’).

### 4. Speech acts

Based on the data analysis the utterances that contain speech acts are the data number 28, 36, 37, 38, and 40. Two of them are as follows:

#### Data UT-28/S

ST	Don’t enter the room except the staffs.
TT	<i>Dilarang masuk ruangan kecuali petugas.</i>
BT	Don’t enter the room except the staffs.

The source text in Data UT-28/S is an example of directives. It is one of the speech act classification. Based on the structural forms, it is categorized into negative imperative or prohibition in the class of general communicative function. The utterance ‘Don’t enter the room except the staffs’ is really translated into ‘*Dilarang masuk ruangan kecuali petugas*’ literally. The meaning does not change.

**Data UT-37/S**

ST	Don’t accept if the seal is broken.
TT	<i>Jangan diterima jika tutupnya rusak.</i>
BT	Don’t accept if the cap is broken.

The same as the previous data, the Data UT-37/S is also an example of directives. It is a negative imperative sentence or utterance. Based on the general communicative function, it is group into a negative command or prohibition. The source text ‘Don’t accept if the seal is broken’ is translated into the target text ‘*Jangan diterima jika tutupnya rusak*’ literally. The meaning, before and after translation, does not change at all. This utterance of this speech act is easier to understand than other utterances in the other pragmatic aspects.

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

What is discussed above is about the glimpse study of translation and pragmatic problems in daily-life. Understanding pragmatics as a science that examines how language is used by humans conveys the meaning that the various speech deliveries are strongly influenced by the speakers’ background knowledge and culture based on their environment. So, this causes the variety of language meaning as well. The English utterances used in daily-life communication in Indonesia mostly have dominant implicit meaning. In relation to this case, the translator must be able to catch the meaning delivered by the speakers both spoken and written and translate the source utterances into the target ones accurately and politely in order to avoid the misleading and misinterpretation in doing communication between different languages and maintain the meaning of the source language and target language as accurate, natural, cultural as possible.

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#### Appendix: Data of Translation Analysis on Daily Utterances

Data	The Source Text (ST)	The Target Text (TT)
1.	They can fish.	1) Mereka dapat memancing ikan, 2) Mereka mengawetkan ikan dengan cara pengalengan.
2.	Beautiful girl's dress.	1) Gaun wanita yang cantik, 2) Gaun milik wanita cantik.
3.	Flying plane can be dangerous.	1) Pesawat yang sedang terbang bisa membahayakan, 2) Menerbangkan pesawat terbang mungkin berbahaya.
4.	He promised me to come next week.	Dia berjanji pada saat bahwa dia akan dating pecan depan
5.	His car was reported stolen by his friend yesterday.	1) Mobilnya dikabarkan dicuri oleh temannya kemarin, 2) Mobilnya yang diberitakan, dicuri oleh temannya kemarin.
6.	She cannot bear children.	1) Dia tidak dapat melahirkan anak, 2) Dia tidak bias bersikap sabar pada anak.

7.	I found a book on Gatot Soebroto.	Saya menemukan sebuah buku di jalan Gatot Soebroto.
8.	Professor Smith caught a fly.	1) Profesor Smith menangkap seekor lalat, 2) Profesor Smith menangkap bola kasti.
9.	hot dog	1) Anjing yang kepanasan, 2) Nama jenis makanan roti belah isi daging.
10.	Jack and Susan were married.	1) Jack dan Susan suami istri, 2) Baik Jack maupun Susan keduanya sudah berumah tangga.
11.	He ate the bread on the table.	1) Dia memakan roti yang ada di meja, 2) Dia memakan roti (sambil duduk) di atas meja.
12.	We now have dress shirts on sale for men with 16 necks.	1) Sekarang kita mengobrol baju lelaki yang berleher 16, 2) Sekarang kita menjual obral baju lelaki yang berukuran kerah 16 inches.
13.	The corps shot the rioters with guns.	1) Polisi menembak para pengunjung rasa dengan senjata api, 2) Polisi menembak para pengunjung rasa yang membawa senjata api.
14.	The lady hit the man with an umbrella.	1) Wanita itu memukul pria itu dengan sebuah payung, 2) Wanita itu memukul pria yang membawa payung.
15.	He gave her cat food.	1) Dia memberinya makanan kucing, 2) Dia memberi makanan pada kucingnya.
16.	David went to the bank.	1) David pergi ke bank, 2) David pergi ke pinggir sungai.
17.	I saw the man with the binoculars.	1) Saya melihat pria yang menggunakan alat teropong, 2) Saya melihat pria itu dengan menggunakan teropong.
18.	They are hunting dogs.	1) Mereka sedang berburu anjing, 2) Mereka itu adalah anjing-anjing buruan
19.	I saw her duck.	1) Saya melihat bebeknya, 2) Saya melihat pasukannya.
20.	I told her books were funny.	1) Saya katakan buku-bukunya lucu, 2) Saya bilang padanya bahwa bukunya lucu-lucu.
21.	I love hunting dogs.	1) Saya senang berburu anjing, 2) Saya menyukai anjing pemburu
22.	Did you see the girl with the telescope?	1) Apakah kamu melihat gadis yang memakai teleskop? 2) Apakah kamu melihat gadis itu dengan menggunakan teleskop?
23.	A good life depends on a liver.	1) Hidup yang baik bergantung pada hati, 2) Kehidupan yang baik bergantung pada penduduknya.
24.	Foreigners are hunting dogs.	1) Orang asing sedang berburu anjing,



		2) Benda asing itu adalah anjing pemburu.
25.	Welcome	1) Selamat datang, 2) Keset
26.	He is looking for a match.	1) Dia sedang mencari pertandingan, 2) Dia sedang mencari korek api.
27.	I promise I will give you a ring tomorrow.	1) Saya berjanji bahwa saya akan memberimu sebuah cincin besok, 2) Saya berjanji akan meneleponmu besok.
28.	Don't enter the room except the staffs.	1) Dilarang masuk kecuali petugas, 2) Selain petugas dilarang masuk.
29.	Buy one get one.	1) Beli satu dapat satu, 2) Beli satu, gratis satu
30.	Garage Sale	1) Obral, 2) Dijual garasi
31.	Until the police arrest the drug dealers control the street.	1) Hingga polisi melakukan penangkapan, para penyalur narkoba mengawasi jalan, 2) Hingga polisi menangkap para pengedar obat bius yang menguasai jalanan.
32.	The man who hunts ducks out on weekends.	1) Orang yang memburu bebek keluar pada akhir pekan, 2) Orang yang berburu, beristirahat di akhir pekan.
33.	The girl told the story cried.	1) Gadis yang berceritera itu menangis, 2) Gadis yang dikabari cerita itu menangis.
34.	The dog that I had really loved bones.	Anjing yang kumiliki sangat suka makan tulang.
35.	No smoking here	Dilarang merokok di sini
36.	No riding except with helmet	Tidak boleh berkendara kecuali pakai helm
37.	Don't accept if the seal is broken	Jangan diterima jika segelnya rusak.
38.	No parking here	Dilarang paker di sini
39.	Baby on board	Ada bayi di mobil
40.	Keep silent, the test is running.	Harap tenang sedang ujian.

*Source: Compiled from some daily conversations and mass media*

## Gender and Lexical Features in Jordanian University Students' Use of SMS Messaging

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### **Abstract**

The phenomenal growth of mobile phone and SMS messaging in Jordan calls for an urgent analysis of its social, psychological and linguistic impact on Jordanians. The present study aims at exploring gender variation in the lexical features used in the SMS messaging of young Jordanian university students. This study draws upon theories of language and gender in face-to-face communication and in computer-mediated communication. One research question guides the study: How do young Jordanian male and female university students use different lexical features in their SMS messaging? The analysis of the present study is based on a corpus of 1,612 SMS messages, which was collected from young male and female university students using three different techniques of data collection. The collected data were categorized according to Yule's (2009) classification of lexical words. The analysis of data showed that the young Jordanian male and female university students differ in terms of the lexical features used in their SMS messaging. The males used more abbreviation and acronyms than the females, whereas the females used more borrowing, derivation, compounding, blending, conversion, and coinage than the males. The paper concludes by suggesting that females tend to use a more clear and expressive language in their SMS messaging. Some recommendations are presented for future research.

**Keywords:** Gender differences, SMS messaging, Lexical features, Jordanian students

## 1. Introduction

Today's society depends heavily on mobile phones and SMS messaging. SMS, which formally stands for "short SMS messaging" (Baron, 2003), is an asynchronous mode of computer-mediated communication (henceforth CMC) that enables its users to send short text messages to one mobile phone from another, or to a mobile phone via the internet (Hård af Segerstad, 2002). Technically, SMS is not computer-mediated communication, since it was designed to be sent and received via satellite technology, not through computer networks (Hård af Segerstad, 2002). The first SMS message in the world was a "Merry Christmas" message sent in 1992 by Neil Papworth in the United Kingdom (Deumart & Masinyana, 2008).

Research has revealed that SMS messaging has become an indispensable part of young people's everyday life (Grinter & Eldridge, 2001; Thurlow, 2003). SMS messaging is used for a variety of functions such as contact with family and friends (Döring, 2002; Ling & Baron, 2007; Thurlow, 2003), coordinating times and events (Döring, 2002; Ling, 2005), discussing school topics (Al Rousan, Abdul Aziz & Christopher, in Press), among others. According to Lancaster, Dodd and Williamson (2004), and Ling (2005), SMS messaging is greatly used by university students.

Young generations use a particular language in their SMS messaging that has distinguishing characteristics from both the written and spoken forms of a language (Crystal, 2001). Döring (2002) pointed out that the language of SMS messaging has a discrete system of writing in terms of lexical, syntactic and typographical forms, making it a special code for youth. SMS messaging has also a distinct style as it saves time, effort, and space (Hård af Segerstad, 2002; Thurlow, 2003). This distinct style may be the result of its limited number of characters, which is up to 160 characters in English and up to 70 characters in other languages such as Arabic and Chinese. Young people often make their SMS messaging as economical as possible by using special lexical SMS acronyms, abbreviations, or shortenings and deletions. For example, they use *LOL* instead of lots of laugh/love; *clas*, instead of class; *gud* instead of good; *luv* instead of love; *u* instead of you; *r* instead of are; *wk* instead of week. They also use a combination of letters and numbers such as *every1* instead of everyone; *2moro* instead of tomorrow. Moreover, young people (males and females) widely use emoticons such as happy and sad faces, which are similar to body language to modify the message.

The study of gender differences in SMS messaging in the Arab world, in general, and in Jordan, in particular, has not been sufficiently explored. The paucity of such research as well as the interest of the researcher in this field have inspired the researcher to work on this particular topic.

The purpose of this study is to examine gender differences in the use of lexical features in the SMS messaging of young Jordanian students. The study attempts to answer the following question: How do young Jordanian male and female university students differ, if they do, in the use of different lexical features in their SMS messaging?

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1 Gender and Face-to-Face Communication

Gender differences in the linguistic choice and interactional style of males and females have triggered a number of language and gender studies (Coates, 1993; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Gray, 1992; Holmes, 2008; Lakoff, 1975; Poynton, 1989; Romaine, 1999; Tannen 1990; Yule, 2009). According to Holmes (2008), Lakoff (1975), and Tannen (1990), males and females communicate very differently with each other. Their communication is so different as if they

belong to two different planets (Gray, 1992). For instance, it was revealed that males and females differ in way they use personal pronouns, articles, hedges, intensifiers, and qualifiers in their communication (Coates, 1993; Lakoff, 1975; Poynton, 1989). It was also found that the conversational style of males and females differ greatly. Whereas males' style is described as "report talk", females' style is described as "rapport talk" (Tannen, 1990). Men's style was also described as aggressive, while women's style was described as polite (Lakoff, 1975; Holmes, 2008; Tannen, 1990; Trudgill, 1983).

The choice of language used by males and females in various social communications characterizes linguistic differences between them. For example, females' speech is considered less assertive, facilitating social interactions and relationships, while males' speech is considered more information-oriented (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1990). Furthermore, female language has the tendency to be powerless, using particular linguistic forms like tag questions, silence and indirectness (Coates, 1993; Lakoff, 1975). In contrast, male language tends to be dominant, employing different linguistic forms such as interruption and topic-raising (Poynton, 1989; Tannen, 1990).

Previous research also revealed gender differences in the amount of talk (Coates, 1993; Poynton, 1989; Tannen, 1990). Coates (1993) and Tannen (1990) maintained that men are more "verbose" than women, though it is women who "chatter" in stereotypical mythology. Poynton (1989) believed that females make longer statements to avoid interruption by others. Moreover, women are more likely to use more standard forms in speech than men (Coates, 1993; Holmes, 2008; Trudgill, 1983). Trudgill (1983) pointed out that the association between women and standard language is the most important finding that emerged from social dialects over the past twenty years.

## 2.2 Gender and Computer-Mediated Communication

Just as males and females differ in their face-to-face communication, they also differ in their computer-mediated communication. Herring (2000), who studied gender differences in CMC based on Lakoff's (1975), Tannen's (1990), and Coates' (1993) theories of gender and face-to-face communication, believed that both men and women transfer the already-present gender differences of face-to-face communication onto computer-mediated communication.

Recent literature has reported gender differences in the linguistic forms as well as the conversational styles of males' and females' communication in both synchronous and asynchronous modes of CMC. (Guiller & Dundrell, 2006; Herring, 1992, 1993, 1995; Selfe & Meyer, 1991; Sierpe, 2002).

One of the earliest studies to investigate how humans communicate using CMC was conducted by Selfe and Meyer (1991). Their results coincided with previous research in face-to-face communication, revealing that men have the tendency to dominate the amount of discourse and that they are more verbally assertive than women are. Herring (1992, 1993) listed two different sets of features distinguishing men's communication style from women's communication style: *the adversarial style* versus *the attenuated style*. The adversarial style of men is characterized by strong assertions, self promotion, sarcasm, rhetorical questions, exclusive first person plural pronouns, imperative form of verbs, impersonal and presupposed truth, and ridiculing an opponent's point of view. The women's attenuated style, on the other hand, is characterized as attenuated assertions using hedges and qualifiers, exhortations phrased as suggestions, questions as a means to get a response, apologies, and inclusive first person plural pronouns.

The findings of Rossetti's study (1997) showed many significant gender differences in the emails of males and females. For instance, women used more modals than men, except for the modal "can". Men, on the other hand, used the modals "could", "might" and "would" significantly more times than women. Women, however, used "can" more than men. "Should, may, and must" are all used more by men. In addition, men and women tended to use adverbs differently. For example, women significantly used the words "please, sorry, thanks, and appreciate" more frequently than men. Men tended to use a more assertive language than women using the word "sure" more times, whereas females used "not sure" more times. Rossetti's (1997) findings support those made by Herring (1992, 1993), and Selfe and Meyer (1991) in terms of *aggressive vs. supportive* language. Supporting Rossetti's (1997) findings and Herring's (1992, 1993, 1995) findings, Soukup (1999), found that male-male interaction was full of flaming, profanity, sexual reference, and attacks on masculinity. In contrast, female-female interaction was characterized by cooperation, relation building, and emotionality. Just like their face-to-face interactions, women on the internet were more likely to maintain a more expressive language, interpret non-verbal behavior better, and socially orient themselves more than men did (Huffaker 2004; Soukup, 1999).

College students are usually the focus of gender differences research in CMC (Baron, 2004; Lee, 2003; Punyanunt-Carter & Hemby, 2006). For example, Baron (2004) concluded that female-female conversational turns are longer than male-male conversational turns, and that the average of female-female conversations is longer than that of male-male conversations. Therefore, it seems that females are more expressive and more concerned with establishing connections with other people through instant messaging. With regard to lexical issues, females employ more complex punctuation and more capitalization than their males and use more unabbreviated lexical forms than males. These findings concur with the finding that women usually use a more standard form than men (Holmes, 2008). All in all, the findings of the research discussed above concur in many aspects with the findings of previous research in face-to-face communication with respect to language and gender.

### **2.3 Gender and SMS Messaging**

Researchers have shown that males and females are different in their SMS messaging with respect to certain features (Baron, 2004; Deumart & Masinyana, 2008; Igarashi et al., 2005; Kasesniemi & Rautiainen, 2002; Klimsa, Colona, Ispandriarno, Sasinska- Klas, Döring, & Hellwig, 2006; Ling, 2005). Ling (2005) pointed out that Norwegian teen males and females used text messages differently. Males used more text messages for mid-future planning activities, whereas females used them for immediate future planning activities. In a study whose findings agree with those of Ling's (2005), Klimsa et al. (2006), Igarashi et al., (2005) demonstrated that SMS messaging is a medium that appeals more strongly to girls than to boys. Igarashi et al. (2005) also revealed that first-year undergraduate Japanese females used SMS messaging more actively than males in social networks and, therefore, usually expand their SMS messaging social networks. Although not elaborated, they mentioned that the content of the females' SMS messaging was different from that of the males'. Similar to face-to-face interaction, Japanese females were more interested in forming and sustaining strong and intimate relationships over SMS messaging than Japanese males.

Deumart and Masinyana (2008); Kasesniemi and Rautiainen (2002); Klimsa et al. (2006); Ling (2005); and Ling and Baron(2007) revealed that females send more messages, write longer messages, form more complex messages, and get involved in more SMS messaging discussions



than males do. In South Africa, female participants wrote longer messages (23 words) than male participants (19 words) (Deumart & Masinyana, 2008). The same results were found in Finland where girls tended to send longer and more complex sentences (containing more than one clause) than male teenagers (Kasesniemi and Rautiainen, 2002). Likewise, Norwegian teenage girls sent far more complex and longer messages than Norwegian teenage boys. A total of 52% of the complex sentences were sent by females compared with 15% sent by males (Ling, 2005). This finding agrees with that of Ling and Baron's (2007), who reported that 60% of the text messages sent by American female students are complex ones.

Furthermore, previous research has revealed significant gender differences with regard to the lexical, syntactic, and typographical features used in the SMS messaging of males and females. In terms of syntactic features, Baron (2004) and Ling (2005) noted that females employ more sophisticated syntax than males. Unlike males who tend to delete syntactic features from their text messages, females like to preserve these syntactic features. Baron (2004) and Ling (2005) also reported some significant gender differences concerning contracted forms among young people. For example, Baron mentioned that male senders of text messages employed more contracted forms than their female counterparts (77% and 57%, respectively). Females, furthermore, used less abbreviation and more punctuation than males (Baron, 2004; Ling, 2005). Females also had the tendency to use more emoticons than males (Baron, 2004; Ling, 2005). Gender differences related to code-switching were also evident in the text messages of students. According to Al-Khateeb and Sabbah (2008), Jordanian male students code-switched between English and Arabic less frequently (30%) than females (44%).

### 3. Theoretical Framework

Herring (2004) devised a framework for the analysis of online texts. It is an approach to researching computer-mediated communication, which she called Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA). The core of CMDA is the linguistic analysis of logs of verbal interaction (e.g. characters, words, utterances, messages) (Herring, 2004). It enables the analysis of language in a specific medium of communication. For example, language used in text messaging can be influenced by specific features of the technology itself.

According to Herring (2004), CMDA can be used to study "micro-level linguistic phenomena" such as online word-formation processes, lexical choice, sentence structure, and code-switching. It can also be used to investigate "macro-level phenomena" including coherence, community, gender equity and identity in discourse. CMDA may be applied to four levels of language (Herring, 2004): *structural domain* (the use of special typography or orthography, novel word-formations, and sentence structure), *meaning levels* (meaning of words and utterances), *interactional levels* (turn taking, topic development, and other means of negotiating interactive exchanges), *social levels* (linguistic expressions of play, conflict and power, and group membership).

### 4. Methodology

The present study is part of a larger project which was conducted in 2013. It is a qualitative case study that employed qualitative design to answer its questions.

#### 4.1 Participants

The participants of this study were selected by means of purposive sampling. The sample in the present study was confined to first-year young male and female students from three different universities in Jordan. For the purpose of the current study, "young students" were defined as



male and female students between the ages of 18-20, studying as first year undergraduates at a Jordanian university. This particular group of young students has several years (at least 2 years) of SMS messaging experience from high school. According to Grinter and Eldridge (2001), these young people bring with them to college a well-developed practice of SMS messaging. In this study, a total of 100 students, who were evenly balanced for gender, constituted the sample.

#### **4.2 Data Collection Techniques**

Three techniques of data collection were used in the current study. An open-ended questionnaire, a user diary, and semi structured interviews.

##### **4.2.1 The Questionnaire**

The questionnaire's main goal was to collect demographic information about the participants as well as their habits of using SMS messaging. Survey questions from previous studies (Grinter and Eldridge, 2001; Hård af Segrestad, 2002) were adopted and customized to fit the purpose of the paper. The questionnaire was written both in Arabic and English and the participants had the choice to pick the language of their choice. It was divided into two parts. The first part focused on getting demographic information about the participants including age, sex, nationality, and major. It was important to gather demographic information in order to guarantee that the participants would meet the requirements of the study. The second part included questions about the habits of using SMS messaging, which may be difficult to observe directly from the corpus.

One hundred students (50 males and 50 females) participated in the questionnaire. It is important to note that a number of students were hesitant to participate in the questionnaire. The researcher believes that the sensitive nature of text messages as being very private was the reason behind their hesitation and refusal.

##### **4.2.2 The User Diary**

A diary is a document made by someone who has kept a recent, regular, personal log. User diaries offer an intense and real representation of an individual's everyday intimate, sensitive, and personal experiences (Blatter, 2008). This technique was used by Grinter and Eldridge (2001), Deumart and Masinyana (2008), Hård af Segrestad (2002), and Ito and Okabe (2005). Sixty participants' diaries (30 males and 30 females) were used for analysis. The participants were invited to keep a log of the text messages they sent from their mobile phones over a period of one week. They were selected from the group of the students who participated in the questionnaire. Of the 100 students who took part in the questionnaire, 71 (37 males and 34 females) students agreed to participate in the user diaries. Only 62 (30 males and 32 females) students out of 71 students actually participated in the logs because the other 9 (7 males and 2 females) students didn't forward any messages to the researcher. When the researcher contacted them, a few of them apologized and the others didn't answer the calls. To make the sample equal for gender analysis, the researcher excluded the last two diaries received from the female students.

The participants were highly assured that all of the information they provide in the study would be kept strictly confidential, and informed consent was obtained from them. They were given verbal instructions and were requested to keep a record of the text messages they sent to their colleagues or family members over a period of one week. In order to control the possibility of copying errors due to retyping or rewriting, the participants were asked to forward their messages to the researcher's mobile phone, at the researcher's own expenses. The participants were compensated by the researcher by charging their pre-paid phone cards with an amount covering the cost of sending the messages. They were given the choice to do the forwarding either at the end of each day or right after sending their messages, whichever was more

convenient to them. A total of 1612 messages (780 messages from males and 832 messages from females) were sent by the participants to the researcher's mobile phone.

#### 4.2.3 The Semi-structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to complement the other two techniques of data collection by eliciting information directly from the participants. A semi-structured interview, "is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks informants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions" (Ayres, 2008, p. 810).

The interviewees, 20 students (10 males and 10 females), were chosen from the group of the students who participated in the user diaries. The interviews were not primarily intended to gain data for linguistic features per se, but rather for complementing the linguistic material obtained from the other two techniques and the researcher's understanding of how people use SMS. The interviews were carried out in Arabic. To ensure confidentiality and eliminate disruptions, the interviews were carried out in private rooms within the universities. They were conducted in the form of an informal one-to-one, friend-to-friend chat, which created a friendly atmosphere, motivating the participants to share their information willingly and trustfully. The students were given pseudonyms to conceal their identities. Informed consents were also obtained from the participants before beginning the interviews. The whole interview process was tape-recorded. The participants were informed that it would be possible to stop the audio-recording if they felt uncomfortable at any time during the interview. The researcher took down some quick and important notes in his notebook while the students were answering the questions. At the end of each interview, the researcher thanked the participants for their co-operation.

#### 4.3 Data Analysis

The data collected for this study were analyzed manually. All the messages were categorized by gender. Each message was then analyzed for the occurrence of the lexical features. Frequency was used to help determine gender differences in the students' SMS messaging. The data revealed the use of three systems of writing in the SMS messaging of the students: English, Arabic, and Romanized Arabic. Therefore, the students' text messages were classified into three categories: English messages, Arabic messages, and Romanized Arabic Messages.

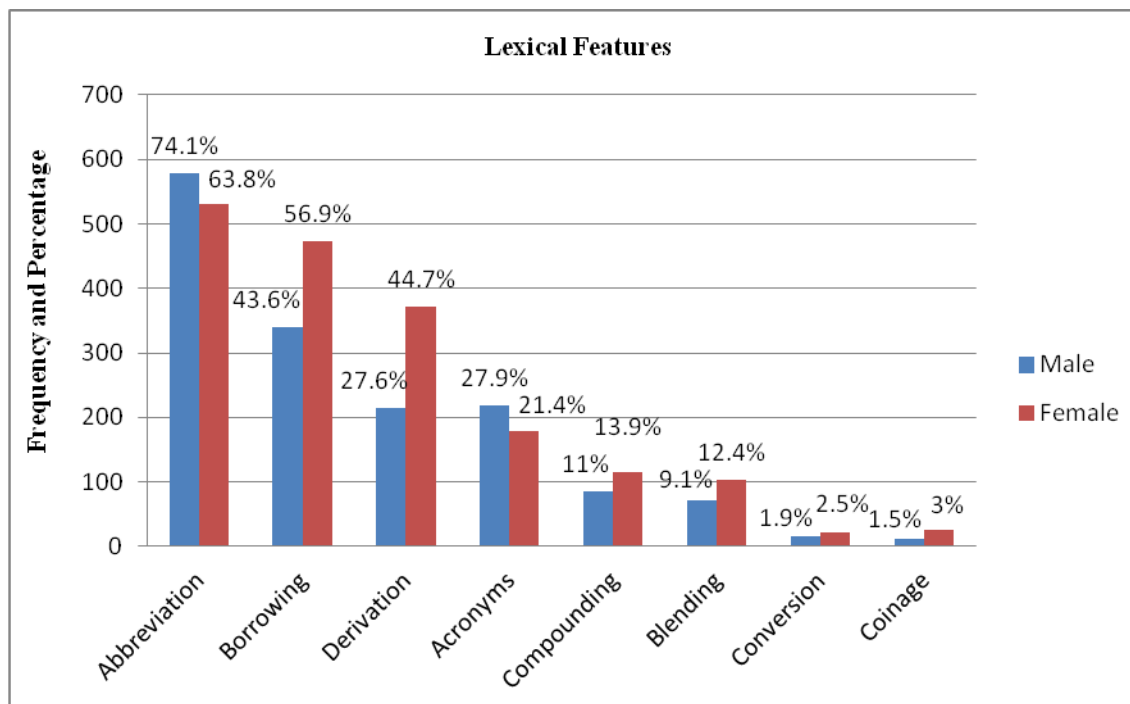
The lexical features were classified in light of word-formation processes proposed by George Yule in his book, "The Study of Language" (2009, pp. 53-57). They were then adapted to fit the purpose of the study. The lexical features were categorized as the following:

- a. Coinage (Kleenex, Xerox, Brillo)
- b. Borrowing (*yogurt* from Turkish; *Pizza* from Italian)
- c. Compounding (*girlfriend*=girl+friend, *headmaster*=head+master)
- d. Blending (*motel*= motor+hotel; *smaze*= smoke+haze)
- e. Conversion (*vacation*, *butter* are nouns used as verbs)
- f. Derivation (*unimportant*= un+important; *successful*= success+full)
- g. Acronyms (ATM= automatic teller machine; LOL= lots of love/laugh)
- h. Abbreviation (*wk*= week; *msg*= message)

Before proceeding with data analysis, all the text messages were checked by three trained coders to determine the type of lexical features used in the text messages. Each coder analyzed all the text messages individually, and their results were compared for consistency.

## 5. Results

Figure 1 covers word-formation processes among the students and shows variations among them with respect to each lexical category.

**Figure 1: Lexical Features in SMS messaging of Young Jordanian University Students**

### 5.1 Abbreviation

This word-formation process is one of the “most noticeable features of present-day English” (Crystal, 2005, p. 504). It refers to the process whereby longer words are reduced into shorter ones by omitting certain vowels from a word (e.g., wk for week; tnght for tonight). Yule (2009) used the term clipping in his categorization of word-formation processes. This term was replaced by the term abbreviation because it is a more common and a wider term that includes more abbreviated forms of words than clipping (Crystal, 2005).

The data analysis showed that abbreviation is the most common lexical feature among the young Jordanian students participating in this study. Most abbreviated forms occurred in the English and Romanized Arabic messages. Abbreviation in the students’ text messages is recorded high on the scale and the ratio of using abbreviation in the text messages differs between the male and female students. The percentage of abbreviation among the males is 74.1% (578) compared to 63.8% (531) among the females.

The vast majority of the abbreviations in this study are based on English and Romanized Arabic text messages. This may be due to the nature of orthography in Arabic. Texters usually achieve abbreviation through clipping such as sis for “sister” and bro for “brother”, or by omitting vowel sounds from the middle of the word such as wk for “week” and hw for “how”. Below are some examples of the students’ abbreviations. English, Arabic, and Romanized Arabic messages are provided below (Abbreviated words are given in square brackets and the originals in round brackets. M represents male and F represents female).

Example 1(M): [hw] come you don’t want to give me my [mny] back?

((How) come you don’t want to give me my (money) back?

Example 2 (F): [اووووبس سامحيني. والله انسيت انه في تريننج (غلطي)] غلطي

(Oooops, it is my mistake. Please, forgive me. I forgot that we have training.)

Example 3 (F): [kf] (keef) eltalj bijanin, ru7na 3ala 3jloun [inbstna] (inbasatna) [ktrrrrrr]. (kteer)

([How] was the snow? It was fabulous. We all went to Ajloun. We [had a lot of fun].)

### 5.2 Borrowing

Borrowing is a linguistic term which refers to a linguistic form that is transferred from one language into another usually by bilingual speakers (Crystal, 2008). For example, the word restaurant came into English from French. The borrowed lexical items are also called "loan words" (Fromkin et al., 2011, p. 505). Borrowing simply means taking a word or a phrase from one language and using it in another.

The given data mark borrowing as the second most common linguistic feature in the students' text messages. The percentage of borrowing among the young Jordanian male and female students emphasizes the aforesaid finding. The data showed that borrowing was used in 56.9% (473) of the females' text messages. In contrast, it was used in 43.6% (340) of the males' text messages. This finding is consistent with Al Khateeb and Sabbah's (2008) study which revealed that female students code-switch between English and Arabic in their text messaging more than their male counterparts. The data also showed that the students borrowed items from English when they type their messages in Arabic and vice versa. However, females tend to borrow more words and phrases from English than males do. It is noticed from the data that when English and Arabic are used in text messages, students tended to use more English words than Arabic words in a given message. This seems to indicate that English is a popular mode of communication among the young Jordanian females. Below are two examples of students' borrowings from Arabic:

Example 4 (M): **Hi, don't forget to bring the CD [bukrah] plz (tomorrow)**

Example 5 (F): سموحه لاتنسى دفتر الاسلاميه [بليز]

([Please] Samouhah. Do not forget the Islamic Science notebook)

Example 6 (F): **Roo7i 3al [faysbuk now now] o shoofi el[masij] elli ba3tlik yaha**

(Go to [facebook] right now and check the message I have sent you).

### 5.3 Derivation

Derivation is considered the most common word-formation process to be found in the production of new forms (Fromkin et al., 2011; Yule, 2009). It is accomplished by means of a large number of affixes in English messages. An affix is added to an already existing word. For example, boyish is derived by adding the suffix-ish to the word boy; the word unhappy is derived by adding the prefix un- to the word happy.

Figure 1 shows that the frequency of derivation among females is higher than the frequency of derivation among males in the text messages; females used derivation in 44.7% (372) of their text messages while males used it in 27.6% (215) of their text messages.

English is a derivational language while Arabic is an inflectional language (Khalil, 1996). In English, derivation is achieved by adding affixes (suffixes, infixes, prefixes) to an existing word such as helpless which is derived by adding the suffix less to the end of the word help. In Arabic, some words are derived from root words. For example:

Example 7 (F): [ تروحي ] معنا ولا مثل كل مره امك تعبانه؟

([Do you want to go] with us or like every time you say that your mother is sick?)

In this example, the word تروحي is derived from the root "راح" and in example (2), the word [قولت] is derived from the root "قول".

#### 5.4 Acronyms

Acronyms are words that are derived from the initials of several words and they are pronounced as single words (Fromkin et al., 2011, p. 504) such as USA from United States of America, UN from United Nations, and NASA from National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Even though brevity in text messaging does not allow the use of complex and formal style of language, it becomes a common feature of text messages owing to its ease of use and mutual intelligibility across the board among the texters. Most of the acronyms found in the data are English-based. The given data showed considerable variation among the males and females in this study with regard to the use of acronyms. While acronyms were used in 27.9% (218) of the male students' messages, they were used in 21.4% (178) of the female students' messages. The texters form acronyms from the initial letters of a set of other words that sound like one word. Below are examples from English, Arabic and Romanized Arabic as they appear in the students' messages. (The acronyms appear in square brackets followed immediately by the original word in round brackets).

Example 8 (F): **U hear the breaking news. Amal left her [bf] (boyfriend)**

Example 9 (M): **بتمر أحمد تتذكر [ع م] (عيد ميلادك) السنه الماضيه؟ من الآخر صح!! يا الله الأيام كيف**  
(Ahmad, do you remember your [birthday] last year? It was the best, wasn't it? God, how quick the days go by!)

Example 10 (M): **ween halghaibeh? Lessa za3laaneh. 2na 3an jad 2asef [lol](lots of love)**

(Where have you been? Are you still angry with me? I am really sorry [lots of love])

The most common acronyms reported in the students' English text messages are lol for laughing out loud, brb be right back, cul for call you later, and ttyl for talk to you later respectively. However, in their Arabic text messages, the students frequently use **س م** (salam) for Hello and **ص خ** (sabah elkhair) for good morning.

#### 5.5 Compounding and Blending

Compounding is a linguistic term widely used to refer to a linguistic unit which is made up simply by joining together two different linguistic words that function independently in other circumstances such as bedroom, rainfall, and washing machine (Crystal, 2008). Blending is a similar process that refers to combining two individual words to form a completely new word, usually by joining two shortened forms of two other existing words (Crystal, 2005; Yule, 2009). For example, the word *smog* is formed from *smoke and fog*; *heliport* is formed from *helicopter and port*. Blends are usually formed by combining the first part of the first word with the second part of the second word.

As shown in Figure 1, the females used compounding and blending 13.9% (116) and 12.4% (103) respectively in their text messages, whereas males used them 11% (86) and 9.1% (71) respectively, in their text messages. Both of these features involve combinations of morphemes to form a new word, but compounding requires combining two independent lexemes. The following are examples of blending and compounding:

Example 11 (M): **I ate [breakfast] with mother before I come to university**

Text messages in Arabic overwhelmingly indicate proper nouns compounding. Here are some examples on compounding from the students' messages which were written in Arabic.

Example 12 (M): **حدا ما يحب يسمع [لام كلتوم]**

(Is there anyone who doesn't like to listen to [ Umm Kaltoum]?)



Example 13 (F): **2otlak abouy [mudeer bank] fi amman bs mu mdawim elyoun**  
(I told you my father is a [bank manager] in Amman, but he isn't working today.)

The use of compounding in English is extensive, whereas the use of compounding in Arabic is limited (Khalil, 1996). Unlike English compounds, Arabic compound words found in the text messages are typically separated by a space within the nouns. Compounds in Arabic can be formed from three words such as *ابو عبد السلام* [Father of Abd Alssalam] although they are pronounced as single forms.

### 5.6 Conversion

Conversion refers to the derivation of a new item by changing its function without adding any affixes (Crystal, 2008; Yule, 2009). For example, the verb *smell* comes to be used as a noun; the noun *bottle* comes to be used as a verb. It is among the least common word-formation processes, which is texted in a minimum number of the messages. The females used conversion in 2.5% (21) of their text messages compared to males who used it in 1.9% (15) of their messages. The researcher assumes that the low percentage of conversion may be attributed to the uncommon use of this feature of word-formation in our everyday communication. In conversion, a noun comes to be used as a verb (Fromkin et al., 2011; Yule, 2009), a skill that may require command on word-formation processes. The data collected from the young Jordanian texters provide us with insight into interesting instances of conversion in the text messages. The following are some examples of conversion:

Example 14 (F): **Dunt tell her nthing. she will [wikileak] u**

It is important to mention that this feature is not a characteristic of Arabic; thus, very few examples of Arabic conversion appeared in the data. However, there are students who used some technical lexical elements found in English in their daily conversations such as e-mail, wikileak, message, save, and format.

Example 15 (M): **لا تنسى [تسيفها] وابعثها بسرعه**

(Do not forget to [save it] and send it very quickly)

The data indicated that most of the terms used by the males and females in this category are words that have recently appeared in communication. These terms are very common in everyday interactions nowadays. Even though the frequency of conversion is not high in the text messages and the difference is not significant, the female students tend to use conversion more than the male students, signalling more complexity in their use of language.

### 5.7 Coinage

Coinage is a term which refers to the invention of totally new words (Yule, 2009). These new words are created outright for a specific purpose. For example, new words that have been added to English by the advertising industry are such Kleenex, Brillo, Jello, Xerox, Band-Aid (Fromkin et al., 2011). Some words are actually coined from the existing words (e.g., Kleenex from the word *clean*).

Among the word-formation processes, coinage is one of the least common and least creative processes of word-formation. In this study, coinage is observed only in 37 text messages. However, the percentage of coinage in the text messages among the females is 3% (25) compared to 1.5% (12) among males, which is relatively higher. The most typical sources of coinage are found to be related to trade names for commercial products or objects mentioned in the messages of the texters. The following are some examples from the students' text messages on this particular feature:



Example 16 (M): U saw Samer [jeep]? Very nice color

Example 18 (F): salam 3omri. Ma3ek [Vaseline]? Hassa jeet min el jim

(Hello my love. Do you have some [Vaseline]? I've just come out of the gym.)

Example 4 (F): بلييز بدّي اياك تعملي 20 كوبيز. في (زيروكس) ماشيين عند ابو جواد عزاوية الجنوبي

(Please, I need you to make 20 copies. There is a [zerox] machine in Abu Jawad store on the corner of the south gate.)

## 6. Discussion

The data analysis revealed that there is variation in the lexical features used by the male and female students in their SMS messaging.

One of the obvious gender differences is present in the students' borrowing, where females tend to be more regular borrowers than males. They tend to borrow more English words and phrases when texting in Arabic or Romanized Arabic. The relatively higher percentage of borrowing from English supports the finding that English has become a common means of interaction among young Jordanian female students. It also shows a strong female interest in English. This raises a profound question on the influence and future of English in Jordan.

Abbreviations, including clippings and short forms, are shown to be the most common features that occur in the students' text messages. The male students in this study used more of this feature in their text messages than their female counterparts. This finding agrees with the findings of previous research revealing that males employed more abbreviated forms than females (Baron, 2004; Hård af Segerstad, 2002; Ling, 2005). Such a finding shows that students prefer using the abbreviated spelling rather than the standard spelling indicating the importance of brevity in text messages. Economy and speed which are usually manifested in the abbreviation of words are said to be the motive for using abbreviations in SMS messaging. The interviews showed that the young students commonly use abbreviation to save time, money, and effort, a finding that is in accordance with Baron (2004), Döring (2002), Hård af Segerstad (2002), and Thurlow (2003). According to Döring (2002), abbreviations satisfy collective identity functions thus requiring a common shared knowledge in order to be able to understand the language and, hence, to be able to use it. SMS messaging communication is interpersonal, that is, it is communication between people who share a considerable amount of shared background knowledge; therefore, they can rely on their shared background knowledge by using a particular kind of language in their texting (Grinter & Eldridge, 2001; Hård af Segerstad 2002). According to Reid and Reid (2004), the skilful use of abbreviations and short forms among the young students signals solidarity and group affiliation.

Despite the fact that abbreviations speed up the process of typing, save time and effort, and do not change the semantic value of communication, females still do not like to use them in their SMS messaging as much as males do because some of them consider it rude to be very short-spoken.

Joud, a female student, said that:

"انا بحس اني قليلة احترام للاخرين لما بتكون رسالتي مختصرة"  
[I think it is rude to be short-spoken]

The interviews and the questionnaires indicated that females sometimes use abbreviation unintentionally, but they stop using them when they realize that they are overdoing it. 60% of the female students who participated in the interviews explained that they always try to make their text messages as clear as possible. One of the female students stated that:

" لما بستخدم كتير اختصارات بالمسج تاعتي , بحس انه مش كتير شي حلو. عشان هيك انا دانما بعيد عليها. "

[When I use so many abbreviations, I feel that my message is disrespectful, so I always recheck my messages].

Acronyms are also a strong marker of gender differences in the students' SMS messaging. These acronyms are used more by males compared to females. It is important to note that 10% of the males and 20% of the females interviewed reported having difficulty understanding, at times, some of the acronyms used by their fellow students (males and females) because of the use of new acronyms which can sometimes be confusing. This indicates that the language of SMS is still evolving to fit the needs and the features of the medium.

The data also showed that compounding and blending are not very common in the text messages of the students. However, they appear more in the text messages of the females. This may indicate that females are more complicated users of a language and that males like to keep their communication simple. It also shows that females choose a language that is more complex and closer to the standard norm.

Despite the fact that males and females differ in their use of coinage and conversion, these two word-formation processes are found to be low in the data. The weak utilization of coinage and conversion may be attributed to technical matters or to the uncommon use of this feature of word-formation in everyday communication. The finding that females employ coinage and conversion more than males in their text messages may suggest that females are more creative than males in the use of this medium.

## 7. Conclusion

Gender differentiation is a significant aspect of culture that is often reflected in language use. This study concludes that the young Jordanian male and female students used different lexical features in their SMS messaging. Word-formation processes such as coinage, compounding, blending, abbreviation, conversion, acronym, and derivation are essential stylistic features of texting among the students. Specifically, abbreviations and short forms such as clipping, and acronyms are the most prevalent of all features. Brevity is the most popular feature among the students although males tend to use it relatively more than females. However, females tend to be relatively more expert in other word-formation processes such as borrowing, derivation, blending and compounding. Along with this, the text messages of female students differ from those of the males in lexical reduction and shortening. English is also found to be a more popular mode of communication among the young Jordanian females because they borrow English words and expressions, on average, more than their male counterparts. Finally, further research is needed in order to explore more gender and language issues in SMS messaging

## About the Author

I obtained my PhD degree in Applied Linguistics from Utara Universiti Malaysia in 2013. Presently, I am a lecturer at the department of Applied Linguistics at Yanbu University College, Saudi Arabia. I teach courses in linguistics including sociolinguistics, semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, phonetics, research methodology, among others. My research interest includes sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and gender and CMC.

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## Arabic Language as the Foundation of Semitic Languages

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### **Abstract**

There is a view that there was a hidden Greek transmission into Arabic linguistics and terminology which was subsequently borrowed by traditional Arab scholars who started to describe their own language scientifically. This has been rejected by some Muslim scholars who believe that the purity of Arabic linguistics, such as the theory of Arabic syntax, is totally free from any foreign influence. Thus, the purpose of the research is to discover the origin of the Arabic language before the dawn of Islam. The research focuses on the linguistic corpus development in order to give a balanced judgment.

**Keywords:** Arabic linguistics, Arabic Language, Origin of Arabic and Semitic Languages



The word `Semitic` was introduced by Schlozer<sup>i</sup> in 1781 to denote a group of languages that evolved from Aramaic, Phoenician, Hebrew, Arabic, Yemen, Babylonian and Assyrian (al-Wāfī, 1988, p. 6). He understood them to be languages of the descendants of Prophet Noah (Roux, 1965, p. 124). If we look at the Upper Paleolithic,<sup>ii</sup> Mesolithic,<sup>iii</sup> Neolithic,<sup>iv</sup> and Chalcolithic<sup>v</sup> times, the descendants of Adam were the founders of human civilization; their success was dependent on the stability of their political, cultural and geographical structures. We find that linguistic study is a vital aid in analysing their development. The major documented cultures of the ancient Near East have produced the largest body of material, providing a sound basis for subsequent reflections on their linguistic diversity and attempts at contrastive linguistics with Mesopotamia (Reiner, 1990, p. 61). Reiner (1990) asserted that there were two major languages at the beginning of recorded human history, namely, Acadian<sup>vi</sup> and Sumerian<sup>vii</sup> (p. 61). He assumed that the Acadian of the Semitic people spread to Mesopotamia by way of migration around 4000 B.C.E. (Ṭaha Bakir, Wādi an-Nail, 1956, pp. 210-320).

The medieval Muslim historian Ibn Kathīr believed that when Adam and Eve were expelled from paradise, Adam found himself in India on a mountain called Wasim in the valley of Bahil between ad-Dahnaj and al-Mandal and Eve in the land of Mecca (al-Bidayah wan Nihayah 1:13, Dār Ibn Kathir).<sup>viii</sup> However, Ibn Abī Hatīm narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas that Adam descended in Dihna situated between Mecca and Ṭa’if. Another anecdote mentioned by Ibn Kathīr in his book `The Stories of the Prophet` is that according to Al-Hassan Al-Baṣrī, Adam descended in India, Eve in Arabia, Iblis in Bodistiman, Iraq, and the serpent in Isfahan, Iran. According to Abu Musa al-Ash’arī, before Allah ordered Adam to descend from Paradise to Earth, he taught him the names of all things and provisioned him with crops (Stories of the Prophets 1:1, Umm al-Qura). According to some narrations, Adam and Eve met in ‘Arafah.<sup>ix</sup>

The question is, what language did Adam speak? Loewe (1994), a historian of ancient Babylon, purported from the Scripture that Aramaic was the language spoken by Adam (vol. 1, p. 103). Yet, if Adam spoke Aramaic, how could he receive a direct command from God in Arabic? As mentioned in Quran verse 2:35 is a command pattern or command mode, the word أسكن is a command pattern and لا تقربا and فتكونا both of them were commands pattern but for inhibition, what does it mean if the sentence in a command mode or pattern? It was revealed in direct conversation between the both parties, the letter أ in أسكن and التاء in لا تقربا and فتكونا linguistically had indicated the direct conversation was occurred. The Qur’ān states (Translated by A. Y. Ali):

"وقلنا يا آدم اسكن أنت وزوجك الجنة وكلاً منها رغدا حيث شئتما ولا تقربا هذه الشجرة فتكونا من الظالمين"

(Qur’ān, 2:35)

*We said, ‘O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the garden and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression.’*

"وعلم آدم الأسماء كلها ثم عرضهم على الملائكة فقال أنبؤني بأسماء هؤلاء إن كنتم صادقين"

(Qur’ān, 2:31)

*And he taught Adam the nature of all things; then he placed them before the angels and said: ‘Tell me the nature of these if ye are right.’*

It seems that Adam was taught not only the names of all things, but also the art of writing (on clay)<sup>x</sup> which he passed on to his descendants, for the just governance of the world and writing (Zawq, 2006, p. 11 & al-Numānī, 1985, p. 77). Is it possible — as some historians assert — that mankind’s first language was Arabic, which developed the Aramaic dialect? (Zawq, 2006, p. 2). If so, then Aramaic did not prelude Arabic, but has to be considered as its offshoot, as argued by Zawq (2006) who stipulates that Arabic formed the root of Qahton, Adnan, Hebrew and Aramaic (p. 2). Yaseen (n.d) whose research into Mesopotamian civilization led him to establish the theory that the Sumerians received Acadian immigrants from Arabia (pp. 36-40) supports his theory. While Sumerian culture was more advanced (Kramer, 1963, pp. 73-269), their languages integrated and formed the ancient Semitic language.<sup>xi</sup> Around 2400 B.C.E Semitic people migrated to eastern Mesopotamia, settled in the vicinity of the Dajlah river and erected the city of Assur. A group of migrants moved further south and mixed with the original populace. The language that developed through this migratory process was called Acadian or Babylon-Assyrian (al-Wāfī, 1988, p. 27). The two major cities entertained ties with other cities like Tel al-Emrnah as indicated by the evidence of scriptures<sup>xii</sup> written in Acadian circa 1411-1358 B.C.E. It is assumed that Acadian represents an eastern branch of the Semitic family of languages. According to Reiner (2013), a group of bilingual texts composed around 1000 B.C.E. contain numerous syntactic faults in the Sumerian version -- a calque on the Acadian (p. 88). This suggests that the Sumerian version was subsequently added, either because of the need for a Sumerian version for cultic recitation or simply to lend more authenticity to the text (Reiner, 2013, p. 90). Conclusive evidence that Acadian was the formal language was uncovered when two Acadian tablets were unearthed in Gaza, written in cuneiform script that contained contracts relating to the sale of land and dated according to the Assyrian calendar by the eponym of the year. Based on these findings, it was inferred that cuneiform script had survived in Canaan from the Amarna period onwards serving as the official script for legal documents when the Assyrians were the undisputed masters of Palestine. A small limestone fragment bearing Assyrian characters was found in Samaria issued during the reign of Sargon (Lods, 1996, p. 3).

The Arabic writing development process was similar to the Greek writing development process as mentioned by Powell (1991):

“...In the eighth and seventh and sixth century B.C. appear in the Levant clear local varieties of this script. West Semitic writing came to include two branches: Northwest Semitic (Phoenician, Canaanite, Hebrew, Aramaic, Samaritan) and Southwest Semitic (North Arabic, South Arabic, Ethiopic). Derivatives of the script are still today preferred by Semitic speakers, while Phoenician writing is a sub-group of `West Semitic` writing, it is also the form of West Semitic writing which is earliest attested by complete inscriptions” (p. 9)

In addition to that evidence we find that ancient Greek writing was written from right to left (Powell, 1991, p. 9)—similar to the case of Arabic writing which originated from ancient written languages that interacted in Mesopotamian area. Perhaps, the interrelationship was an indicator that they originated from the same root at the genealogical level.

### **Ancient near East Writing Activities**

According to Kramer (1959), the Sumerians are one of the best known people of the ancient Near East. They became excellent workers in building temples, palaces and making tools such as

weapons, pots, vases, jewels and ornaments. Moreover, Sumerian clay tablets have been found by the tens of thousands inscribed with their business, legal and administrative documents. A large number of Sumerian clay documents on which their literary creations revealing Sumerian religion, ethics and philosophy were inscribed because the Sumerians were one of the very few people who not only, probably, invented a system of writing but also developed it into a vital and effective medium of communication (Kramer, 1959, p. xviii & xix). Kramer believed these people had existed 5000 years ago (1959, p. xix). Their early attempts were crude and pictographic characters; after the development of thinking, they became a highly conventionalized and pure phonetic system of writing. The great majority of these were excavated between 1889 and 1900 at Nippur, an ancient Sumerian site not much more than a hundred miles from modern Baghdad (1959, p. xx). A millennium before the Hebrews wrote their Bible and the Greeks their Iliad and Odyssey, the epic Gilgamesh which was the most excellent literary work of Babylonian was found in 1862 (1959, p. 183). The epic Gilgamesh consisted of twelve songs or cantos of about three hundred lines each; each canto was inscribed on a separate tablet now located in the Ashurbanipal library (1959, p. 183). The poet who held the centre stage was Gilgamesh, whose love and hatred, tears and rejoice, strives and wearies, hopes and despair meant he dominated the action of the poems (1959, p. 104). The discussion above indicates that the concept of writing had already come to existence since the existence of Noah and his descendants; Shem, Ham and Japheth (Genesis 10:7).

H. G. Wells (Wells, 1956, Vol 1, p. 159) had divided the types of human writing into three categories; picture writing, syllable writing and alphabet writing. Picture writing is the pictograph that could be found today in places like railway stations such as the arrow pointing uptown or downtown; in restaurants a little sign of steamboat or a sign of a cup of coffee or even in Chinese writing where there are still traceable numbers of pictographs (1956, p. 160). The syllable writing could be visualized in Sumerian picture-writing which was done upon clay and in styles made of complex and inaccurate curved marks which today is rapidly degenerating; it was however, a well-adapted language. Then, another system of writing, developed in Egypt and the Mediterranean coast, had been found in priestly picture-writing called hieroglyphics of the Egyptians which also partly became a sound-sign system based on the sign the alphabets were created.

The above mentions how the system of writing was developed during the different periods in time. We now return to our discussion on how the ten systems of five languages (Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, Ancient Phoenician and Babylonian Assyrian became almost matching in corresponding aspects. The vowel and consonant systems indicate that those languages perhaps originate from the same source. The question is, from the five languages above (some of historians considered six languages because the Babylonian and Assyrian came from the same area but in different period of dynasty), which one had become the source for the rest? Or are they languages or dialects? If we refer to historical documents, it was mentioned in the Qur'an, the Genesis or other ancient documents that the sons of Shem named Amur, Asshur (Kysun), Elam, Arpakhshad and Aram travelled to the East and West to find different places to live in. H. G. Wells believed they were looking for new places to relocate, leaving their current home which had been struck by natural disaster (Wells, 1956, p. 117-122). According to Zaydān (1911), the first son of Shem, Amur, moved to the East or present-day Iraq (*Urk*) and the West in Palestine. In the East, he became the ruler of *Urk* starting the Hamurrabi Dynasty. Likewise, in the West

his people became the first group who populated the coast of Palestine, eventually known as the Canaanite people who spoke the Phoenician language (Margoliouth, 1924, p. 9). The second son of Noah was Ham who spoke the Hamitic languages such as the language of ancient Egyptians and Copts, the Berber languages of the mountain people of North Africa, the Masked Tuaregs, the Ethiopic group of African languages in eastern Africa including the speech of the Gallas and the Somalis (Wells, 1956, p. 120). The third son was Japhet, the languages which originated from his descendants called the Aryan languages or the Indo-European in Aryan family were popular among philologists. Currently, these great languages cover nearly all of Europe such as English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Russian, Armenian, Persian and various Indian tongues. We realize the same fundamental roots and the same grammatical ideas are traceable throughout this family of languages; for instance, the English words for *father* and *mother* are similar to the German *vater* and *mutter*, Latin *pater* and *mater*, Greek *pater* and *meter*, French *père* and *mere*, Armenian *hair* and *mair*, Sanscrit *pitar* and *matar*, etc. (p. 118). Similarly, the manner in Aryan languages only changes in a great number of fundamental words, for example, the *f* in the Germanic languages becomes *p* in Latin and so on. Actually those languages are not different; they are variations of one thing since the people who speak those languages think in the same way (p. 118). We can conclude that Semitic, Hamitic and Japhetic or Aryan people express their ideas of relationship in different ways; the fundamental ideas of their grammars are thus different. The above mentioned indicates that the three sons of Noah (Shem, Ham and Japhet) developed the first languages in the different regions; however, each had different fundamental approaches due to the different territories, provinces and cantos.

The above mentioned shows the strong connections between them; when we look at the ancient historical aspect we can see that they came from the same root whereby their father called Shem bin Noah had five sons; Amur (Elam)<sup>xiii</sup>, Asshur (Khyusun), Arpachshad, Lud and Aram (Genesis 10:22) and their land of origin was Damascus previously called the city of Aram, which means that Syria was their original home (H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, Volume 1, 1956, pp. 127-134). The first was Amur who travelled to the East (Iraq) and West (Palestine) looking for new places and habitat; most historians believed his descendants were rulers of Sargon, Hammurabi (called Babylonian), Assyrian and Chaldean empires. Meanwhile, Hebrew came from Shem's sons, Lud and Aram; it is no wonder that their dialects are very similar to each other (Genesis 15: 10).

### Arabic Language as the Root of Semitic Languages

As we have discussed earlier, the Semitic languages which – as postulated by Schlozar – consisted of Acadian, Aramaic, Syriac, Phoenician, Babylonian-Assyrian, Arabic and Hebrew. However, a group of linguists argue that Arabic had assumed its classical form not shortly before the seventh century C.E. but actually already during ancient times and as such has to be considered the main stem from which all other Semitic languages evolved later on.<sup>xiv</sup> There is linguistic evidence which would indicate that Arabic was the mother of all ancient Semitic languages (Kamaludin, 2007a, pp. 41-44 & 2007b, pp. 27-36).

**Table 1. Similarities between Arabic and other Semitic languages**

	Arabic	Hebrew	Syriac	Ancient Phoenician	Babylonian Assyrian
Istifham	Mā	Mā	Mā	Mī	Mī

Nafi	Lā	Lā	Lā	Lā	Lā
Domir naşob	Nī	Nī	Nī	Nī	Nī
Nouns	Tanawwūr	Tannūr	-	-	Tinnūru
	Lisān	Lāšōn	Leššānā	Lesān	Lišānu
	Şayţān	Şaţān	Sāţānā	Sayţān	-
	Ful	Pūl	-	Fūl	-
	Ḳassīs	-	Ḳaşšīšā	Ḳasīs	-
	Atān	Āţōn	Attānā	-	-
Al-Muta'addi ajwaf	Şāma	Şām	Sām	-	-
	Şāba	Şāb	-	-	-
	Dāna	-	Dān	-	-
	Baḳā	Bāḳā	Bkā	-	-
	Banā	Bānā	Bnā	-	-
	Balā	Bālā	Blā	-	-
Al-Muta'addi Al-Akhir	Ġalā	-	Ġālā	Ġlā	-
	Talā	-	-	Tlā	-
	Ḥaliya	Ḥālā	Ḥlī	-	-
	Hayiya	Ḥāyā	Ḥyā	-	-
	Raḍiya	Rāşā	R<Ā	-	-
	Abā	ābā	-	Abaya	-
	Bakā	Bāḳā	Bkā	-	-
Al-Harakāt At-	Kibārunā	Wālaylā	Nāşā	Samāwāt	-

Ūawīlah Fi Al-Kalimah	كبارنا Hārātunā حاراتنا	وليلنا Ālay علي	قوم Abdāyā إفساد	سماوات -	-
Al-Ḍomah	Yaḡūlūna يقولون	Mōʾābiyyōt مؤابيات	Šūbḡūh اتركوها	Zayeʾehzōmū الذي يأخذهم	-
	Mansūrūna منصورون	-	Abūkūn أبوكم	Yenaḡhōmū يحطمهم	-
	Maḡhūrūna مقهورون	-	-	Fenōtōmu طريقهم	-
Al-Kasrah	Tabiḡina تبيعين	Šadiḡim أبرار	Šbikin مغفورة	Yebēlanī يقول لي	-
	Ġariḡina جربئين	Yēmīnī يميني	Smīkīn متكى	-	-
Associate in meaning	Uht أخت	Āhōt	Ḥāḡā	Eht	Ahatu
	Balaḡa بلغ	Bālaḡ	Blaḡ	Balaḡa	Belu
	Baḡir بعير	Bēḡir	Bḡirā	Baḡrāwī	-

The languages which can be found in nearly all of the Mesopotamian area including North African are Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, Ancient Phoenician and Babylonian Assyrian. They are called Semitic languages or the language of *al-Jazariyyah*. The same fundamental roots and the same grammatical ideas are traceable throughout this family. When comparing the ten examples which have been highlighted from the ten topics that focus on grammatical issues; *istifham* (question) in Arabic language is *Mā*, for Hebrew it is *Mā*, Syriac is *Mā*, Ancient Phoenician is *Mī* and for Babylonian Assyrian it is *Mī*. The difference can be found in the last vowel; either in accusative form by using *ā* (*al-Alīf*) or genitive form by using *ī* (*al-Yā*) when there is a declensional change in the noun ending represented by vowel *i*. In Semitic linguistic rules, it does not change the meaning or in other words, `a word` could be in similar connotation and denotation based on sense signification. The *Nāfi* (deny) in all languages in the table is



represented by the same word which is `Lā which means the concept of denying something with the same sense of significance. The word *Domir naṣob* (accusative case) is also in the same form and feature. In order to have concrete evidence, the researcher highlights some used nouns in these languages such as in Arabic it is called *Tanawwūr*, in Hebrew it is *Tannūr* and *Tinnūru* in the Babylonian Assyrian language; meanwhile, the words for the remaining two languages Syriac and Ancient Phoenician are still being researched in the manuscripts. The words `Lisān, Lāsōn, Leššānā, Lesān and Lišānu are in the same roots but with different features; however, they still originate from the primary source which is considered the oldest language among the five mentioned above. The word *Šayṭān* in Arabic, *Šaṭān* in Hebrew, *Sāṭānā* in Syriac and *Sayṭān* in Ancient Phoenician indicate that most of these languages use the same forms and features basically, in the same manner for the words *Ful*, *Pūl* and *Fūl* except for the long vowel in the middle, for sure it does not make any sense as a result of different dialects spoken among the ancient population indicating that the languages did evolve. Looking at the accusative case (*Al-Muta'addiajwāf* and *Al-Muta'addi Al-Akhir*), the examples may include the word *Šāma* in Arabic, *Šām* in Hebrew and *Sām* in Syriac, or other words `Šāba, Šāb, Dāna, Dān, Baḳā, Bāḳā, Bkā, Banā, Bānā, Bnā, Balā, Bālā, Blā, Ġalā, Ġālā, Ġlā, Talā, Tlā, Ḥaliya, Ḥālā, Ḥlī, Hayiya, Ḥāyā, Hyā, Raḍiya, Rāšā, Rā, Abā, Abā, Abaya; simple analysis could help us in proving that all of them actually come from the same source by examining the basic root of the words provided such as the word *Baḳā* which is an Arabic root word that Arab people still use till today. The Jewish people pronounce it in a long vowel style in the middle and ending of a word, the Syrians pronounce *Bkā* with a long vowel in the ending as well as *Banā*, *Bānā*, *Bnā* and *Balā* in Arabic and Hebrew. Another angle that the researcher believes proves a stronger connection between them is the system of long vowel either at the beginning of the word or middle or end of it such as in the case of *Al-Harakāt At-Ṭawīlah Fī Al-Kalimah* in Arabic *Kibārunā* and *Hārātunā*, Hebrew *Wālaylā* and *Ālay*, Syriac *Nāšā* and *Abdāyā* and Ancient Phoenician *Samāwāt*; the letter *ā* in each word has the same manner in pronunciation. Further discussion on the topic focuses on the nominative and u-vowel such as Arabic *Yaḳūlūna*, *Manṣūrūna* and *Maḳhūrūna*, Hebrew *Mō'ābiyyōt*, Syriac *Šūbḳūh* and *Abūkūn*, Ancient Phoenician *Zaye'ehzōmū*, *Yenāḍhōmū* and *Fenōtōmu*; the letter *ū* plays an important role for these languages in practising the nominative and u-vowel. The *Al-Kasrah* among these languages is practised when they are collectively and cooperatively used together to identify and diagnose the classification of words such as Arabic *Tabīcina* and *Ġari'īna*, Hebrew *Šadiḳim* and *Yēmīnī*, Syriac *Šbikin* and *Smīkīn*, and Ancient Phoenician *Yebēlanī*, the focus is on the letter *ī* which undoubtedly conveys the same manner in fundamental basic word approaches. The associate meaning is the last analysis on the function of samples carried out by the researcher. It obviously shows the same root or source of the languages in Arabic which calls *Uht*, *Bala'a* and *Ba'ir*, Hebrew *Āhōt*, *Bāla'* and *Bē'ir*, Syriac *Ḥāṭā*, *Bla'* and *B'īrā*, Ancient Phoenician *Eht*, *Bala'a* and *Ba'rawī*, Babylonian & Assyrian *Ahatu* and *Belu*. The words *Uht*, *Āhōt*, *Ḥāṭā*, *Eht* and *Ahatu* basically use the same fundamental morphology in giving the impression of meaning; this technique is also implemented in the second and third words.

Obviously, these ten linguistic samples display indisputable similarities. The variant pronunciations indicate the development of different dialects stemming from an identical root. Sulaimān (1992) and Nahār (2002) proposed changing the common term 'Semitic' with 'Jazariyah' as a means to correctly denote the relation of the branches to the Arabic stem or 'Ur' language. Acadian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Caldaean and Aramaic tribes in Mesopotamia can

trace their origins in ancient Arabic civilization (Sakiz, 1989, p. 35). The researcher believes the similarities essentially occur in the ten samples of languages spread and extended in the Mesopotamia area in dialects which came from the same origin which is the Arabic language. In addition, the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad PBUH narrated by at-Tirmīzī *سام أبو العرب، حام أبو حابس، يافث أبو الروم* (Shem the father of Arab, Ham the father of Habsyā, Japhet the father of Rom) evidently proves the claim said that the Arabic language is the origin of Semitic languages.

### The Term *Jazariyyah* instead of Semitic

Generally, most studies on the evolution of the Arabic language focus on the development of Arabic grammar, the channels through which its system was adopted, and whether or not Arabic was subjected to substantial foreign influences. With respect to the role of Arabic in Islamic civilization, the majority of historians and linguists agreed that formal writings on Arabic grammar started in the time of ‘Ali bin Abi Tālib (Ḍaif, 1995, pp. 366-372). However, the issue regarding the origin of the Arabs and their language has not yet been agreed upon. Many debates focus on numerous assumptions and premature conclusions not thoroughly founded on a solid basis of textual evidence. The earliest extensive body of textual sources in the Arabic language is found in the corpus of pre-Islamic poetry. At the initial stage of investigation, when Jahili literature was created has to be determined. The most famous poet among the Arabs was Amru` al-Qays (died 565 C.E.), the nephew of Muhalhil Ibn Rabi`ah. His phrase "Let us halt and weep" is contained in one of the seven *Mu`allaqāt*, a selection of poems prized as the best examples of pre-Islamic Arabian verses, which - according to the custom of the time - were publicly displayed in Mekkah. Imru' al-Qays remains the most revered of all the pre-Islamic poets and has been a source of literary and national inspiration for Arabic intellectuals up until the 20<sup>th</sup> C.E. In the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Makkī (2005) believed that Imru al-Qays was of the Kindah tribe and the first major Arabic literary figure by quoting ‘Verses from his *Mu`allaqah* (Seven Suspended Poems), one of seven poems prized above all others by pre-Islamic Arabs, are still the most famous and possibly the most cited verses in all of Arabic literature. The *Mu`allaqah* is also an integral part of the linguistic, poetic and cultural education of all Arabic speakers.’ (p. 311). He also emphasized that Ibn Sallam al-Jumahī (d. 846 C.E.) summarized the poet’s genius in his *Generations of the Stallion Poets* as follows:

Imru' al-Qays was the originator of many great things the Arabs considered beautiful, and which were adopted by other poets. These things include calling up his companions to halt, weeping over the ruins of abandoned campsites, describing his beloved with refinement and delicacy, and using language that was easy to understand. He was the first to compare women to gazelles and eggs, and to liken horses to birds of prey and to staves. He 'hobbled like a fleeing beast' [a reference to his famous description of his horse] and separated the erotic prelude from the body of his poem. In the coining of similitudes, he surpassed everybody in his generation. (Makkī, 2005, p. 222)

To support the above statement, the Iraqi writer al-Samarrā'i (1993) hails Imru' al-Qays as “the freedom poet” (*al-shā'ir al-‘ashīq*) and ascribes to him the ideal of an independent spirit:

The poet Imru' al-Qays had a gentle heart and a sensitive soul. He wanted the best not only for himself, but also for all the people of his society. The freedom that he struggled for was not confined to romantic and erotic relations between him and his

beloved Fatimah nor was it limited to his demands to lift the restrictions on sexual relations between men and women, rather it exceeded all this. He was singing for the freedom of humanity and from this point, we are able to name him the Poet of Freedom. (p. 32)

Pre-Islamic poetry also contains reference to the ancient Arabic kingdom of Palmyra that was ruled by Queen Zenobia (الزيباء) in the third century C.E. when Greater Syria was part of the Roman Empire. Zenobia succeeded in extending her rule to Egypt until 274 C.E. when she was defeated and taken to Rome as a hostage at the orders of Emperor Aurelian (Tārīkh al-Umam wal-Mulūk 1:73, Bayt al-Afkar ad-Dauliyyah). Arabic sources provide indications of her Arab descent, such as al-Ṭabarī who recorded that she belonged to the same tribe as her husband, *al-'Amlaqi*, one of the four original tribes inhabiting the Palmyra region. Zenobia's father, 'Amr ibn al-Zarīb, was the chieftain of the *'Amlaqis* before he was killed by members of the rival *Tanukh* confederation; Zenobia succeeded him as the head of the *'Amlaqis* and originated from the first al-Arab *'Āribah*.<sup>xv</sup> Latin and Arabic sources describe Zenobia as a beautiful and intelligent woman who carried herself like a man accustomed to riding, hunting and drinking with her officers. Zenobia was renowned to be educated and fluent in Greek, Aramaic and Egyptian. She frequently hosted literary salons and surrounded herself with philosophers and poets (Tārīkh al-Umam wal-Mulūk 1:73). Ibn 'Aqil's *Commentary* (1998) contains a poem allegedly authored by the queen herself (vol. 2, p. 366, & Tārīkh al-Umam wal-Mulūk 1:73):

مَا لِلجَمَالِ مَشِيئُهَا وَوَيْدًا \* أَجْنَدَلًا يَحْمِلُنَ أُمَّ حَدِيدًا

*Doesn't the walk of the camel cry out \* Be it stoness she carries, or steel*

أُمَّ الرِّجَالِ جُنْمًا قَعُودًا

*Or heavy men riding her*<sup>xvi</sup>

Her poem was used by Arabic grammarians to prove specific grammatical rules of the Arabic language. This is of course to be considered another viable piece of literary evidence for the existence of ancient Arabic.

In respect to the origin of the classical Arabic alphabet, scholars such as Suyūṭy have established a linkage with Syriac calligraphy (al-Muḏḥīr 1:4, Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah), this evidence being supported by Farūqī (1980) who explained the beginning of a more sophisticated Arabic writing style by the introduction of so-called 'Arabeques' in what used to be ancient Mesopotamia and the Arabs called 'what lies between the two rivers (Euphrates and Tigris) (p. 11). When examining the oldest existing manuscript copies of the Qur'anic text originating from the eighth century C.E., their characteristic *naskh* style can be associated with the ancient Nabataean, the difference being that in the latter the letters remained disconnected and scattered while in the former the letters were interconnected (Farūqī, 1980, p. 158). Further studies explained the evolution of specific Arabic letters by the combination of certain Nabataean letters (al-Zayyid, 2011, p. 36). Recent heliographic manuscript studies have also contributed to the discussion (al-Zaybī, 1995, p. 18) by observing noticeable similarities between ancient Egyptian and Arabic syntax. In summary, De Sacy's statement that the Arabs had no writing before Prophet Muhammad's time has long been dispelled and is no longer considered worthy of serious academic consideration (Margoliouth, 2004, p. 7). Even such notoriously biased and ostensibly Biblically inspired orientalists such as Margoliouth (2004) could not help but submit to the sheer overwhelming evidence of ancient Arabic writing which was mostly preserved in the form of stone inscriptions found scattered throughout Arabia:

Inscriptions in truly monumental alphabets accumulated to the number of some thousands, they were found to represent more than one kingdom and more than one dialect the names, records and dates, which they contained, cleared away some of the obscurity which veiled the pre-Islamic history of the peninsula. (p. 7)

Then he added:

... The old Arabian alphabet was constructed is unknown, we have no record... it has however been pointed out that within that alphabet we can see a certain amount of evolution. (p. 11)

From the above it can be safely established that Arabic existed already in its basic form and structure in ancient times. The preservation of classical pre-Islamic Arabic poetry was also not interrupted by the coming of Islam but rather continued in the works of early Muslim grammarians. The evolution of any language does not occur in complete isolation from other languages and cultures, thus, the possible influence of *Nabataean* writing and Egyptian syntax does not stand in contradiction to the independent development of the Arabic language as a unique form of expression of Arabic culture and civilization. Thus the researcher believes the word *Jazariyyah* instead of Semitic is more appropriate due to the origin and development occurred in Mesopotamia area.

### Conclusion

The Arabic language originated from ancient civilization not long after the dawn of Islam where the Qur'an became the major source for Muslims. From the abovementioned, it is clear that the Arabic language had been used during historic times but in different forms. What does this mean? Several evidence indicate the existence of the Arabic language during ancient times based on the early manuscripts written by the primitive people, the main one among them the manuscript of Epic Gilgamesh which dated 4000 B.C, written in Sumerian writing where some orientalist claim it came from the Sumerian civilization. Unfortunately, the researcher believes it did not originate from this group but from the Semitic groups who were descendants of Shem either through Amur or Kyushun or Elam or Arpakhshad or Lud or Aram but not from Sumerian people who were known as non-semitic so they could not claim the manuscript of Epic Gilgamesh as originating from the Sumerians. The Sumerian people came to the Mesopotamia area after the period of Sargon and Hammurabi Dynasties, not before. In addition to that, the writer who translated the first world document of 'The Epic of Gilgamesh' into Arabic in 1957 asserted that the fundamental grammar such as the different types of rules had been practised by different genders<sup>xvii</sup>. Thus, the civilization in ancient Iraq (Urk) did not belong to them but to the descendants of Dynasty King Hammurabi, then the Dynasty of Assyrian ruled the region, not the Sumerians. This means the Sumerians who came from the regions of Europe were absolutely not the people whose started the civilization of the Mesopotamia area but the region was developed by the Semitic people. The ancient inscriptions were the evidence indicating that the established system in linguistics had occurred. According to the findings, the Arabic writing was considered a new character form called *Arabesque* which is an ornamental design consisting of intertwined flowing lines, originally found in ancient inscriptions; a strong evidence that the Arabic language originated from the evolution of the ancient writing character of Nabatean, Syriac, Assyur, Madaen, etc.

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<sup>i</sup> German Orientalist whose theory is not supported by Arab scholars who coined the rival term ‘*Jazariah*’ or ‘*Urubah*’; (see Kamaludin, 2007a, p. 15).

<sup>ii</sup> Relating to the time when humans first started to make tools out of stone.

<sup>iii</sup> Denoting the middle period of the Stone Age between the Paleolithic and Neolithic period also called Middle Stone Age. (The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1999, p. 1161).

<sup>iv</sup> Period of history began around 8000 B.C.E. when humans began to make stone tools, grow their food and live in permanent communities, when ground or polished stone weapons and implements prevailed. (see The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1999, p.1242)

<sup>v</sup> Relating to the period in 4000 to 3000 B.C.E. in the Near East and South Eastern Europe when weapons and tools were made of copper, period still largely Neolithic in character, also called Eneolithic (see The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1999, p. 301)

<sup>vi</sup> Also called Assyro-Babylonian.

<sup>vii</sup> Was supported by HijÉzi (1980, p. 151).

<sup>viii</sup> (See *Qism al-AbhÉth wa al-dirÉsÉt al-IslÉmiyyah*, n.d., p.30); (Stories of the Prophets 1:1); and (Newby, 1989, p. 38).

<sup>ix</sup> Originally means “place to know each other”; (see Stories of the Prophets 1:1)

<sup>x</sup> (See Domrah, 1987, p.11), He was the first man in the earth spoke Arabic, (see Zawq, 2006, p.2).

<sup>xi</sup> According to Schlozer, all people of language were descendants of Sam, the son of Noah.

<sup>xii</sup> Contains narratives of Egyptian kings such as Akhenaton and Amhotep 1 & 11, (see al-WÉfÉ, 1988, p. 27).

<sup>xiii</sup> The Bible only mentions the name of Elam, but the researcher found in traditional Arabic books supported by some views from Jewish writers who stated `Amur` as the other name.

<sup>xiv</sup> The spoken and written Arabic before the revelation of the Qur’an in the seventh century was different, the Arabic spoken by prophet Ismail was the dialect of the Quraysh. (see Zawq, 2006, p. 7).

<sup>xv</sup> Al-Arab ‘*Āribah* they were ten, ‘*Āad, Thamud, ‘Amlaqi, Taas̄m, Jadis, Ummim, al-Mauḍu’, Jurhum, Yaqṭān and Salāf*. (Tārīkh al-Umam wal-Mulūk 1:28).

<sup>xvi</sup> Mentioned by Tārīkh al-Umam wal-Mulūk 1:73

<sup>xvii</sup> *Milhamah al-Gilgamish*, p. 31.



## **Development, Problems and Solutions: A Critical Review of Current Situation of College English Language Education in Mainland China**

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### **Abstract**

This paper critically reviews current situation of College English Language education in Mainland China. It firstly briefed the history of College English language education which reveals that its development is intertwined with China's political situation and language policies. It then commented on the problems concerning curriculum, assessment, English teachers and their teaching methodologies, and teaching materials and textbooks of current College English language education. These problems indicate that current College English language education in China has failed to meet the need for a good English proficiency at the national and individual levels. Based on the review, this paper proposed that an individualised curriculum, which takes into account the rules of language teaching and learning and Chinese characteristics, and an English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI) education, be advocated in the Chinese EFL context.

**Keywords:** College English Language Education; Problems; Mainland China

## Introduction

English language education in Mainland China began to develop at an increasing rate since China endorsed the reform and opening-up policy in 1978 (Hu, 2009; Li & Moreira, 2009). China has the largest English-learning population of the world (Crystal, 2008). As reported by *China Daily* in 2010, there were around 400 million English language learners in China (Bolton & Graddol, 2012). Undoubtedly, with China's growing economic and political integration into the rest of the world in recent years such as the 2008 Beijing Olympics (Hu & Alsagoff, 2010), this nationwide fashion of learning English will continue to increase in future. Another testimony of the development of English language education in Mainland China is that English has become a pivotal component in the Chinese educational system. As required by the Ministry of Education (MOE) of China, a student receives English language education from primary school to university. Students are expected to learn English at Grade 3 in primary schools and to learn English for the entire 3 years in junior and senior middle schools respectively. When attending university, they are required to learn English in the first 2 years. Aggregately, a student may have been learning English for at least 12 years when he/she graduates from university.

Although great development has been achieved, present College English language education in Mainland China is continuously criticised for failing to meet the public's demand for good English proficiency. This paper aims to review the criticisms which mainly centre on College English curriculum, College English test, College English teachers and teaching methods, and teaching materials and textbooks. In order to better understand these criticisms, it is essential to briefly review the history of College English language education in Mainland China.

## College English Language Education in Mainland China

College English language education in Mainland China is closely intertwined with China's political situations and language policies (Lam, 2002; Hu, 2008). Lam (2002) divides foreign language education in China into three periods with six phases (Table 1).

**Table 1 Six Phases of Foreign Language Education in Mainland China**

Historical Period	Phase in Foreign Language Education	Time
Before the Cultural Revolution	1. The interlude with Russian	Early 1950s
	2. The back-to-English movement	1957-65
During the Cultural Revolution	3. Repudiation of foreign learning	1966-70
	4. English for renewing ties with the west	1971-6
After the Cultural Revolution	5. English for modernization	1977-90
	6. English for international stature	From 1991

\*Adapted from Lam (2002).

During the first phase (early 1950s) of the interlude with Russian, the newly founded People's Republic of China was in urgent need of political and economic support from the former Soviet Union-led communist camp. These political and economic reasons made Soviet Union exert a great influence on China (Ford, 1988). The close relationship with Soviet Union made Russian the primary foreign language for Chinese university students in early 1950s (Scovel, 1995). Although other foreign languages were designed into university curricula, College Russian seemed to dominate exclusively in Chinese universities in early 1950s (Yan & Zhang, 1995).

Foreign language education in China came into the back-to-English phase (1957-1965) when the Sino-Soviet relations tensed in the late 1950s (Lam, 2002). At this short period, the primary status of English teaching as a foreign language in China was temporarily restored. Many English programmes for college students of arts, sciences, and engineering had been designed in universities. However, the primary status of English was soon cut by the upheaval of the Cultural

Revolution in 1966.

The Cultural Revolution made learning of anything foreign unpatriotic and anti-revolutionary (Lam, 2002). As a result, foreign language learning was repudiated from 1966 to 1970 in China (Lam, 2002). During this period, Chinese tertiary education was halted and all universities stopped recruiting new students (Sun, 1996). Therefore, there was no College English language education, though English was taken by the government as a means to renew its ties with the West when China regained its membership in the United Nations in 1971 and China's diplomatic talks with the United States in 1972 halfway through the Cultural Revolution.

College English language education came into a brand new phase (1977-1990) after the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976. College English resumed in China when higher education restarted to recruit new students in 1977 and undertook the mission of the nation's modernization when China endorsed its reform and opening policy to the world in 1978. Since then, College English teaching began to invigorate in China (Yan & Zhang, 1995). Many efforts were taken to develop better teaching materials and design textbooks. However, due to China's long-term isolation from the outside world, college English teaching still faced some problems (Ford, 1988). The national college English teaching curriculum was not well implemented throughout the country. Grammar-Translation approach remained the main teaching method in college English classroom.

English language education in China had a new mission after the 1990s. The disintegration of the former Soviet Union in 1991 made China face a new international situation in which "the balance of power in the global arena made it possible for China to adopt a more international stance" (Lam, 2002: 247). Its pursuit of an international stature requires further openness to outside world. This requirement is further enhanced by China's continuing involvement in the international arena, such as the entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001 and the 2008 Beijing Olympics. This increasing engagement demands more versatile international professionals who have a good proficiency of English. Facing this new domestic and international situation, College English language education in China needs innovations in various aspects like teaching objectives, teaching contents and teaching methodologies. Accordingly, College English language education in Mainland China underwent consecutive reforms in the 1990s and early 2010s. College English language education in Mainland China entered into an innovative period in 1990s onwards, which has brought into great developments and also caused criticisms.

## **Criticisms of College English Language Education in Mainland China**

### ***College English Curriculum***

College English curriculum has been reformed several times since 1978. With English becoming a compulsory subject in the national college entrance examination in 1980, a national College English curriculum for students of science and engineering (hereinafter referred to as 1980 Curriculum) was drafted by the MOE. Later in 1986, as a response to the general guiding principle issued by Chinese government that education should serve the construction of socialism, a national College English Curriculum was mandated for non-English majors of arts and science (hereinafter referred to as 1986 Curriculum). With the intensification of the Reform and Opening up in 1990s, the previous curriculum could not meet the requirements of the fast developing economy and society. Reform was thus necessary in the existing College English curriculum. Accordingly, in 1999, the MOE issued a new College English curriculum (hereinafter referred to as 1999 Curriculum). Coming into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China entered into a

new era where its economy continues to develop fast and it is more actively engaged in the global arena. The country's internationalisation put further requirements for foreign language education. The MOE therefore initiated a new round of reform in College English in 2003 and issued a trial edition of the College English Curriculum Requirements in 2004. This trial issue was made a final curriculum in 2007 after 3 years' piloting in some universities (hereinafter referred to as 2007 Curriculum). All together, there are four College English curricula (Table 2) in Mainland China since 1980.

**Table 2 Four College English Curricula from 1980 to 2007**

	1980 Curriculum	1986 Curriculum	1999 Curriculum	2007 Curriculum
Aim	To provide students with capability to gain some information through English	To provide students with capability to gain some information through English for their professional needs	For students to be capable of exchanging information in the target language	For students comprehensive ability to use English to communicate effectively and to study independently, and to improve their cultural awareness in international exchanges
Objective	No specific description	Proficiency reading ability, certain listening ability and elementary speaking and writing ability	Strong reading ability and fairly good ability for listening, speaking, writing and translating	Competent in using English in a well-rounded way, especially in listening and speaking
Methodology	Teacher centred, grammar translation	Learner centred (grammar translation and audio-visual approach in practice)	Learner centred (grammar translation and audio-visual approach in practice)	Learner-centred in combination with modern technology (grammar translation and audio-visual approach in practice)
Vocabulary	From 1,500 to 1,800	From 1,600 to 4,000	From 4,200 to 6,500	From 4,500 to 6,500

A comparison of these four curricula reveals some obvious changes in terms of aims, objectives, teaching methodologies and vocabulary. The most obvious aspect is the shift of the teaching aims. The priority of College English teaching aim is switched from linguistic competence to communicative competence. Teaching objective is changed from emphasising the proficiency of English reading to all-round language proficiency in the four skills with a particular focus on listening and speaking. There was no clear specification of the objectives in English reading, writing, listening, speaking and translation in the 1980 Curriculum. The 1986 Curriculum mainly emphasised proficient reading ability and the 1999 Curriculum highlighted strong reading ability with English listening, speaking, writing and translating fairly required. In contrast with the previous three ones, an all-round linguistic proficiency was required in the 2007 Curriculum, with particular attention to English speaking and listening. There is also a shift in teaching methodology from teacher-centred in the 1980 Curriculum, to learner-centred in the 1986 and 1999 curricula, and to the learner-centred in combination with modern information technology in the 2007 Curriculum.

These four curricula made their due contributions to the construct of socialist modernisation in history. However, it cannot be denied that they bear some shortcomings. One of the main problems is that they were not well-implemented in practice. A variety of reasons, like students

and teachers' beliefs towards English teaching and learning, shortage of teaching staff, teaching materials and facilities were the obstacles for the national curricula to be well implemented. Consequently, College English teaching in China has been time-consuming with low efficiency (Cai, 2010; Wang, 2002).

Another major problem is that current College English curriculum is criticised for being unable to reflect social needs of development in a context of internationalisation and globalisation in China (Cai, 2010, 2012; Zhang & Margaret, 2010). For instance, the 2007 Curriculum is pointed out to fail to truly reflect the nation's requirements for foreign language professionals (Xie, 2009). The course design embodied in current curriculum cannot meet the social needs of professionals who have good English proficiency in the field of a particular profession (Cai, 2012). This problem was mainly caused by the quickening process of globalisation.

Given these problems existing at present College English curricula, doubts have been increasingly raised nowadays in China: is the extant curriculum really appropriate to the actual need of the situation in China in a context of internationalisation and globalisation? A curriculum which could well reflect the need in the global context may be more appropriate to China (Zhang & Margaret, 2010).

### ***College English Test***

In order to evaluate the efficiency of College English language education, a national College English language proficiency test, College English test (CET), has been established for non-English majors. The College English Test is composed of four parts (Table 4): listening comprehension (35%), reading comprehension (35%), cloze (10%) and writing (15%) and translation (5%) (Zheng & Cheng, 2008). English tests such as the CETs (Band 4 and Band 6) are of paramount importance to Chinese tertiary students. They are perceived as the key to success (Cheng, 2008). For non-English majors, passing the CET Band 4 is one of the prerequisites to obtaining a degree upon graduation. Further, success in the CETs might give them a competitive edge in future employment market (Jin & Cortazzi, 2002).

On the other hand, the current College English test is under severe criticism. Firstly, it is accused of overemphasising students' reading skills but neglecting to test their communicative competence (Chen, 2008; Xie, 2009). 45% of the questions of the CETs are concerned with students' reading ability. Moreover, it is criticised for leading to examination-oriented learning and teaching (Jin, 2008). In Han, Dai and Yang's (2004) survey of attitudes towards the CET system among 1194 English teachers in 40 colleges and universities, they found that 37.7% of the teachers believed that their universities evaluated their teaching performance on the basis of the CET passing rate in the class they taught. In addition, the CET was found to mainly test students' knowledge about vocabulary and grammar. As a result, teachers mainly focused on the teaching of these two aspects with a purpose of helping more students pass the CET (Qiao, Jin & Wang, 2010).

Examinations under such an evaluation system emphasise learning results rather than the learning process (Jin, 2008). Consequently, this examination-oriented teaching made students lose interest in learning English (Chen, 2008). Therefore, a formative assessment method, which not only tests students' reading skills, but also tests their communicative competence, is in need.

### ***College English Teachers and their Teaching Methods***

The continuing expansion policy of higher education has increased the number of College English teachers in Mainland China since 1999. However, this expansion policy has resulted in a



severe shortage of experienced College English teachers (Cai, 2006). In a national study, Dai and Zhang (2004) discovered that 32.4% of the surveyed teachers had no more than 5 years' teaching experience. Many of them did not have a good academic qualification (Zhou, 2005). Moreover, many College English teachers have a weak awareness of the importance of linguistic theories, psychology, and pedagogy (Cheng & Sun, 2010). Inadequate knowledge of modern language education thinking will definitely constrain these teachers from selecting appropriate teaching methods. Therefore, a teacher-centred, textbook-reliant, grammar-translation teaching method is often found to prevail in English classroom at universities in China (e.g., Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Rao, 2006). In such a traditional class, teachers primarily focus on vocabulary and grammar, while students listen to them passively and memorise every item of knowledge their teachers provide (Liao, 2000). As a result, these traditional English teaching methods have failed to cultivate Chinese EFL learners' communicative competence (Hu, 2002).

In order to foster students' communicative competence, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been increasingly advocated for the Chinese EFL classroom since the late 1980s (Liao, 2004). However, due to some constraining factors, the CLT method has not been well implemented. One of the constraints relates to English teachers' misconceptions about CLT (Xiao, 2011). Some teachers mistake CLT as "less 'teacher talk' and more 'student talk' regardless of 'nature' and 'spontaneity' of the talk *per se*" (Xiao, 2011, p.56). Large class size is another constraining factor. It is commonly found that an English class has between 50 and 70 students in China, which makes it difficult to organise communicative activities (Ding, 2007). Thirdly, as noted above, the examination-oriented evaluation system, the CET in particular, is considered to be an obstacle to the adoption of the CLT in class (Rao, 2006).

### ***Teaching Materials and Textbooks***

College English teaching materials and textbooks have come into a new phase of development. Communicative competence has been increasingly emphasised in these textbooks. A variety of English textbooks were developed, such as *New College English*, and *New Horizon College English*. Different from previous ones which primarily focused on reading, the recent published textbooks lay much emphasis on comprehensive communicative competence. The task-based approach is also integrated into the design of these textbooks. Apparently, there has been great improvement in these textbooks in terms of quality and pedagogical philosophies (Liu & Dai, 2003).

However, College English textbooks are considered to be problematic. For instance, a national investigation revealed that over 20% of the surveyed College English teachers thought that the present College English textbooks were inappropriate for the reform of College English teaching (Liu & Dai, 2003). The reasons are that these textbooks still emphasise reading and that the exercises in these textbooks still mainly focused on vocabulary and grammar. They are structuralist in nature rather than communicative. Accordingly, textbooks designed in this manner definitely cannot meet China's requirements for educating professionals with a comprehensive communicative competence in the context of internationalisation.

### ***Chinese Students in English Classrooms***

Chinese students bring an array of characteristics into the English class. A large majority of them have been found to be highly motivated in learning English (Jin & Cortazzi, 2002). They hold a utilitarian attitude towards the learning of English. For them, learning English well means good educational opportunities, passing various examinations, obtaining a university degree, ideal



career prospects, better access to the latest information in modern science and technology, making foreign friends, and fulfilling social responsibility (Gao & Trent, 2009; Liu, 2007).

Though highly motivated to learn English, Chinese students are found to be passive in the English class (Campbell & Li, 2008; Wang, 2010). They are particularly found to be reticent in discussion activities (Jackson, 2002; Trent, 2009). One of the reasons for their reticence might be their inadequate English proficiency (Evans & Green, 2007). Their limited language proficiency results in a lack of confidence in expressing themselves fluently in class. Contextual reasons are also perceived to be responsible for Chinese students' reticence in class. In a case study of a Chinese student in London, a lack of basic understanding of the UK educational context and culture might result in the student's silence in class (Wang, 2010). Coupled with Chinese students' strong motivation but reticence in class, they have also been reported to be obedient and respectful to their teachers. This characteristic is argued to be associated with Confucian thinking in Chinese culture (Biggs & Watkins, 2001; Li, 2003). Confucian thinking highlights obedience and respect to authorities. As a result, Chinese students are expected to highly respect their teachers as authoritative and to memorise what they are taught in class (Ho, 2001).

A good understanding of these characteristics of Chinese EFL learners would be helpful for the improvement of the efficiency of College English teaching. However, the traditional teacher-centred and grammar-translation teaching methods, being rigid and mechanical, neglect these characteristics and provide few opportunities for students to interact and communicate in class (Leng, 1997). Additionally, the examination-oriented teaching makes students receptive rather than productive in learning English (Tang, 2001). The present English teaching does not take these characteristics into full consideration, which constrains the reform of English teaching in Mainland China.

In summary, the above sections have reviewed current College English language education in Mainland China and the characteristics of Chinese EFL students in the English classrooms. It has been revealed that current College English language education is inefficient in meeting the societal needs for international professionals with good English language proficiency. Current College English language education has also been found to fail to take into account the characteristics of Chinese EFL students. As a result, current College English language education has dissatisfied university students, resulting in their loss of interest and their passivity in English classroom (Cai, 2012). The present situation of College English teaching and evaluation systems ignore Chinese students' characteristics in English class and thus constrain the reform of College English teaching in China. Therefore, a new teaching model that fully takes Chinese students' features into account is desirable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in China.

### **Potential Solutions to the Reform of College English Language Education**

The above literature has briefly reviewed the main issues regarding College English language education in Mainland China. It has indicated that College English language education is closely related with the changes of the Chinese governmental policies and the development of Chinese society and economy. It has also revealed that, though top-down initiatives have been made consecutively by the Chinese government to reform College English teaching to tackle the problems restraining the development of English language education, there is still space to be improved. Since 2003 when the MOE launched a latest reform of College English language teaching and learning, there have been some solutions proposed and debated concerning where College English language education should go. These solutions are mainly concerned with such aspects as the reform of curriculum, evaluation system, teacher education, teaching model and

bilingual education.

### ***Calling for an Individualised Curriculum***

With English having become established as a lingua franca (Gui, 2010), it is not any more appropriate to treat English as a foreign language, but a global language (Zhang & Margaret, 2010). English has penetrated into every aspect and plays a critical role in education in China. The objective of College English education, therefore, should be set to foster students' comprehensive English communicative competence (Wang, 2008). However, this goal, as claimed by some researchers (e.g., Cai & Xin, 2009; Xiao & Shi, 2008), may be unattainable under a uniform curriculum through the country, but possible if there are individualized ones.

Cai & Xin (2009) argued that the uniform College English Curriculum Requirements for all universities in China will unavoidably bring about some problems that may constrain the development of College English language education while the multi-dimensional society calls for multi-dimensional and individualised education. They claimed that the uniform requirements cannot be attained in reality because of the following reasons: first of all, the enrolment expansion in universities since 1999 sharpened the varieties in English proficiency among students at different universities and made the uniform College English Curriculum inappropriate for all universities all around the country. Secondly, there is an increasing number of universities coming into existence with various orientations in recent years in China. This multiple types of universities thus required an individualised English curriculum, rather than a nationally uniform one. Thirdly, a uniform language proficiency requirement does not apply to all professions since different professions need different graduates with different English proficiency levels. Finally, different regions at different development levels may also need graduates with different English proficiency levels. Therefore, given these institutional and regional disparities, an individualised curriculum is essentially suggested.

### ***Pursuing an Effective Teaching model***

With the development of computer and information technology in 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the development of pedagogies and linguistic theories, some teaching models have been proposed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of College English language education in China (e.g., Wen, 2008; Xie, 2009; Xiao & Shi, 2008; Ouyang, 2009).

In order to improve the effectiveness of College English teaching, some shifts of beliefs about English teaching are called for. Wang (2007) maintained that the model of College English teaching should be innovated from the following aspects: teaching method should be changed from the traditional grammar-translation approach to the approach of Style and Strategy-Based Instruction (SSBI). A shift called on is about the beliefs of the role of modern computer and information technology in English teaching. Modern computer and information technology are suggested to be employed to optimise current College English teaching model. Wang (2008) expounded that computer technology should be incorporated into classroom English teaching. Another shift is also called on to build up a dynamic, process-based formative evaluation system, rather than the traditional summative assessment approach (Jin, 2008).

In tandem with proposals for the shifts in teaching beliefs, Chinese characteristics are also claimed to be an important element in an effective College English teaching model. Xie (2009) argued that the time-consuming but low efficient, exam-oriented evaluation system and lagging behind language policies are the major problems that inhibit the healthy development of foreign language education in China. Considering the current international situation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century,

she proposed that the medium-long term policies for foreign language education in China should manifest Chinese characteristics, which is supported by some other researchers (e.g., Wang, 2007; Xiao & Shi, 2008).

A model that reduces teaching hours is also recommended to be effective under some conditions. As analysed by Wen (2008), there are two main problems existing in present College English teaching in China: firstly, the two-year duration of English class at universities is too loose to maintain students' interest and motivation in learning English. The other problem is that current College English class in such a loose arrangement of teaching hours cannot meet the needs of those students who have a good foreign language learning ability. Previous experiences in foreign language learning and training abroad and at home (Xie, 2009), for instance, the special language training courses for U.S. army during the Second World War in American universities, and the summer camps of English held by Chinese universities, have a common feature that all these programmes had a tight arrangement of teaching hours. Wen (2008) therefore proposed that it may be also applicable for Chinese universities to reduce teaching hours and enhance the intensity of College English teaching.

### ***Advocating an English-medium Education***

In recent years, there has been a craze for bilingual education in Chinese universities in Mainland China (Gu & Dong, 2005; Hu, 2009). Bilingual education has two forms in China: the blended form of English with Chinese in classroom instruction, the other being English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI) (Cai, 2010; Yu, 2008).

While there are advocates for EMI education, there are also cautions of the negative consequence it may bring about. Gu & Dong (2005) reviewed the practice of bilingual education in Hong Kong which has a more appropriate context, in terms of language environment, social political background and economy, than Mainland China for bilingual education. According to them, Hong Kong did not achieve success in, or even paid a lot for its bilingual education experience. They therefore cautioned that EMI education should not be blindly promoted in Mainland China. They also contended that the promotion of EMI education needs some prerequisites, such as relevant policy support and a good English proficiency level among both teachers and students.

By contrast, there are studies justifying the feasibility of EMI education in Mainland China (Cai, 2010; Yu, 2008; Han & Yu, 2007). First of all, there is a need for EMI education in Mainland China. With an increasing international communication in education, there are more and more foreign experts and professor coming into China (Cai, 2010). Secondly, there is an increasing number of Sino-foreign cooperative educational programmes and institutions. These situations make EMI not only possible but also indispensable in Mainland China (Cai, 2010). There are also some successful practices of EMI education in Mainland China, which provide evidence for the applicability of EMI education for Chinese universities. Cai (2010) pointed that the experience at Fudan University proved that it is feasible to carry out EMI teaching under certain conditions. For instance, it could be profitable to students if they have got good scores in the CET 4 or pass the CET 6 (Han & Yu, 2007). In his study, Cai (2010) found that at least 75% of year 1 students at Fudan University were at this threshold of language proficiency requirement for EMI education.

However, in their investigation, Han & Yu (2007) discovered that only 27.37% students from a national key university were at that threshold. They thus called on a transition period that EMI education is applicable to those universities whose students and teachers are at a good English level. Students also need to changes their beliefs about language learning; teachers need to adapt

their teaching beliefs; curriculum should be designed to adapt EMI education (Cai, 2010). And in-service education for teachers should be given due importance (Cheng & Sun, 2010; Xia, 2007; Zhou, 2005).

As an adaptive step, the status of College English language education is suggested to be defined. Wang (2007) maintains that the place of College English teaching should be gradually transited from English for general purposes (EGP) to English for academic purposes (EAP) and English for specific purposes (ESP). There are also appeals for attention to students' needs of English at the post College English period and the development of the corresponding textbooks (Qiao, Jin & Wang, 2010). The English study at the post College English period in Mainland China is actually the study of English for specific purposes (ESP). Apparently, EAP and ESP teaching has been viewed as a significant direction and an indispensable element for the reform of College English language education in Mainland China (Cai, 2007; Zhang, 2006).

### **Conclusion**

This paper has critically reviewed College English language education in Mainland China. This review mainly manifested the following issues: 1) The development of College English language education is closely intertwined with the political situations and language policies in China; 2) Current College English curriculum cannot truly reflect the need of Chinese society for foreign language professionals; 3) The present evaluation system leads to the exam-oriented learning and teaching, and neglects to test their communicative competence; 4) The traditional grammar-translation still prevails in present current College English class; 5) The teaching materials and textbooks cannot meet China's requirements for professionals of a comprehensive English communicative competence in the context of internationalisation; 6) College English teachers have a limited proficiency of English language and an inadequate knowledge of updated linguistic theories, psychology and pedagogy; and 7) The characteristics of Chinese students do not receive enough attention in College English class.

The various problems, as reviewed in the literature, have constrained the reform of College English language education in Mainland China and resulted in Chinese students' low level of English communicative competence. Given these constraints, debates over how to reform College English teaching never stop in Mainland China. The review of these debates revealed that 1) an individualised curriculum may be more appropriate for College English education in Mainland China; 2) a College English teaching model that follows the rules of language teaching and learning and embodies Chinese characteristics may be more effective in Chinese EFL context; and 3) an EMI education is feasible for those universities whose students and teachers are at a good English proficiency level.

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## Linguistic Analysis of Humor in Jordanian Arabic among Young Jordanians Facebookers

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### Abstract

This study presents preliminary analysis from a sociopragmatic perspective of the speech act of humor in Jordanian Arabic as used by Jordanian Facebookers. The data of the current study was collected from Facebook status updates. A total of 1535 status updates were collated and classified according to their communicative functions. Of this number, 210 humorous messages matched Nastri et al.'s (2006) description of humor and were analyzed to determine the pragmatic functions utilized in writing a humorous status update on Facebook in Arabic. The findings indicate that generally the Jordanians tend to be more serious and less humorous. In terms of gender differences, the findings reveal that female participants were less humorous than their male counterparts. These findings suggest that certain aspects of humor are more culture-bound, as in masculine societies such as Jordan, women are perceived to be subordinate to men. Within these societies, men are supposed to be talkers, whereas women are expected to be listeners. The findings also highlight that the function of humor is governed by three pragmatic functions, namely, love, life and work. It was also found that female participants were more interested in posting hilarious romantic anecdotes, whereas male users were more concerned with discussing humorous daily life activities.

**Keywords:** Arabs, Facebook status updates, Jordanians are very serious, online humor, online speech acts,

**Introduction**

There has been a proliferation of language and gender studies in the last few decades (Newman et al. 2008). Linguists have explored the relationship between the usage of language and gender differences by employing various methodologies and a wide range of variables. Research on humor has also seen rapid acceleration among researchers. The field now has journals devoted exclusively to the study on humor. Examples of such journals include: *The European Journal of Humor Research*, *International Journal of Humor Research*, *International Society for Humor Studies*, as well as other periodicals on language usage such as *Journal of Communications*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communications* and *Journal of Personality and Individual Differences*. There are many hypotheses and stereotypes postulating gender differences in the use and appreciation of humor, but there is an obvious lack of studies exploring how Jordanians use humor in social networking sites (SNSs), especially in Facebook. This paper is an attempt towards bridging this gap.

In the virtual community, SNSs may perpetuate a mirage of a real life community and provide a platform for the real life discourses (McNeill, 2008). An essential part of interactions among people in a community entails the use of humor in daily conversations that could range from teasing, banter to self-mockery (Norrick and Chiaro, 2009). Sociolinguistic studies (e.g., Carr et al., 2012; Dimicco and Millen, 2007; Kloučková, 2010; Mcneill, 2008) have contended that humor serves an essential social function in SNSs. In this respect, the researchers concentrate on online humor as a key example of everyday life among its users. It is well-documented that humor in all its complexity is a major element of human culture that merits researchers' close attention. The everyday online social interactions could provide deeper insights and reveal the thought process that could assist in understanding the particular online speech community.

SNSs play a major role in the Jordanian society, especially among the young generation. Among the many SNSs that are available, Facebook seems to be one of the most popular SNSs, and Jordanians are particularly attracted to it. According to CheckFacebook.com, the number of Facebookers in Jordan was over two million in 2012, which accounts for half of internet users in Jordan. Jordanian users between the ages of 18 and 24 years comprise 44% of the total Facebookers (Ghazal, 2012). Mcneill (2008) and Björnsson (2011) contend that Facebook is growing in popularity among young people who are of or approaching university age. The sample in the current study is taken from Jordanian undergraduate Facebookers aged between 18 to 24 years.

In addition to features such as 'profiles', 'friends', 'comments', and 'private messaging', Facebook is flexible because it allows its users to update their status messages anytime. The status messages reflect users' comments, views and feelings and allow them to share the updates of their activities with each other at any time (Das & Sahoo, 2011; Ellison and Boyd, 2007). Wilson et al. (2012) also assert that Facebook offers a unique opportunity for researchers to examine a wide variety of social phenomena in a realistic setting. Based on this claim, the current study chooses Facebook status messages as an analytic tool to investigate naturally occurring humor acts in the Jordanian context.

It is widely assumed that Jordanians are less humorous compared to other nationalities as reflected in some newspaper articles, cartoons, Facebook groups or pages and academic writing. This is probably due to the fact that Jordanians frown a lot, even in the public places (Freij, 2012). In an effort to substantiate empirically whether Jordanians are less or more humorous than

others, it would be appropriate and relevant to examine Nastri et al.'s (2006) findings with regards to the Jordanian context. In their study, Nastri and his colleagues investigate how participants use language to construct their instant messages. They found that almost one-fifth of the data included some attempts to evoke laughter.

In the present study, the researchers extend Nastri et al.'s work by providing an empirical analysis of the frequency of humor production in Facebook status updates. This extension has two objectives: first, to find out the frequency and manifestations of humor in Facebook status messages among young Jordanian Facebookers, so as to compare between the frequency of humor of this study and those found in Nastri et al. (2006); and second, to understand the pragmatic function of humor in Facebook status updates because the analysis of how people present themselves through humor may give a deeper understanding into the value system of the Jordanian young community as reflected in their speech. These objectives are guided by the following research questions:

### Research Questions

1. What is the frequency of humor produced in the Facebook status updates messages (FUSM) among male and female Jordanian Facebookers?
2. What function does humor play in the FUSM among male and female Jordanian Facebookers?

### Literature Review

There is an ample amount of literature on humor, documenting and revealing how it is performed by speakers with various features in different social contexts (Lynch, 2002). Social scientists from different disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, sociology, and gender studies have explored the features of humor and joking (Shifman & Lemish, 2010). Linguists have studied and approached humor from different angles, including sense of humor (Martin & Sullivan, 2013), humor appreciation (Carretero-Dios & Ruch, 2010), and humor as a coping strategy (Samson & Gross, 2012). This literature review represents an assessment from the body of studies available. It reviews the features of humor which provide relevant background information to the current paper.

Despite the great number of studies exploring humor, no satisfactory definition has yet been reached (Samson et al., 2013). Researchers define humor in different ways. Berger (1976), for example, defines humor on the basis of the audience's interpretation as a "specific type of communication that establishes an incongruent relationship or meaning and is presented in a way that causes laughter" (Berger, 1976 cited in Duncan, 1982, p.136). In his definition, Berger highlights laughter as a main thrust of his definition. Winick (1976), on the other hand, concentrates on the speaker's intention and defines humor as "any type of communication that has a witty or funny intent that is known in advance by the teller" (p.125).

Based on the given definitions of humor, it can be seen that although the definition of humor is possible, its application to the selection of instances from real life data is difficult to determine. There is unavoidably some subjectivity involved, and the researchers may use some sort of their understanding to the data. Researchers may put the emphasis on a particular aspect based on what they are interested in. Hence, the essential dilemma is to make obvious which criteria are being applied, so that the reader may understand what is meant when the word "humor" is used in any study.

One of the most well-known definitions of humor is the one propounded by (Lynch, 2002). According to him, humor is an “intended or unintended message interpreted as funny” (Lynch, 2002: 423). This definition is adopted in the current study because it is more comprehensive than the others, and it has a high frequency of use in online humor research studies (e.g., Carr et al., 2012; Nastri et al., 2006). Lynch, in his definition, takes into his consideration the fact that humor is a matter of subjectivity. Although different people are able to appreciate the humor in the same joke, there would also be those who would not find it funny. In other words, while unsuccessful humor fails to make a listener laugh, it is still an attempt to evoke hilarious responses.

Different theories have started to look at the functions that humor plays in a particular context (Tracy et al., 2006). They have explored the psychological motivations of humor, theorizing that individuals may find certain messages to be funny due to superiority, relief, or incongruity (Lynch, 2002). First, the superiority theory suggests that people are motivated to use humor as they can feel superior over others or even over one’s own previous situation. Superiority humor is usually found either in the form of laughing at others’ inadequacies, or self-derision (Cooper, 2008; Gruner, 1978). However, the superiority theory is too limited because not all funny situations make individuals feel superior.

A second psychological theory considers humor as a tool for relief from physical and emotional problems (Lynch, 2002). This means that a joke or laughter is used to reduce tension or boredom. According to this theory, humor can be an appropriate means for breaking the ice among individuals. It increases trust among parties and helps individuals to save face in their interactions. The third theory is incongruity theory. According to Cooper (2008), this theory focuses on the object that is the source of the humor (joke, cartoon, etc.). More specifically, incongruity theory proposes that humor is based on intellectual activities rather than a drive to be superior or to reduce tension (Lynch, 2002).

These three main theories- superiority, relief, and incongruity- continue to dominate theoretical understandings of humor motivations and origins. However, regardless of motivation or origin, humor has been unilaterally perceived as an essential activity in everyday interactions (Carr et al., 2009; Lynch, 2002). Drawing on status messages posted by Facebook users, Carr (2012) found that online humor is used as a means of engaging in interpersonal communication with others, and it functions as a mechanism for identity creation.

In his study, (Lynch, 2002) tried to explain how a communication approach can be used as a medium between the psychological and sociological studies of humor. He proposed that there are general functions which humor serves in a society such as identification, differentiation and resistance. He claimed that in contrast to psychological or sociological research that gives more attention to what humor does for the individual or for a society, sociolinguistic researchers should give more attention to explore how humor serves as a social function among individuals or among the particular speech community.

Huang and Kuo (2011) found in their study that humor could be a source of power and influence, enabling organizations to foster unique dynamic environments, perhaps improving the competitive advantage of the organizations. They concluded that humor plays a significant role in promoting team spirit and forging cohesive units in organizations that unanimously are concerned with their own survival and profitability levels. Their findings are supported by other



studies which concluded that humor is a useful tool to facilitate communication; build relationships; mitigate tensions; create open atmosphere that improves listening, understanding and acceptance of messages; enhance romantic relationships; influence perspective; deflate self-importance or undue emphasis on a particular project or policy and encourage concentration and motivation (Cahill & Elke, 2008; Gardner et al., 2005; Locke, 2011).

In order to explore how participants use language to construct their away messages, Nastri et al. (2006) investigated the social applications of instant messaging (IM). More specifically, they examined what specific types of speech acts were used by participants to create their away messages. Data was analyzed based on Searle's (1969) speech act taxonomy. Away messages were first coded into descriptive categories such as assertive, directive, commissive, expressive and declarative. Then, they were analyzed for humor and were marked as either containing humor or not comprising any humor. The findings indicated that the messages were constructed mostly with assertives, followed by expressives and commissives, but rarely with directives. It became evident that humor was frequently detected in away messages. Almost one-fifth of the data included some attempts to evoke laughter and amusements (humor). The researchers concluded that away messages were constructed with two communicative goals in mind: to entertain and to inform. These findings are upheld by other researchers who asserted that away messages away messages often express both informational and entertainment meanings (Baron 2004; Carr et al. 2009).

In the Jordanian context, literature on humor is very scarce. One of the recent studies by Alzoubi (2012), examined the different types of humorous animated cartoon texts on political, economic and social topics. She hypothesized that each culture has its own unique way of expressing humor which may not easily be understood or comprehended by people from different cultures. In order to test her hypothesis, she collected data from different Jordanian websites such as [www.sawaleif.com](http://www.sawaleif.com), [www.mahjoob.com](http://www.mahjoob.com), and [toons.kharabeesh.com](http://toons.kharabeesh.com). The animated cartoons were transliterated and translated into English. Then, analysis was executed based on three sources of humor, namely, linguistics, context and character. The findings revealed that humorous texts primarily serve three functions. The first function deals with social issues related to the Jordanian culture. It was observed that humor was used to criticize, disapprove, and complain about inappropriate behaviors in the society. The second function is related to economic issues. The humorous texts in this context were used to raise people's awareness and attention to economic issues that surround them which affect their lives. The majority of these texts revolved around the role of corruption as one of the main problems of Jordan's economy. The third function deals with political issues. The political humorous texts were regarded as effective tools to criticize political corruption, government, politicians, bias, inequality and society. The researcher concluded that humorous texts that contain pragmatic ambiguity are easier to understand than those that contain linguistic ambiguity or culture-specific meanings.

The studies reviewed above examined the speech acts of humor through different data collections methods such as the Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT), animated cartoons and IM. It should be noted that there are other studies on online humor which were conducted in English speaking countries (e.g., Carr et al., 2009; Lynch, 2002). However, studies on online humor based on non-western languages are very scarce. To the researchers' best knowledge, there has been no serious attempt to study the act of online humor in the Arabic culture in general and particularly, in the Jordanian speech community. This venture into exploring speech acts through



a new and widespread social medium has set the purpose of the study, that is, to examine humorous status updates posted by Jordanians on Facebook.

As such, the current study has significant potential value for four reasons. First, it would extend the pragmatic analyses of humor by examining a large body of real-life data. Secondly, it will deal with a group of participants who (from a linguistic perspective) are relatively under-studied, and whose communications are formed by the online media affordances of a relatively novel communicative context. Thirdly, it would familiarize Arab EFL learners with the way native Jordanian Arabic speakers use humor in Facebook status updates, since what is considered funny and hilarious in one culture may seem inappropriate or even serious in another. Finally, the studies reviewed above used conventional instruments to collect data which include DCT, animated cartoons and IM. However, with regards to humorous Arabic texts posted in Facebook status updates, a method of investigation has yet to be determined for the speech act of humor. Therefore, this study attempts to expand previous research of speech act of humor and online messaging by examining how individuals use the Facebook status updates to communicate humorously. More specifically, it is an attempt to understand the role of humor in Facebook status updates through examining the frequency of humor as appearing in speech acts.

### **Methodology**

Social scientists have distinguished between two different approaches the Internet can be used in research. These are named as 'Web as corpus' and 'Web for corpus building' (Hundt et al., 2007). The 'web as corpus' allows the researcher to create corpora from the Web directly. While, the 'Web for corpus building' needs the researcher to select manually the data to build offline corpora (Meinl, 2013). The current study was conducted by following the 'Web for corpus building' approach, as the data has been extracted manually from the Facebook status updates. In order to facilitate the collection of these status messages, a Facebook account was created. The sample for the current study is selected using a snowballing technique. Snowball sampling is often used to recruit and find new informants. With this approach the sample emerges through a process of reference from one user to the next (Denscombe, 2010). The researchers used this technique to find as many potential users related to the search terms. This technique is repeated until the required target sample size is achieved or until the additional data does not yield any new valuable information (Ahn et al. 2007). All the participants involved in the study are Arab Jordanians by birth. The sample was evenly balanced for gender, with 30 males and 30 females. All participants are from different disciplines including social science, computer science, engineering, economics and nursing.

It may be recalled that this study is an investigation into the humorous status updates posted by native Jordanian Arabic speakers on Facebook. In other words, the data of the current study was collected through Facebook status updates, which, according to Ellison (2007) & Wilson et al. (2012) display sufficient naturalistic behavioral data. These status updates could provide a rich source of information for researchers interested in understanding the linguistic features of online language. Through status updates, individuals not only express their feelings but also share information on their everyday life and activities as to what they are doing or what was going on in their lives at that moment (Ilyas & Qamar, 2012).

All undergraduate participants were studying at different universities that are located in either the southern or northern part of Jordan, namely, Jordan University of Science and Technology, Yarmouk University, Mutah University, Tafila Technical University and Al al-Bayt University.











youths, the findings indicate that out of 1535 status updates, only 210 status messages were identified as humorous. The reduction in humor content was due to social, economic and political situation in Jordan. In terms of gender differences and the humor use, the findings reveal that male participants made more humorous status updates compared to their female counterparts. This is in line with the observation by Force (2013) who found that women prefer someone who could make them laugh, while men desired someone who laughs at their jokes. Similarly, for the second research question that seeks to understand the pragmatic functions of humor in Facebook status updates, the findings reveal that the function of humor is governed by three pragmatic motives, namely, love, life and work. It has also been found that female participants were more interested in posting amusing romantic anecdotes, whereas, male participants were more interested in discussing humorous daily life activities. Both Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) submitted that in saying something, a speaker may be doing something or be performing an action. They postulated that communication is a series of communicative acts that are used systematically to achieve specific purposes. In the current study, when respondents posted their status updates, they were saying something. In other words, humor is a form of speech act in which the speakers convey their message in an indirect way.

Although this study has generally answered the given research questions, there is still a need to do more extensive research on the speech act of humor by Jordanians in order to have a clearer picture on the use of humor in the Jordanian context. The general findings may be constrained by the following limitations. First, this study concentrated particularly on a limited number of samples. Future research on usage purposes of Facebook could be broadened to involve a wider demographic base, both internationally and geographically, to further examine to what extent the findings are generalizable. Second, the researchers believe that this study should be conducted in other settings to further test the findings. Third, the speech act of humor could be also observed among Jordanian EFL learners. Regardless of these limitations, the findings of the current study provide some valuable insights. For example, the findings showed that Jordanians were more serious and less humorous since only 13% of the total status messages were identified as humorous. In contrast, other studies indicate approximately 21% of their data were humorous (Carr, et al. 2012; Nastri, et al. 2006).

The current study contributes to sociopragmatics studies and research on SNSs. It also presents methodological approaches for collecting data from online users. In this respect, Morkus (2009) states that the use of the SNSs (e.g., Facebook) in speech acts, research is pertinent as the language used in online interactions is totally different from either spoken or written language but it contains features of each, and therefore, it warrants examination in its own right. Morkus also claims that the use of digital medium is significant because there are new possibilities for collection of data that are not available in face-to-face communications. The current study, thus, adds an important contribution of how online humor is comprehended and produced by the Jordanian native speakers of Arabic. It has been noted that the humorous behaviors are always embedded and guided by the social norms of a particular culture and interacted with the daily life activities.

A content analysis of humorous status messages suggested that humorous texts revolved around three basic needs, namely, life, love and work. Therefore, these findings could assist in developing materials for specifically, teaching and learning pragmatics and sociolinguistics. The educational implications of the current study can also benefit designers of Arabic language



curricula to shed more light on the speech act of humor. Moreover, these findings can function as “situated-learning platforms” especially for newcomers who are entering Jordanian universities and undergoing socialization. What is considered as humor in one culture may not be considered similarly in another culture. Consequently, understanding and acquiring the Jordanian culture and the manner Jordanians express speech acts of humor through the Arabic language are necessary to improve the socialization process of the Jordanian society.

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## Cultural Awareness; A Key Element in Teaching English in the Globalization Era

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### **Abstract**

As our globe is becoming more unified and less diverse in the sense of the cultural behavior, English teachers in the contact zone context may confront a number of dilemmas created by the universal unifying standards in the field of education and the diverse cultural values among their students under the conditions of globalization. This paper has been conducted to find out how a teacher may put effort to make his/her students familiar with a global culture without offending their own identities and values. To do so this study investigates on a professional linguist teacher's assumptions about the cultural process of globalization and identity via interviews and classroom observations. The highlight of the interviews and classroom observations reveal how a teacher may adopt different tactics and tasks in order to establish a mutual cultural learning. The aim of this study is to introduce a range of strategies and tailor made techniques to give voice to his students enabling them move towards SELF development keeping abreast of the global cultural flows.

**Key words:** Agglobalization, Cultural awareness, contact zone

## 1. Introduction

### *Teachers' dilemmas in cultural globalization*

The education systems in the international environment have led the scholars to pay a specific attention to the cultural processes in the globalization era. It appears that without cultural awareness\* maintaining an effective communication with students from other nationalities would be difficult, let alone teaching them.

Furthermore, teachers, at the front line of educational globalization, are expected to keep a wary eye on their students' identity formation. In this era of globalization, even though the concept of morality is changing rapidly, teachers need to negotiate how to handle the different backgrounds learners bring with them to the classroom. Teachers usually try to develop strategies for managing these diversities in order to put social and educational values into practice so as to maintain fruitful communications among learners from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. However, this task would be more difficult in a contact zone where "cultural action, the making and remaking of identities, takes place" (Clifford 1997, p. 7.)

In order to see how a teacher may put effort to get the best out of this chaotic process of identity formation in globalization era and the nature of dilemmas in recent era, I have consulted my colleagues to find out how teachers can get the best out of the global flows to give voice to the learners to purposefully go towards what the researcher terms as aglobalization\*\* - a deliberate, cognizant journey towards globalization adopting the globalized standards selectively.

The very two questions that served as the researcher's motivation to conduct this study have been

- How do teachers ethically navigate the classroom dilemmas to make their students familiar with a global culture without offending their own identities and values?
- Plus, how are the students' identities heeded in the process of aglobalization?

The present study aims to explore into a linguist English teacher's perception of such global flows. The reason that the researcher chose this person to conduct a case study on is his uniquely creative methodology to teach the controversial, culture- laced issues. She is hopeful that a precise scrutiny of the participant's classes through an exploratory practice might shed light on the path of other interested teachers like me. By means of observation, she would try to portray how the participant faces such predicaments via adopting creative, tailor made techniques. She would also interview him to trace the cultural theory of his mind. That's why this study can be categorized as an exploratory practice.

## 2. Observing how professional researchers approach the issue

Hereafter, the author of this study is going to review cultural globalization school of thoughts as well as identity in the related literature.

### *2.1. Cultural globalization Cultural River on the Global Run*

Globalization itself is more or less another problematic concept which reminds the researcher of a poem by Rumi (Masnawi-collected poems; 1258-1273).

*Everyone befriended me from an angle of their own*

*They sought me not and my secrets went unknown*

The vastness of globalization has made the scholars accept the fact that it is rather impossible to define it within a single theory. The term globalization denotes the process of worldwide interconnections. Steger (2003, p. 19) defines globalization as "a multidimensional set of social processes that create, multiply, stretch, and intensify worldwide social interdependencies and exchanges while at the same time fostering in people a growing awareness of deepening



connections between the local and the distant." He classifies globalization into five historical periods. The "prehistoric period" from 10,000 B.C.E to 3500 B. C.E when some hunter-gatherers settled in South America. "The premodern period" from 3500B. C. E. to 1500 C.E. Coinciding with the invention of technology. The third period is "the early modern" between 1500 and 1750 when Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, France, and England started to establish colonialism. Then " the modern period" from 1750 to 1970 as the heyday of capitalism. And finally, " the contemporary period" from 1970 to date as the global trading and exchange hit the rocketed. (Cited in Kumaravadivelu, 2008, pp.32-33)

Despite the fact that globalization is not a new concept, the impact of this very wave is so considerable. As mentioned, the global electronic world connects billions of people around the globe in a second. The internet easily has broken down the borders. Therefore, the ideas, values, and information can be transferred in a real time.

Cultural globalization indicates cultural flows across the globe. Spring (2001, p.7) defines global culture as "the growing uniformity and homogenization of the world's cultures." Nowadays, "cultural images far-off lands flashed across small screens in our living rooms and big screens in multiplex cinemas have made the world a global neighborhood. Foreign cultures are no longer cultural islands unto themselves." ( Kumaravadievelu, 2008, p. 38.)

The consequences of foreign and local culture interconnection in the process of globalization have transpired three schools of thought; the homogenization thesis, and the hybridization, and glocalization.

The first group consider globalization as a process of reaching uniform standards of the west which is also termed as 'McDonaldization' or 'westernization'. This can be achieved not only through an international language but also through media and entertainment industry. For sure, globalization has resulted in spreading the western cultural values; however, to my understanding, this process cannot linger for two reasons. First, it ignores and undermines the democratic values of the individuals, and second, due to the fact that globalization is not a one way flow.

In contrast, the second schools of scholars believe that nonwestern countries have has a significant impact on the western countries. As Giddens (2000, pp. 34-35) claims globalization is a decenterization process what he dubs as "runaway world". However, Kumaravadivelu (2008, p.44) cleverly criticizes them and points out that " Localizers vehemently dismiss the idea that a single, unified global culture is emerging. They insist that a diffusion of cultural fads from the West does not denote cultural domination on the part of the West." To put it in other words, they do not suggest any practical solution for the cultural power of the West but they rather do the talking instead of doing the walking.

The third schools of thought sees cultural transmission as "a two way process where cultures in contact shape and reshape each other directly or indirectly" (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, p. 44.) In other words, global and local are seen as two sides of the same coin that modify each other so as to meet the needs. Robertson (1992, pp. 177-178) defines glocalization as "the two fold process of particularization of the universal and the universalization of the particular." A language educator who follows this pattern tries to help the learners to accommodate the globalized world without losing their dynamic self identities.

As these three schools of thoughts' argumentations seem to be open to endless interpretation, language teachers, particularly, may find themselves uncertain about which to follow.

Kumaravadivelu (2008, p. 164) has suggests that cultural realism is a "realistic response to the challenges and opportunities arising out of cultural globalization." He maintains that cultural

growth is possible but only with individuals, communities, and nations, commitment towards identity formation. It can be achieved via a global cultural consciousness. He argues "such a consciousness requires the cultivation of a critically reflective mind that can tell the difference between real and unreal, between information and disinformation, between ideas and ideologies. Only such a critical mind can help the individual develop the knowledge, skill, and disposition necessary to deal with the challenges of contemporary realities."

What might be a practical response then to the identity formation of the language learners (English in this case) in the globalization era? And, how can we raise their consciousness in order to help them think critically in the process of aglobalization. Aglobalization: incorporates both local and global aspects of any language and culture tailored for the individual needs of each and every learner to reach global consciousness.

## 2.2. *i "D"ENTITY:*

Identity has been associated with sameness. That is the sameness of the members of a social class. However, in postmodern parlance, identity is referred to as the difference and it is based on how different somebody is from somebody else. As Bauman (1995, p.18) explains "if the modern problem of identity was how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, the post modern problem of identity is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open. In the cases of an identity as in other cases, the catchword of modernity was creation the catchword for post modernity is recycling." While, in reality, identity politics may marginalize some groups in a society or even some nations in the world, we cannot overlook the role of "self" in each and every individual's identity formation. Pavlenko & Blackledge (2004, p.27) claim that "individuals are agentive beings who are constantly in search of new social and linguistic resources which allow them to resist identities that position them in undesirable ways."

To the best of reviews, individuals are not in a vacuum to create and develop their individualities but they are in a society which has its unique historical, regional, national and international background. The relationship is an interactive one and it may have different impacts on individuals under different conditions. Giddens (2008, P. 65.) says "the very basis of our self-identity-our sense of self is sustained largely through the stability of the social positions of individuals in the community. Where tradition lapses, and lifestyle choice prevails, the self is not exempt. Self-identity has to be created and recreated on a more active basis than before." (P. 65) However, being exposed to the concept of identity would not suffice. Clearly, such a goal cannot be achieved by learners without their teachers' help and support. To learn how the researcher, as an English teacher, may assist her learners in the voyage of self-realization and becoming acquainted with the others, she has conducted this study.

## 3. Methodology

This exploratory case study that falls into the interpretive paradigm focuses on a specific cultural globalization phenomenon in pedagogy with some elements of critical paradigms. Fred&Perry (2011, p. 80) believes "any study that is done in a real life setting, involving intensive holistic data collection through observation at a very close personal level without the influence of prior theory and contains mostly of verbal analysis, could be classified as a qualitative study." In this line, my aim is to discover a professional English teacher's perspective regarding identity formation of students and his strategies to meet their needs in the globalization era and in a contact zone context through thick description. As for construction of meaning, interpretivists assume that "the view that all knowledge, and therefore, all meaningful reality as such, is

contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted an essentially social content." ( Crotty, 2008)

### ***Participant***

The linguist teacher whose practice is being observed and discussed here was a 39 year old, PhD candidate in Linguistics, who has been involved in TESOL for over 17 years. He was chosen for this study on the basis of his reputation as a professionally committed L2 teacher in his work places. As Fred & Perry (2011. P.67) assert the main goal of intensity or expert sampling is "to use a case that concentrates the trait(s) being studied. The inquirer selected her case on two grounds of "purposiveness and intensity" and "expert case", with an emphasis on the quality of the information that she could take from him. Since the researcher has been his colleague for two years and, in our team discussions, she found out that he has some novel ideas to enhance his students' higher order thinking.

### ***Data collection***

The inquirer has not been looking for any established knowledge but a possible hypothesis from this study to develop and further my own knowledge. She tried to follow Allwrights' Exploratory Practice that is based on three philosophies: the quality of life in the language classroom is much more important than instructional efficiency, ensuring our understanding of the quality of classroom life is far more essential than developing ever "improved" teaching techniques; and understanding such a quality of life is social." (Kumarvadivelue, 2008. P.195).

Here, the data is mutually created by the professional and the researcher to figure out a better understanding of a phenomenon. As for data collection, the researcher observed his intensive American English Phonetics classes where there were five Iranian, three Arab, two Afghan, three Kurd, and two Turk students as a full participant to see the outward tactics and strategies he uses in the classroom. In order to avoid any interruption and to capture valid natural behavior, the students were unaware that they were being observed. The advantage of this full observation technique is that the research may contribute to a sort of "access to less obvious data, such as attitudes or intentions" (Fred& Perry, 2011, p. 123.)

Besides, the inquirer tried to access the inner thoughts of the participant through interview. The interview schedule contained open ended questions on three central themes of cultural globalization, student identity formation, and strategies and tactics to obtain deeper responses.

For adding weighted data and increasing the credibility, the researcher depended on triangulation by using the spiral technique via collecting information at different times to support her conclusion. In the beginning, the resulting themes were affected by the research questions. However, later on the categories were redefined along the course of the interview sessions. Themes and interpretations emerged from the input as she shifted through the transcripts, coded and categorized them. She used the technique of constant comparison starting with a particular episode in the data from the interview and comparing it with a similar episode that was gathered through observation as well as literature. Moreover, she created a table displaying the participant's information which has been checked with him to conduct member checking.

To extend credibility of her clarification, the researcher provides the readers with rich, thick description of the participant, and content by adding excerpts from the data where an explanation suits to be supportive. What follows is a description of the participant's perspective towards globalization, identity and identity formation along with his practice in a real classroom context.

#### 4. Data analysis

Hereafter, the inquirer would like to weave her interpretations throughout the participant's interviews illustrating his vision on inception of globalization as well as its effect on peoples' lives. To identify the issues, she initially considered his responses to the interview questions. The process of determining the issues was recursive; the researcher worked through the transcripts, wrote initial draft of the article; and then returned again to the data to check if she had accurately represented the participant's concerns. In the following, she has attempted to categorize the highlights of the interviews as they emerged based on occurrence frequency. Afterwards, a detailed description and/or clarification would be given.

Analysis of the data revealed that the participant has a historical perception towards globalization and peoples' objectives to shape a new form of interconnection. In the interview sessions the participant introduced a new idea- what he terms as "*e-reunification*"- that is a sort of unification triggered and pushed forward by virtual engine of electronic links. Inspired by the teachings of Persian mysticism, he wishes to imagine "there has once a One. This One turned into many through a process of divergence. However, at some not-too-distant point in time and due to the emergence of telecommunication means and the so-called standardization of languages, dress codes, etiquette and the like, convergence is summoning the Many into a novel One. This new One is a more aware One, a more vigilant One, a One which has been experienced, a One which has been understood." He believes that one of the teachers' responsibilities is to help students to become more aware one in order to reach self-awareness. To do so, he applies three kinds of tasks in his classroom.

##### 4.1. *What is being conducted in a real classroom context? (the researcher's field notes from the observation)*

##### 4.1.1. *Assimilation task*

On the first day of the phonetics course, the participant brought along a puppet. Soon as the amazement of the students died down, he introduced him to the class as JohnAli that brought a smile to the face of many students. John is a typical Western name and Ali is a typical Muslim's name. The combination of this two names in a creative way could raise students consciousness towards both familiar and unfamiliar dichotomies of culture. As JohnAli began to talk, you could trace the typical mispronunciations of the students on his accent. The participant of the study believes that the students, who laugh at an inanimate puppet in chorus, would get a chance to become "aware" of their own errors, and, in order to dissociate themselves from him, they try the best to mimic the teacher.

JohnAli's English is vividly and internationally at a low level, he carries with him his local accent, intonation, grammar, and even idioms that are translated literally into English. Not only does it create a humorous atmosphere inside the classroom, but it shows the students where their own weaknesses are in an indirect way.

Furthermore, it is JohnAli who faces up with the cultural similarities and differences and asks the students to help him to make a right decision in various situations. In this way, the students are engaged in critical reflection tasks without being worried of clarifying their thoughts, since the focus is not on them. In my understanding, as Kumaravadiveldu (2008, p. 193) claims "one way of formulating effective classroom strategies for raising global cultural consciousness is to design reflective tasks and exploratory projects centered on familiar dichotomies and popular themes." Doing so, the participant not only uses students as cultural informants but also as decision makers. Therefore, learners feel safe to express their inner thoughts and values through exchanging the information.

#### 4.1.2. *Reflective tasks*

One example of reflective task that the researcher observed was when the participant touched the values and notions of students with some common examples for instance to teach /ʌ / for mother (short) and /ɑ/ for father (long). Then, he popped the discussion of women's rights as if the sound has had a role in that the gender based discussions among the students is then predictable, where the teacher finds a chance to catch to correct the students' mispronunciations. In such a way, students used their necessary background information in order to take part in discussion and they exchanged their ideas and possibly left the classroom with a why and how question that helps them to become a critical thinker not only to other cultures but to their own cultural values. Such reflective tasks allow the learners to write whether they like to change any aspects of their thoughts and identity so that they fit any other cultural group around the globe or not and why is so.

#### 4.1.3. *Exploratory task*

4.1.4. After a few sessions when students were engaged with cultural differences and similarities, he explained the concept of identity and identity formation as follows.

"Each person is regarded as an entity among the endless animate and inanimate entities. Each person's entity is reflected in their self-image. Identity is a dynamic individual-social phenomenon." Then he introduced a metaphoric journey of identity formation which is in line with postmodernism view towards identity formation.

He mentioned in order to distinguish one's SELF and/or ENTITY from those of others', whether knowing or not, every human undergoes an on-going, dynamic process of contrasting SELF's entity against other entities from one's own outlook. The process, as he puts it, is a more of a journey of "I" (self), as a member of any community within any context, destined to find its place and status among other members, and maintain communications with them. Then he asked the students to fill the blank by any verb that begins with "D". He introduced this journey in a dramatic way as:

I first Declare my ENTITY. Then, in contact with the others, I need to Define my ENTITY. Interaction with the others requires that I, at times, Defend, and sometimes, Deny my ENTITY. Deliberating on my ENTITY, I may decide to DECORATE or even Deconstruct my ENTITY. In some cases, I Divide my ENTITY to certain Sub-Entities in order to address my societal needs. These all help me to Develop, Define ever anew, and Declare my ENTITY on an incessant basis. That's how I "D" my ENTITY in order to form my desired IDENTITY.

After that, he asked students to think how they have defined, defend, decorate, divide, or deconstruct themselves in order to declare their entities in their own social groups. And also, if they like to make any changes in the accepted self in their own cultural group or not. This kind of task is termed as exploratory projects that help learners to "explore a slice of their own cultural self, and to write a critical account of the process of their identity information." (Kumaravadiveldu, 2008, p. 205.)

These examples are few and far between. There were many other tasks and projects that he applied in the classroom. Obviously, I suppose it could be enough to demonstrate how a teacher



can design a task and/or project based on familiar theme so the differences can be shown. This is what can give students voice to define themselves, to deconstruct, or to develop themselves and create a mutual learning atmosphere for both the teacher and other peers.

## 5. Discussion

People live in a society and are willy-nilly in interaction with one another. Language is the handiest, most ubiquitously applicable means that human beings use to communicate with each other. Sometimes this communication leads to miscommunication when participants follow different conversational maxims or violate one of them. It may happen more often in a contact zone where people with different cultural backgrounds and values interact, particularly in the new century when “globalization changes the conditions in which language learning and language teaching take place.” (Block & Cameron, 2002, p. 2.)

The interconnection between language and culture has long been a controversial issue. A well-known theoretical perspective is a linguistic determinism, where Sapir-Whorf hypothesized “language determines thought”. Some linguists dismissed this idea as Fishman (1980, p.33) notes that “we are far more valiant, nimble, experienced and successful strugglers and jugglers with language- and- communication problems than Whorf realized.” However, to my understanding it is safe to assume that language and culture are linked and we as language educators can put this theory to good use by seeing how cultural factors underlie the possible conflict and clashes among people from different background values and beliefs. This knowledge can help us overcome culture shock while we are communicating our thoughts. As Brook (1964, p. 85) argues, “Language is the most typical, the most representative, and the most central element in any culture. Language and culture are not separable; it is better to see the special characteristics of a language as cultural entities and to recognize that language enters into the learning and use of nearly all other cultural elements.” Consequently, each point of views to culture has affected language pedagogy in a way or so. For instance, one group of scholars believes in the cultural assimilation as a solution to the cultural contact. Park and Burgess (1921/1969, P.735) define assimilation as “ a process of interpretation and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life.” According to this point of view, teachers are the source of cultural information for their students. In this approach, the students need to acquire the cultural knowledge and move towards acculturation. In other words, the students get familiar with the discrepancies between the culture of origin and that of the targets, in the classroom in order to move forward in the process of assimilation in everyday life. Nevertheless, this approach is blind to the pupils' agency. It classifies the learners' needs based on nationality, ethnical group, and social class. Not having a notion of culture in education is a problem that cannot be ignored anymore as there is no afford to resist it in the new millennium with the World Wide Web having a great impact on the daily life of peoples throughout the world. Along with the information exchange, obviously, much cultural knowledge about different nations would emerge and transfer through this global interaction.

In this study, the researcher tried to outline the debates on the stance of culture in language teaching under conditions of globalization. Rather than subscribing to a particular position, she suggests that one may understand the identities and merits of a teacher within him/herself via broadening their own sociological view point. Teachers as the active agents can get the best out of the global exchange of notions through interaction. It is the interaction between beliefs that may construct our global consciousness. To put it in Wenger’s (1998, p. 45) words “we interact with



each other and with the world; we tune our relations with each other and with the world accordingly. In other words, we learn."

Furthermore, the researcher provided a detailed view of a professional in the field of TESOL along with his strategies in the classroom to portray how a teacher may adopt different tactics in order to establish a mutual cultural learning in his classroom. Such a global cultural awareness is likely to help our students cope with the challenges of possible cultural clashes in this new era and to maximize their opportunity to move forward in the voyage of self development.

The findings reveal that the participant's perception is in line with what Kumarvadivelue (2008) terms as "cultural realism." Cultural realism demands critical self reflection. It has the potentials to lead to a better cultural transformation. As Kumarvadivelue (2008, p. 165.) says " in understanding other cultures, we understand our own better; in understanding our own, we understand other cultures better... when we do that, and do that right, we are not culturally melting. We are not hybridizing. We are, in fact, culturally growing." In this way, we recognize and value diversity. And it encourages us to have an ongoing inquiry to become more aware of ourselves and help our students effectively to become more aware of themselves. This may not be achieved without respecting the differences and making wise decisions in the complex, chaotic, and dynamic globalized situations.

## 6. Conclusion

In short, instead of promoting homogenization or hybridization we may need to do something practical based on our students' needs. To do so, one as a teacher can teach culture not as an informative product but as a kind of information that needs to be explored and shared in a collaborative way to be understood better. This helps students and teachers to go towards aglobalization and critical cultural reflection. Kumarvadivelu (2008) believes it requires knowledge to understand, analyze, and assess "how cultural stereotypes determine the way people perceive themselves and others; and how difficult and sometimes disturbing dialogues can bring about a change of basic attitudes toward one's own culture and toward other cultures."

The way the inquirer looks into it, a teacher who is aware of the cultural globalization can design tasks and projects based on familiar theme which, in turn, gives students voice to declare, define, and to develop themselves and create a mutual learning atmosphere for both teachers and students. Clearly, teachers can assist their students to position themselves in the global flows and to create global cultural consciousness so as to evolve their self into their SELF. As Kumarvadivelu (2011, p. 72.) claims " Teachers have to learn to recognize and renew not only their own identities, beliefs and values but also strive to shape those of their learners as well."

The researcher tried to maximize her understanding by linking the three components of exchanging ideas through an interview, observing what really goes on a professional's classroom, and linking these two with what she learned from the related literature and the scholars' intellectual content. This triangle allowed me to avail myself with a colleagues' experience with my dynamic self and with the existing literature so as to feed my mind. However, it would not be the end of the story as it is a recycling procedure of learning and developing which shall be done constantly and critically.

She should like to wrap up this paper by seeking the support of Edge (2011) as she tries to expound the last comment:

“None of us wants to get stuck in the riverside mud, or to burn up over the ocean, but the mutually-shaping interactions between our roots and our wings, our self knowledge and our environmental knowledge, as we bring them to our awareness and the commit ourselves to future action based on that combined awareness that constitutes our development, and that constitutes our life.”

The inquirer hopes that in future, as much as we try to promote the English knowledge of our students, we do our best to improve self critical awareness among teachers and learners so that it would shed light onto our path to understand ourselves and the world around us as well.

### Glossary

\*Cultural awareness: Exploring into new worlds, excavating similarities and discrepancies between different cultures and having a critical reflective mind “that can tell the difference between real and unreal, between information and disinformation, between ideas and ideologies. Only such a critical mind can help the individual develop the knowledge, skill, and disposition necessary to deal with the challenges of contemporary realities.” (Kumaravadivelu (2008, p.164).

\*\*Agglobalization: Unlike acculturation that is a one-way process of adjustments and adaptations of minority group, agglobalization entails a two-way process of a deliberate, cognizant journey towards globalization by adopting both localized and globalized standards selectively and consciously.

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## **Unearthing a sense of cosmopolitan social justice in Middle Eastern students through an analysis of media language.**

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This paper explores how students' research exercises on analyzing the language used in media could evoke, through class discussions, a sense of social justice with regards to ontological issues such as human rights and political polarities. Critical Discourse Analysis is epistemologically conceived as a three-dimensional framework in which the first dimension is that of textual analysis, the second dimension examines discourses as conduits of ideology, and finally the third dimension explores social practices as interpretations of hegemonic ideology. In view of the three-dimensional framework, students conduct sociolinguistic discussions based on their research projects and evoke a classroom curriculum that articulates their individual sense of social justice across transnational spaces. This paper is premised on the notion that in this globalized world it is important to inculcate a sense of cosmopolitan social justice in students whereby they can try and understand opposing worldviews from their own cultural vantage point.

**Keywords:** Critical discourse Analysis, curriculum and instruction, cosmopolitanism, globalization, social justice, human rights

## Introduction

Dubai has often been blamed in the international media for its violation of labor rights or for its rampant trafficking of sex workers from neighboring countries, but what one fails to recognize is that the United Arab Emirate (UAE), a nascent oil-rich country with Dubai as its crown jewel, is the world's best response to the 21st century globalized world. Home to expatriates from North America and Europe, business people from neighboring Arab countries, and blue-collar workers from the neighboring Asian countries, the UAE has made Multiculturalism and diversity its hallmark. With diversity comes an intermingling of cultures and viewpoints, negotiation of identities, and a certain sense of prevalent social justice that every ethnic group is entitled to.

Before speaking about the assignments in a course called Language in Society, which are the subject of this article, the author would attempt to unpack the title of this article that speaks to the idea of pushing the boundaries of what constitutes social justice in a mosaic culture of the UAE. For a holistic discussion the vantage points of students coming from different cultural backgrounds should be factored in.

## Theoretical Framework

As classrooms, in a sense, are a microcosm of the society at large, students bring with them latent notions of what is right and wrong. Arguing for the crucial importance of critical pedagogy, which is the initial step towards developing critical language awareness in students, Wink (2005) states: "We in education are a mirror of society that is more and more polarized." (p. 165) Hence, educators, who are reflective practitioners, should encourage the development of critical language awareness to engender a socially just and humane society. A dialogic classroom interaction with the teacher and with their peers could effectively 'unearth' their critical awareness about language and what matters most to them in their negotiation of identities as globalized citizens in a democratic society, especially in an English as a Second Language (ESL) environment. "Critical Language Awareness (CLA) [is] an urgently needed element in language education. CLA is I believe, coming to be a prerequisite for effective democratic citizenship, and should therefore be seen as an entitlement for citizens..." (Fairclough, 1998, p.3). Critical language awareness and critical pedagogy are invested with meaningful empowerment for both the educators and the students alike when classroom discourses are negotiated between them. (L. Andrews, 2006; S. Andrews, 2007; Fairclough, 1992, 2001; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Guilherme, 2002; James & Garrett, 1992; Janks, 2010; Lippi-Green, 1997; Reagan, 2006; van Lier, 1995). It is, as Wink (2000) argues, "a process that enables teachers and learners to join together in asking fundamental questions about knowledge, justice, and equity in their own classroom, school, and community" (p.71)

Critical theorists (L. Andrews, 2006; S. Andrews, 2007; Fairclough, 1992, 2001; Gebhard & Oprandy, 1999; Guilherme, 2002; James & Garrett, 1992; Janks, 2010; Lippi-Green, 1997; Reagan, 2006; van Lier, 1995) are concerned with issues of power and justice and the ways that race, economy, class, gender, religion, education and sexual orientation construct, reproduce or transform social systems. They believe that thought is mediated by historically constructed power relations, that facts are never neutral but embedded in context, and that some groups are privileged over others, which entitles them to a greater share in resources. Another belief that critical theorists hold is that one of the most powerful forms of oppression is internalized hegemony, which includes both coercion and consent (Gramsci, 2000) and language in the form of discourse is central in the formation of subjectivities and subjugation. Thus, discourses always have social and political underpinnings that are saturated with power relations. Critical language



Study (CLS) Fairclough, (1998) states, “highlights how language conventions and language practices are invested with power relations and ideological processes which people are often unaware of.” (p.7)

Fairclough (1995a, 1995b) outlines a theoretical framework for Critical Discourse Analysis, which includes an analysis of text, interactions, and social practices at the local, institutional, and societal level. In other words, his analytical framework consists of 3 levels of analysis: the text, the discursive practice, and the sociocultural practice (1995a). He further explains the three dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as: “description of the text; interpretation of the interaction processes, and their relationship to the text; and explanation of how the interaction process relates to the social action” (Fairclough, 1998, p.11)

Analyzing media language as discourse, Fairclough (1995b) looks into the question of “how the mass media affect and are affected by power relations within the social system...” (p. 12). Critical theorists recognize the power of mass media to act as conduits for disseminating a particular ideology to its audience. Van Dijk (1995) defines Ideologies as follows:

Ideologies are basic frameworks of social cognition, shared by members of social groups, constituted by relevant selections of sociocultural values, and organized by an ideological schema that represents the self-definition of a group. Besides their social function of sustaining the interests of groups, ideologies have the cognitive function of organizing the social representations (attitudes, knowledge) of the group, and thus indirectly monitor the group-related social practices, and hence also the text and talk of members. (p. 248)

Thus analyzing newspapers’ discourse reflects the ideology of that society. Van Dijk (1988, 1991) proposes ‘the social-cognitive model’ which provides a link between textual analysis of newspaper articles and their corresponding sociocultural milieu. He takes into account the thematic structure—the macrostructure of a text and its overall organization with regards to themes and topics—as well as its schematic structure—the microstructure which is the way a particular news report is ordered with its various parts such as a headline, a lead, an events element (and its syntactic and semantic relation between propositions)—to convey the processes of news production and comprehension as they pertain to the wider social practices they are embedded in.

‘Cosmopolitanism,’ the word qualifying ‘social justice’ in the title of this article, denotes an idea that all human beings are linked by virtue of their membership in a shared cosmos. The term ‘cosmopolitan’ derives from the Greek kosmopolites, or citizen of the world. So while recognizing the influence of one’s cultural imperatives on one’s identity people owe a certain responsibility to others of different culture (Appiah, 2005, 2006, Nussbaum, 1997 a, b). Cosmopolitanism differs from multiculturalism and pluralism because it does not seek to preserve already formed communities. Hollinger (2002) believes that “Cosmopolitans are specialists in the creating of the new, while cautious about destroying the old; pluralists are specialists in the conservation of the old while cautious about creating the new.” (Pp. 231–232) A Cosmopolitan sensibility in education also has pedagogical implications. Hansen (2008) posits the notion of Curriculum that is generated in classroom interactions between teachers and students as a Cosmopolitan inheritance because it promotes ‘critical receptivity’ in students, rather than a prescriptive content.

Congruent with the globalized concept of fluid identities Cosmopolitanism as an ideology seeks to encourage emerging spaces for new cultural and social configurations, which by necessity



entails understanding others' viewpoints yet recognizing a commitment to a sense of shared social justice. A limited version of a definition of social justice could be "giving to each what he or she is due" but justice on a wider scale is a set of universal principles which guide people in judging what is right and what is wrong, no matter what culture and society they live in. Social justice is a term replete with issues of inequality in society based on race, color, gender, and political affiliations. In a nutshell, endeavors to ensure social justice for everyone are about preventing human rights abuses and encouraging adherence to international human right laws.

### **My teaching context and the Assignment**

I (henceforth 'Author') teach at an American accredited Liberal Arts university near Dubai where the undergraduate students range between the ages of 18-22. Since the course under discussion called Language in Society is a humanities' elective, the students can take it even when they are about to graduate. They come from different Arab nationalities such as Syrian, Palestinian, Jordanian, Lebanese, Moroccan, Libyan, as well as Emiratis. There is also a sprinkling of students from the Indian sub-continent. It is on the whole an ESL environment.

Channeling students' project discussions through certain parameters, in my experience, encourages students to generate critical arguments around a topic. This is in congruence with Vygotsky's notion of scaffolding where he posits that the Zone of Proximal Development is "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance..." (1978, p. 86).

Since one of the course objectives of Language in Society is to 'Critique linguistic bias in texts', and the other is to 'Evaluate the power of language in shaping opinions' the course deals with such topics as 'language and media' and 'language and politics' which encourage in students the skills of critically analyzing texts with respect to the context and the ideologies at work. The parameters that were set for their end of the term paper were therefore as follows:

### **Ethics and Social justice: An Assignment about Critical Thinking and Critical Language Awareness**

- Pick out two events reported in a newspaper/magazine, or aired on a news channel that in your view violate the norms of ethics and social justice. Indicate clearly what is the underlying ideology at work in the article. The topics you could attempt to look at are: crimes against humanity, racism, gender bias, political allegiances etc.

In light of the concepts presented in the chapters entitled 'Language and Politics' and 'Language and Media' explain critically your views on how the news/article is presented and how it could have been presented if a sense of ethics and social justice were to be preserved. Please use some of the concepts learned in the two chapters (Language and Media, Language and Politics). The concepts are:

- -Tools for persuasion: us/them; rhetoric; appeals to emotion, logic, and ethics; metaphor; simile; rule of three, parallelism; euphemism and dysphemism.
- -Presuppositions and implicature
- -Michel Foucault's notions of 'competing discourses', dominant discourses' and hegemonic ideologies
- -Transitivity

- Norman -Fairclough's idea of 'degrees of presence'—back-grounding and foregrounding news items
- -Van Dijk's ideological square
- -Power/knowledge

### Media language analysis as done by some students in response to the assignment

The assignment was done in an essay form by all students and then were presented to class on power point slides followed by discussions on the content of the newspaper articles as well as the application of sociolinguistic concepts learned during the course, to these analyses. The students were given the option to work either in pairs or individually. Owing to the limited scope of this paper only the major points as they transpired in 4 of these essays are enumerated below in students' own words.

#### “Story 1: Sati. Article 1: Fanning the flames of love for death

Sati refers to the religious funeral practice of immolation of widows on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands, either voluntarily or through coercion. Sati is a practice, which exists in India within the Hindu community.

- The title of the article is a metaphor for growing the flames of love by providing air of sacrifice. A romantic image about Sati is being portrayed.

"Prayers rise above the flames as handfuls of spice are tossed into five pits of fire - offerings to a woman of such wifely virtue she became a goddess"(Goldenberg,1996).

- The victim here is described as a "woman of such wifely virtue she became a goddess" - sugarcoated and portrayed as something positive.

- There is also an appeal to ethics by portraying the woman who commits sati as virtuous.

Widows are given a derogatory status as being impure and as being sexually irrepressible. This ideology is very sexist as it is only the women who would have to endure such hardship as a widow.

- This also relates to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in terms of linguistic relativism

- In the article, a devotee is quoted as saying:

"Our ancestors have been doing it. That is our heritage. How can you stop worshipping something which is a show of strength?"(Goldenberg, 1996).

- Van Dijk's ideological square at play. The pronoun "our" as an in-group, and the pronoun "you" shows people who are opposed to sati as an out-group.

- The devotee uses a question to persuade the interviewer of his point of view, and this shows a presupposition; that stopping such a "show of strength" is wrong and immoral.

- The use of the phrase "a show of strength" is a euphemism, showing it as a virtuous act, and hiding the fact that it is tortuous for the widow to undergo the act of sati.

"This elevation has made her village, her in-laws and her family extremely proud and famous. On Wednesday, there was a massive, and at times frenzied, outpouring of devotion by about 200,000 pilgrims in Deorala" (M. K., 1987).

- He describes the incident as an "elevation" that "has made her village, her in-laws and her family extremely proud and famous".

- The choice of the word "elevation" shows that the author sees the incident as something positive that has vertically raised the status of everything related to Roop Kanwar.

- Rule of three is used to emphasize that everything related to "her" is now elevated, proud and famous
- The author describe the pilgrims as carrying out a "frenzied, outpouring of devotion", which portrays them as virtuous, devout people

Sati. Article 2: Arrested in Ritual Death, Gandhi Decries the Practice

"Roop Kanwar, 18, was burned with her husband's body in the small village of Deorala - describing the incident as utterly reprehensible and barbaric. The incident is a national shame, and all right thinking people should speak out against those who are glorifying the murder of a young woman"(Kaufman,1987).

- The fact that he uses the word "burned" rather than saying she burnt herself shows that he believes that the burning was done to her, and she did not do it herself.
- Appeals to emotion by saying that the incident was "utterly reprehensible and barbaric."
- The in group "right thinking people should speak out against this" and the out group "those who are glorifying the murder of a young woman"

The author states that

"there was no attempt to stop people from going to Deorala (the sati temple) or worshipping at the site"(Kaufman,1987).

This reveals a loophole in the Indian law; even though it is illegal to "abet, glorify or attempt to commit sati", there is nothing to say that people may not worship Sati. This allows people to continue to look up to sati as goddesses and this makes it more appealing for women to commit sati.

Conclusion: Through these articles we have discovered that sati still exists in the modern culture of India, and women's basic right to live is violated when they are brutally burned at their husbands' pyre.

We have also seen many examples of a speaker/writer's bias for or against Sati through their use of language. The writers in their article have made use of various rhetorical devices to convince the people with [sic] their mind-set. The problems with Sati need to be resolved, and one way is to close the loophole in the law and establish a ban on worshipping sati. By changing the way we talk about sati, we can change people's mindsets, and then maybe we will finally be free of this atrocious tradition."

**Author's comment:** While one of the two students who did this analysis was an Indian (and a Hindu by religion), the other one was an Arab Muslim. They tried to understand the Hindu tradition of Sati, which in my view, is in and of itself a Cosmopolitan stance. In accordance with the course assignment's requirement they apply the rhetorical devices such as the rule of three, Sapir and Whorf's hypothesis, Us/Them dichotomy, Van Dyke's ideological square, euphemism and presupposition, used by the reporters to portray the underlying hegemonic ideology of Sati. The first article according to the analysis seems to be reporting positively, about the religious fervor with which people deify women who commit Sati. The second article, however vehemently apposes it. The students were able to pick up on the underlying assumptions behind both the articles and conclude, alluding to Sapir and Whorf hypothesis that "By changing the way we talk about sati, we can change people's mindsets, and then maybe we will finally be free of this atrocious tradition."

## “Story 2: Child marriages and women’s rights

Headlines of the articles:

- USA Today: “Child brides around the world sold off like cattle”  
“Cattle” and “sold”, portraying women as items and stock, with a price tag.
- OnIslam: “Yemen's Child Marriages”
- Emirates 24/7: “Saudi set to curb child marriage”

The use of “curb” indicates an effort to control it, not prohibit it.

- The Elders: “Equality for girls and women: Let us measure up as men”  
“Us”, a call for unity, and “men”, only they can change the situation

Euphemisms:

OnIslam: “There are some cases in which young girls as little as 8 were being allowed to enter a marital union.”

“Allowed” gives the impression that the girl wanted to marry and then the parents decided to “allow”.

“Marital union” gives the marriage a sense of agreement and unity between the 2 parties, the man and girl. Not once is the word “forced” used in the article. Where is the justice here? Why the use of euphemisms to mitigate these forced child marriages?

Pronouns:

The Elder:

- “Men have a lot to answer for, I cannot deny it. We have built institutions that oppress and harm women, and we justify our practices as ‘the way things are’ or ‘the way things have always been’. Yet, as I always say, I am a prisoner of hope. I do believe that we men can help put a stop to these traditions. We can refuse to participate in them, and we can refuse to condone them. We can go further, and campaign against them.”

By using “we”, the writer is calling on all men to take a stand and campaign against child marriage, gives “inclusion” to male readers

Gender in language:

The Elder:

He urges men and boys to challenge harmful traditions and protect the rights of girls and women.

- “I want to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women by recognizing the work of young men like Premnath.”

The dominant idea is that when men finally stand up for women’s rights, women will be liberated from such horrendous acts; the use of male superiority and dominance in the article is emphasized

Degrees of Presence:

Emirate 24/7:

- “The Ministry of Justice has drafted the long-awaited legislation which only restricts such marriages but does not totally ban them as it will give the bride’s father the final decision and does not include penalties for offenders.”
- “The bride’s father can decide on marriage but has to obtain court consent if she is below 16 years old and must present a medical report showing his daughter is eligible for marriage physically and psychologically”

- “...his daughter must have training for the new family life before she is married”
- “Under the new draft law, fathers still have the powers to have their daughters married...”

The entire article rotates around the father’s decisions, back-grounding the female’s position in the marriage and foregrounding the father’s actions.”

**Author’s comment:** In this assignment the student an Egyptian-American tries to explore the tradition of child marriages in the Middle East. She analyzes headlines and news articles from four different newspapers to explicate concepts such as gender differences in a patriarchal society as portrayed in their discourse, the word choice that insinuates or promotes a certain ideological stance, and the use of pronouns that form the ‘in-group’ and ‘out-group’ in delegating authority to men to perpetuate certain social norms. She quotes from the news articles by using different subheading for her analysis, such as: Euphemisms, Pronouns, Gender in language, and Degrees of presence. Thus she adopts a critical stance and picks up on euphemisms and understatements as used in the news article when talking about forced child marriages and violation of women’s rights to choose their partners, or even to live a normal childhood.

### “Story 3: Boston Marathon bombings

Considered to be the second biggest terrorist act after 9/11, the Boston Marathon bombing is receiving much of the media’s attention:

-Al Jazeera and CNN reported the capture of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev

-The one written by CNN sensationalized the news while Al Jazeera’s attempted to remain objective.

Titles of the 2 channels

Al Jazeera: “Second Boston Bombing suspect captured.” –Neutral title

CNN: “In the end, Boston bombing suspect done in by a flapping tarp”---Sensationalized

- “Flapping tarp” is in reference to how the suspect was found hidden in a boat due to a tarp being undone
- This is ridiculing the efforts of the suspect at hiding from the police, and also dramatizing how his capture happened
- “Do in” is defined as ‘to bring about the defeat or destruction of’ (Merriam Webster)
- The title puts the suspect in a negative light by implying that he was somewhat incompetent at hiding himself.

Conclusion: media should not target him as the “bad guy” but only report the facts accurately

### Al Jazeera’s Lead:

“Police have captured a 19-year-old ethnic Chechen and a Naturalized US citizen suspected of carrying out the Boston Marathon bombings with his older brother after an intense day-long manhunt that shut down the city.”

-Describing him as an “ethnic Chechen” and “a Naturalized US citizen” brings to light that even though he may be from a minority group, he is an American citizen

-The fact that he was a Muslim was back-grounded, although later in the article it was mentioned that the suspects were from a predominantly Muslim region.

Al Jazeera’s article focused on the bigger picture:

- How he was arrested
- What the public had to say
- The shootings between the police and the two brothers
- Quotes from the suspects' family

--Uncle: ashamed, Parents: could not believe

Conclusion: This is an attempt at objectivity by providing both the sides of the story, so Al Jazeera is being ethical here.

**Tweet by the Boston Police Department:**

“CAPTURED!!! The hunt is over. The search is done. The terror is over. And justice has won. Suspect in custody.”

- The word “captured” and “hunt” make it seem as though the suspect is an animal on the loose.
- The words “terror” and “justice” reinforce the ideology that Americans will always have their justice and every suspect is a terrorist
- The tweet is written in parallelism
- The positive “justice” is juxtaposed with the negative “terror.”

CNN’s description of how Tsarnaev was found:

- “Some animal”
- “Crumpled up in a ball”
- “pool of blood”

Paints a picture of a man who is wounded and cannot fend for himself.

CNN’s description of his capture:

“Hailstorm of gunfire”

“Stand off”

“Police were aware of the danger the armed man posed.”

Makes it seem as though he is an extremely dangerous man and the police had the right to fire at him as much as they could

Conclusion:

Objectivity is a rule that journalists must follow. However, we see that this is not always the case. Media, especially in today’s world need to let go of their prejudices and ideologies that might affect their reports. It should be up to the people to decide how they feel about something or someone, not the media”

**Author’s comment:** These students, both from Mass Communication Department, analyze in detail the choice of words as well as the political and sensationalized stance that the CNN and the Boston Police Department’s tweet assume, as opposed to the relative objectivity adopted by Al Jazeera, an Arab news channel. They further explain in their essay that the use of short value-laden phrases used by CNN and the Boston Police Department’s tweet to convey a sense of danger and alarm, while the smoothly flowing sentence structure employed by Al Jazeera merely showed that they were reporting an event, and not sensationalizing it unnecessarily. Hence, the Western media and the Eastern Media took an opposite stance in reporting the same manhunt differently, in view of the ideology held by their respective audience.



**“Story 4: “The killing of Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011: The US versus the Arab Media Language”**

Al Jazeera’s lead sentence regarding the killing of Bin Laden reads: “U.S. president Barack Obama said bin Laden, the most-wanted fugitive on the US list, had been killed on Sunday in a US operation in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad, about 61km north of Islamabad.”

While Fox news says:

“Declaring “justice has been done,” President Obama announced late Sunday that Osama bin Laden was killed by U.S. forces in Pakistan, marking the end of the worldwide manhunt that began nearly a decade ago on Sept. 11, 2001.”

Comment: Fox news tried to foreground the fact that Justice has been done, and that he was killed by the US forces, while Al-Jazeera just declared the fact that Bin Laden was killed

Fox news: “Killed in firefight”

Comment: A Firefight means that two groups of people were shooting at each other; hence we can see Van Dijk’s famous Ideological square at work in Fox’s article even from the beginning. Fox’s, echoing Obama, states that a firefight took place, leading the reader to a rather Hollywoodish scene in which Bin Laden’s group is fighting the American Special Ops. Fox news doesn’t want to give the reader the image of 40 highly trained American soldiers ganging up against 1 grey haired man. Firefight gives a picture about the event, and that’s semantic loading. Thus, “mitigate our bad” from Van Dijk’s ideological square was achieved by Fox News.

Fox News: Obama says: “Bin Laden was not a Muslim leader. He was a mass murderer of Muslims so his demise should be welcomed by all who believe in peace and human dignity.”

Comment: This is a great example of implicature given by Obama meaning that those who do not welcome his demise do not believe in peace and human dignity, and that is a big implicature that enforces the ‘emphasize our good’ approach in Van Dijk’s ideological square. Interestingly Al-Jazeera and the Guardian did not include the later part of the quote about welcoming his demise in their many quotes throughout their articles .

The Guardian: “Osama bin Laden, the criminal mastermind behind al-Qaida and the world’s most sought after terrorist since the attacks of 11 September 2001, has been killed by a US operation”

Al Quds: ”Barak Obama announces that a US operation in Pakistan leads to the killing of Osama Bin Laden the leader of Al Qaida” .

Comment: The Guardian foregrounds that Bin Laden is the sinister leader of Al Qaida and that he was responsible for brilliantly planning the September 11th attacks. In fact, both the Guardian and Fox News use the word mastermind twice in their text. Al-Quds on the other hand, foregrounds that he was killed by a US operation in Pakistan. The Guardian and Fox talked about how crowds gathered in front of the white house to celebrate, and how they started to sing the

national anthem. Al-Jazeera and AL-Quds did not include this item, caring about the feelings of their audience.

**Author's comment:** In analyzing the same news item reported in four different newspapers, the Syrian student perhaps subliminally unearths his own beliefs about the media's need to be objective while reporting the manhunt, as well as the need for the audience to empathize with a human being who was rightly or wrongly accused of terrorism. He infers that Al Jazeera and Al Quds being Arab news channels were being mindful of their audience's empathy for Osama bin Laden when they did not report the celebrations that took place outside the White House after his capture.

### Conclusion

In all the stories presented, the three dimensional framework of Critical Discourse Analysis is manifested clearly where the first dimension is that of textual analysis, the second dimension examines discourses as conduits of ideology, and finally the third dimension explores social practices as interpretations of hegemonic ideology. The students engaged in discussions that unearthed their individual sense of social justice, thus evoking a curriculum beyond the confines of a set syllabus and a classroom environment. Hence, students were able to empathize with the victims while trying to understand the ideology of the perpetrators at work. These class discussions proved to be a platform to try and understand a situation from different vantage points. The analysis presented highlights the importance of inculcating a Cosmopolitan sense of social justice in students, which necessitates an empathetic understanding of other cultures' social norms for a peaceful coexistence in today's globalized world. After all, moral Cosmopolitanism enjoins people to extend their obligations beyond the confines of their own cultural boundaries and understand others.

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## Teaching English to Cadets in Police Colleges and Academies in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf: Theory and Practice

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### Abstract

Within the theory and practice of English for Specific Purposes, this study attempted to compare and contrast the teaching of English to police cadets in police colleges and academies in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. The participant police colleges were King Fahd Security College in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait Police College, Qatar Police College, and Dubai Police College. Data was collected through analyzing the policy of these colleges in teaching English to their police cadets as displayed on their websites and in their official documents. The analysis of the results indicated that these police institutions vary in the way they introduce English to their would-be-police officers. Overall, English courses and teachings are not in line with the theory and practice of English for Specific Purposes. These colleges did not base their English teaching on their police cadets' needs and the situations in which they will possibly use English. The results also showed that teaching English is traditional in that English is still taught as a subject in the curriculum, which makes instructions and practice limited in terms of the hours taught. The study concludes with recommendations that can be used by these colleges to improve the teaching of English to their police cadets.

**Key Words:** English for Specific Purposes, Needs Analysis, Police Cadets, Police Colleges

## Introduction

A great number of studies have been published about teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) since its first emergence in the early 1960s, and since then it has become "a vital and innovative activity within the Teaching of English as a Foreign or Second Language movement" (Dudley-Evans and Maggie, 2002, p. 1). ESP emerged as a result of three major factors: (1) the growing global demand for a means of communication as a result of the scientific and technical evolution that followed the Second World War; (2) the shift from studying the formal features of language use to the communicative aspects of language use; and (3) the recognition of the importance of meeting the learners' needs and interests for learning a foreign language (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

Although ESP appeared in the early 1960s as a new trend in language teaching, definitions of it in the literature are relatively late in time. For example, Mackay and Mountford (1978, p. 2) defined ESP as "generally used to refer to the teaching for a clearly utilitarian purpose. This purpose is usually defined with reference to some occupational requirements . . . or vocational training program . . ., or some academic or professional study." They emphasized two important aspects of ESP: teaching a language is utilitarian in that it is carried out to achieve predetermined goals and these goals are directly related to a specific setting of knowledge or work (e.g., business, medicine).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 19) defined "ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning." They described ESP teaching as learner-centered since it is based on the learners' reason to learn a foreign language.

Strevens (1988) defined ESP by making a distinction between its absolute characteristics and variable characteristics. He argued that absolute characteristics of ESP teaching include four aspects: (1) it is designed to meet specified needs of the learner; (2) it is related in content to particular disciplines, occupation and activities; (3) it is centered on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, text, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of the discourse; (4) it is designed in contrast with General English. In comparison, variable characteristics of ESP includes two aspects: (1) ESP may be, but not necessarily, restricted to the language skills to be learned, e.g. reading only; and (2) ESP is not taught according to any pre-ordained methodology.

Robinson (1991) defined ESP according to two criteria and a number of characteristics. The two criteria are: (1) ESP is goal-directed and (2) ESP courses are based on the results of the learners' needs analysis which should specify what they will use English for. The characteristics involve the limited time period in which the ESP course objectives should be achieved and the homogenous classes of adults in terms of the work or specialist studies the learners are engaged in.

Ten years later, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) modified Strevens' (1988) definition of ESP to include: (1) Absolute characteristics: a) ESP is designed to meet specific needs of the learner; b) ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines it serves; and c) ESP is centred on the language (grammar, lexis, register), skills, discourse and genres appropriate to these activities. (2). Variable characteristics: a) ESP may be related or designed for specific disciplines; b) ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of general English; c) ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation; it could be used for learners at secondary school level; d) ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced learners; and e) Most ESP courses assume basic knowledge of the language system, but it can be



used with beginners. Dudley-Evans and St. John have removed the absolute characteristic that 'ESP is in contrast with General English' and added other variable characteristics. They emphasized that ESP is not necessarily related to a specific discipline. They argued that ESP is likely to be used with adult learners although it could be used with young adults in a secondary school setting. Like Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) maintained that ESP should be seen as an 'approach' to teaching.

Unlike ESP, English for General Purposes (EGP) refers to contexts such as the school where learners' needs and interests cannot be readily determined. EGP provides a broad basis rather than a detailed and selective specification of goals like ESP (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

However, there is an overlapping relation between ESP and EGP. Widdowson (1983) listed several distinctive features of the two types of teaching. The most important EGP features are: 1. the focus is often on education; 2. as the learners' future needs are impossible to predict, the course content is more difficult to select because it is too general; 3. the content in the syllabus should have a high surrender value. In contrast, the most relevant ESP features are: 1. the focus is on training; 2. as English is intended to be used in specific vocational contexts, the selection of the appropriate content is easier; 3. it is important for the content in the syllabus to have a high surrender value, most relevant to the vocational context; 4. the aim may be to create a restricted English competence.

The learners and their purposes for learning English constitute the major difference between ESP and EGP. ESP learners are usually adults, who are familiar with the English language. They are highly motivated because the language course is based on their needs and interests. They are learning English so as to communicate professional information and to perform job or study-related functions. Therefore, ESP courses make use of needs analysis to determine which language skills are useful for the learners to be able to accomplish certain professional tasks. ESP courses are centered on the learners' context and subject matter. The English language is taught as a subject related to the learners' real needs in a particular field of human activity (e.g., nursing, tourism). The learners immediately use English in their employment context. They are highly motivated as they are aware of their specific purposes for learning English (Alhuqbani, 2008; Qaddomi, 2014).

In contrast with ESP, the age of EGP learners varies from children to adults. EGP courses are mostly focused on language structure and general reading and vocabulary. These courses are responsible to the general language acquisition. EGP helps students to deal with any subject-matter course. It gives them the ability to generate more language skills that may help them use English in any undefined setting. EGP courses deal with various topics and each of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) is equally introduced. No needs analysis is required in EGP due to its general purpose.

### **ESP in Police context**

A few ESP studies have been conducted in police context, mostly in Arabic contexts. The majority of these studies focused on assessing the English language needs of police cadets and officers. For example, Abo Mosallem (1984) investigated the English language needs of 150 Egyptian police officers in ten police departments: Passport, Special Security, Airport Security, Tourist Police, Traffic Police, Criminal Investigation Division, Public Relations, Interpol, State Security, and police stations. He used a questionnaire to collect data. The officers' needs for language skills and sub-skills varied as a result of their police departments. However, these departments gave priority to speaking and listening skills, except the Interpol Police Department

which gave priority to reading and writing skills. The majority of the officers (83.2%) indicated that acquiring English would help them perform their jobs in an efficient way. Abo Mosallem suggested a common core course which concentrated on the four language skills, with more emphasis on listening and speaking. But, he did not elaborate on how this core course would be implemented in the ten departments to meet the terminal objectives of each police department and the officers' English background.

Similarly, Alhuqbani (2008) assessed the English language needs of 103 Saudi police officers on the job through a need analysis questionnaire. Overall, the results showed that the police officers had never been trained on how to use English for police purposes. The results showed that the officers' security sectors affected the frequency of using English in the workplace. Officers in the Passports sector used English more frequently than the other officers in the other sectors due to the nature of their work which requires frequent contact with foreigners. The findings also showed that the majority of the officers ranked listening and speaking as the most important skills to their jobs, similar to Abo Mosallems' findings. Moreover, the study showed that almost all the officers indicated that understanding all what is said to them in English as the most difficult aspect of English use which reflects their weakness in English comprehension. Since the number of officers in some sectors was very small, Alhuqbani's findings need to be verified with larger samples of officers in each security sector.

In another police study, Khamkaew (2009) used a questionnaire and interviews to identify the language needs and problems in English listening and speaking skills of 30 Metropolitan Police Officers working at counter service at Chana Songkram Police Station. Overall, the findings showed that police officers lacked the necessary listening and speaking skills which help them perform certain communicative tasks such as giving information and directions; and therefore they needed training in these two skills. The participants indicated that the main listening problems were the different English accents and the difficulty to get the main idea. Speaking problems included difficulty in producing basic expressions, complete sentences, and pronouncing English vowel sounds.

In a recent study, Alhuqbani (2013) investigated the academic English needs of 42 officers working at KFSC. The participants' military ranks ranged from 1st lieutenants to lieutenant colonel. The analysis of the questionnaire showed that the officers did not receive training on how to use EAP, and the language materials in the English courses they had completed were not consistent with their perceived academic English needs. The officers showed awareness of the graduate requirements that await them; that is, they rated some academic skills such as writing proposals and theses as the most important skills they need to develop.

Qaddomi (2013) identified the English language needs of 91 cadets at Al Istiqlal University in Palestine. He adapted Alhuqbani's (2008) questionnaire with some modifications. The findings revealed that the cadets' English proficiency level was intermediate with apparent weakness in listening and speaking which were identified by the cadets as the most important skills to their police jobs. The results also indicated that the most difficult aspect of English use facing the cadets was following English conversations of natural speed. Qaddomi's findings are consistent with Alhuqbani's (2008) findings.

In another recent study, Alhuqbani (2014a) investigated the English language needs of a random sample of 223 police cadets studying at King Fahd Security College in Saudi Arabia. The cadets selected speaking and listening as the most important skills and studying English for security purposes. The cadets need ESP more than those domains of English for general purposes. They showed a high level of awareness of their need for English as a means of

communication with foreigners residing in Saudi Arabia. That is, the majority of the cadets stressed the importance of English to convey information to foreigners and answer their questions. There was a significant difference for the cadets' university major (science vs. humanities) on the domains of needs per skill. The science group rated the listening domains of understanding the various spoken English dialects, job related lectures and symposiums in English and questions raised by foreign workers as the most needed skills. Communicating with speakers who speak different English dialects was found to be the most difficult of English use followed by understanding English conversations of natural speed and the use of ESP. Understanding and responding to all what is being said in English almost received the same level of difficulty. Difficulty in using English because of cultural differences was found to be the least difficult aspect of English. There was no significant differences between the two groups (humanities vs. science) in terms of their expectations of the difficult aspects of English use, which may suggest that all cadets expected to have difficulty in using the six domains of English uses as illustrated in Table 6 above.

Other studies focused on investigating the motivations and attitudes of police cadets and officers toward learning English. Alhuqbani (2009) studied the motivation and attitudes of 206 police officers in the workplace in Saudi Arabia. He used a questionnaire to collect data. The results showed that the officers were more instrumentally motivated to learn English. Officers with the rank of captain were more instrumentally motivated to learn English than those officers with the ranks of lieutenant, major and lieutenant colonel. They also were more integratively motivated to learn English than lieutenants and majors. Captains had more positive attitudes than majors toward learning English. It is not clear why officers with the rank of captain were more instrumentally and integratively motivated to learn English. A possible interpretation is that captain officers are usually given scholarships to study abroad after spending their early years in their security sectors. For example, officers at KFSC are only allowed to have scholarships to study abroad when they become captains. Officers in the sectors of Public Security, Passports and King Fahd Security College were more instrumentally motivated to learn English than officers in the Prisons sector.

In a small-scale study, Alqurashi (2011) explored the motives and attitudes of 24 Saudi police officers toward learning English as a foreign language. The results showed that Saudi police officers had different motives for learning English, but they in general were motivated to learn it for communication purposes. The participants had negative attitude toward the six-month English course they were having at the Security Training City of Public Security because of several factors such as its long duration and location. Alqurashi called for shortening the current English course to a 3-month English course and administering it a local university. Alqurashi's findings need to be taken with caution because of the small number of participants he employed and the methodological defects in the survey which only included five open questions.

Alhuqbani (2014a) examined the motivation and attitudes of 223 police cadets studying at King Fahd Security College in Saudi Arabia. The analysis of the results showed that there is a significant correlation between almost all the instrumental and integrative motivation variables, which may suggest that both types of motivations are integrated and contribute to English learning. With regard to the cadets' attitudes toward English learning, statements describing negative attitudes toward the English culture did not statistically correlate with the other statements that constitute the cadets' positive attitudes toward English learning, which confirmed their positive attitudes toward both English learning and its culture. The significant correlations

between the cadets' English perceived needs and their instrumental motivations supported the argument that ESP learners study English for utilitarian purposes.

In a more recent study, Qaddomi (2014) examined the motivation and attitudes of 381 Palestinian security personnel toward learning English as a Foreign Language in workplace. The findings showed that Palestinian security personnel had high integrative motivation and instrumental motivation but the former was higher. The results also indicated that their personnel attitudes toward English learning and its culture were positive. There were no significant differences in motivation; whereas there were significant differences on the culture domain for those who had less than 5 years time in service. The results showed that there were significant differences in Palestinian security personnel motivation, attitudes toward learning English and native speakers' culture due to proficiency level in English. Intermediates showed high motivation whereas beginners scored higher on attitudes toward learning English, native speakers' culture.

Only one study focused on ESP course evaluation in police context. Alhuqbani (2014b) evaluated the teaching of English to police cadets at KFSC. The participants included three groups of stakeholders: six English teachers, sixteen former police cadets and 122 current police cades. Data collection instruments included a set of three short questionnaires and observation. The analysis of the results showed that the ESP course and teaching at KFSC is ineffective and inappropriate due to administrative and methodological factors. The current ESP course lacks the major principles associated with the teaching of English for specific purposes such as meeting the police cadets' actual needs and turning these needs into operational objectives that can be tested. Administratively, the three groups of stakeholders expressed their dissatisfaction with the course duration and timing.

It follows from the discussion in the literature above that ESP is an approach to language teaching in which everything is related to the language course (e.g., content selection, learning objectives, method of teaching, testing, etc.) should be clearly based on learners' needs and interests. This requires that teaching should be both goal-oriented ("what the learner wants to do with the language at the end of learning") and process-oriented ("what the learner needs to do actually to acquire the language") Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p. 122). The review of ESP studies in police context showed that these studies, except Alhuqbani's (2014), concentrated on assessing learners' needs, motivation and attitudes and said nothing about how English teaching is implemented in police institutions. It is not clear whether police colleges and academies in the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (CCASG) adapt ESP as an approach to teaching English to their police cades and officers. Hence, this study is conducted to find out how English is introduced to police cadets in the CCASG.

### **Significance of the study**

Since this investigation was conducted with an aim to improving the teaching of English at police colleges and academies in the CCASG, it is hoped that it will benefit the police cadets greatly in their future professional communication. It will also be of assistance to their ESP facilitators in developing a learner-centered curriculum and delivering instructions accordingly. Furthermore, it will guide the police colleges and academies in the CCASG to realize the needs for reorganizing the current facilities for ESP courses in terms of the police cadets' needs and demands.

### Research questions

This study attempted to answer the following three research questions:

1. What type of English do police colleges and academies in the CCASG teach to their police cadets?
2. How many hours of English teaching do police cadets receive in these colleges and academies?
3. What are the pedagogical implications of the research findings to the teaching of English to police cadets at police colleges and academies in the CCASG?

### Method

#### *Participants*

The participant police colleges and academies were four: King Fahd Security College (KFSC) in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait Police College, Qatar Police College (QPC), Dubai Police Academy (DPA).

#### *Data collection procedures*

Data was collected through analyzing the policy of these colleges in teaching English to their police cadets as displayed on their websites and in their official documents.

### Results and discussion

#### *Type of English*

The analysis of the results indicated that these police institutions vary in the way they introduce English to their would-be-police officers. Overall, English courses and teachings are not in line with the theory and practice of ESP. For example, these police colleges and academies did not base their English teaching on their police cadets' needs and the situations in which they will possibly use English, which is a clear violation of one of the most important principles of ESP theory. According to ESP advocates (e.g., Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Robinson, 1991) meeting the learner's needs is an important aspect of ESP theory and practice since all subsequent decisions (e.g., content selection, learning objectives) are based on it. For example, Randel (1991, p. 73) stressed the importance of needs analysis and maintained that ". . . without it any syllabus writer or course designer is addressing a vacuum."

As shown in Table 1, DPA is the only college that offers two different types of English courses to its cadets: EGP and ESP. The DPA teaches its cadets EGP in the first two semesters and then introduces ESP to its cadets. It focuses on teaching English for legal purposes since the curriculum is heavily based on legal studies. The review of its policy and program of study shows that there is no concentration on teaching English for police purposes. Moreover, the two English legal courses are based on reading texts and it seems that they are not based on the actual needs of the police cadets.

**Table 1.** *Type of English in the CCASG'S police colleges and academies*

Police College/Academy	Course Type	
	EGP	ESP
DPA	EGP 1-2	English for Legal Purposes 1-2
KFSC	None	English for Security Purposes



KPC	EGP 1-2	None
QPC	EGP 1-2	None

With regard to KFSC, the college introduces English for security purposes to its police cadets. There is a special textbook titled "English for Security Purposes" 2<sup>nd</sup> edition assigned to the police cadets. This special course focuses on reading police texts and terminology related to police work in Saudi Arabia. It also has police dialogues related to certain police situations such as traffic accidents and robbery investigation. According to Alhuqbani (2014b), the college changed its English course several times. In the 1990s, the college used to teach English for police purposes. From 2000 to 2009, the college replaced the police special course with EGP. Since 2009 the college has been teaching English for security purposes.

In contrast to DPA and KFSC, both KPC and QPC teach EGP to their police cadets. There is no indication in the study program plan of these two colleges that shows ESP is used or will be used later in the program. It seems that the two colleges still view teaching English as a general subject in the curriculum which is one of the general requirements that police cadets must take before graduation. They seem to be unaware of the importance of meeting the language needs of their would-be-police officers to learn English for police purposes to efficiently perform their police tasks. Previous studies in police context (e.g., Abo Mosallem, 1984; Alhuqbani, 2008; Qaddomi, 2013) found that police cadets and officers voiced their need to learn English to meet their police job requirements.

### *Quantity of English instructions*

The analysis of the results showed that English is taught as a subject in the curriculum which makes it limited in the number of hours allocated to its teaching. As shown in Table 2 below, DPA has the highest number of hours allocated to English teaching. DPA allocates 4 hours for EGP and 4 hours for ESP distributed equally over four semesters.

**Table 2. Hours of English instructions in the CCASG'S colleges and academies**

Police College/Academy	Number of hours			
	EGP	Duration	ESP	Duration
DPA	4	2 semesters	4	2 semesters
KFSC	-		2	9 weeks
KPC	6	2 semesters	-	-
QPC	6	2 semesters	-	

KFSC has the lowest number of hours allocated to teaching English to its police cadets. It only has two hours of English instructions per week. The duration of this course is only 9 weeks. KFSC replaced its two-semester academic year with a new plan of study in which the academic



year is divided into three quarters with each consisting of 9 weeks. Two hours per week seems to be inadequate to teach English for police purposes at KFSC, especially that police cadets have varying degrees of English proficiency (Alhuqbani, 2014a).

Finally, both QPC and KPC teach EGP for six hours distributed equally across two semesters: three hours in semester 1 and like them in semester 2.

In ESP, language courses usually last for a short period of time, but are so condensed in hours. The findings of this study indicate that police colleges and academies in the CCASG vary in the duration of English instruction from nine weeks to a whole semester. However, the total number of hours in these periods of time is not adequately condensed since police cadets study English for two or three hours per week among other different subjects. For example, KFSC police cadets study English for security purposes for two hours per week for only 9 weeks, with a total of 18 hours. This is unrealistic since police cadets need ample time to learn and practice English (Alhuqbani, 2014b).

### Conclusion and implications

To conclude, this study attempted to briefly explore the type and amount of English instructions used in four of the CCASG's police colleges and academies, namely King Fahd Security (KFSC), Dubai Police Academy (DPA), Qatar Police College (QPC) and Kuwait Police College (KPC). The results indicated that these police colleges and academies vary in the way they introduce English to their would-be-police officers. Overall, English courses and teachings in these police institutions are clearly not in line with the theory and practice of ESP. That is, they did not base their English courses and teachings on their police cadets' needs and on the situations in which the cadets will possibly use English, which is a clear violation of one of the most important principles of ESP theory. Moreover, teaching English at these police institutions is traditional in that English is still viewed and taught as a subject in the curriculum, which in fact makes instructions and practice limited in terms of the hours taught.

The findings of this study and other previous ESP studies in police context and other contexts bear important implications to the teaching of English at CCASG's police colleges and academies. Some of these implications can be summarized in the following points.

1. CCASG's police colleges and academies need to be aware of the importance of establishing their English courses to meet the requirements of police jobs. Needs analysis is the cornerstone in any ESP program (Hutchinson & Water, 1987). A questionnaire can be used to collect data systematically about the police cadets' English needs and their previous English background. All concerned parties in the teaching process of English at these police institutions (e.g., cadets, teachers, administration, etc) should take part in the questionnaire in order to fully come up with a clear picture of the needs of all parties concerned (Richterich, 1983). In addition, a detailed description of the police cadets' future police tasks can help a lot in the development of a special course for police cadets and officers.
2. After identifying the English needs of the police cadets and other concerned parties, learning objectives should be formulated and developed to reflect these needs. This means that both needs analysis and learning objectives should be carried out at the same as prerequisite to the designing of the ESP course (Aldossari, 1999). In this regard, Cunningsworth (1983, p. 50) emphasizes that " . . . from the learner's needs we

translate a set of operational learning objectives by which we can help the learner accomplish his purpose."

3. The content selection for the ESP course should meet the learner's needs and reflect the ESP course objectives. The content selection should also take into account the learner's level and the course duration, and include only those language items and skills specified as necessary by needs analysis (Aldossari, 1999; Strevens, 1988).
4. The results of this study have shown that practice of English in the CCASG's police colleges and academies is very limited since its included in the curriculum as a general subject. The activities and exercise in the ESP course should be based on the police cadets' needs and interests as revealed by the needs analysis to stimulate them to learn English. The language activities and skills that have no relevancy to the cadets' needs should not be included in the ESP course (Aldossari, 1999).
5. Unlike EGP, ESP is "accountable teaching. ESP learners and sponsors are investors in the ESP course and they want to see a return on their investment of time and/or money" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 144). English teaching at the CCASG's police colleges and academies should have certain evaluation and testing requirements to assess the learners' performance at some points in the course. These police institutions need to adapt both formative and summative evaluation to identify any possible problems with their English teaching.

Finally, this study emphasizes the need for more research related to English teaching in the CCASG's police colleges and academies. Future research should be carried out at CCASG's police colleges and academies to determine the strengths and weaknesses of their current English courses. Research also should be conducted to identify the languages needs and interests of police cadets and officers in the CCASG's police institutions. This research can be done either individually by each police institution or collectively through the Police Unification League of the country of CCASG. Findings then can be distributed to the police administration in each CCASG. Furthermore, research is desired to find out the principles involved in the design of an ESP program for each police college/academy in the CCASG which incorporates the police cadets' needs, as identified by a needs analysis. Research is also needed to Investigate the teaching methods and techniques that can be best used efficiently at police institutions in the CCASG.

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## A Sociolinguistic Perspective on the Arab Spring and Its Impact on Language Planning Policy: the Case of Libya

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### Abstract

This paper examines the impact of the democratic trend on language planning policy in Libya, where the official language policy was long used by policy makers as a mechanism for not only suppressing the ethnic identity of Libyan Amazigh, but also to strongly resist the introduction of foreign languages such as English for merely political and pan-Arabic objectives. The paper is based on the hypothesis that the current geopolitical changes in Libya are likely to exert certain impacts on the sociolinguistic landscape and provide new opportunities to linguistic, cultural and political reforms. The study attempts to achieve three inter-related objectives. The first objective is to draw a comprehensive image of the sociolinguistic situation of Libya where languages compete with each other for their space; Classical Arabic CA, employed in religious discourse and literary writing, Modern Standard Arabic MSA in the sphere of education and public administration, colloquial Arabic – largely, but not exclusively oral, Berber and recently English as the language of science and technology. The second objective is to account for the growing economic and political changes and the emergence of democratic trends (the ‘Arab Spring’) in the country and their foreseen impact on future overall development in infrastructure related to language planning and policy (LPP). Finally, the paper seeks to identify and review LPP models that have been previously implemented and suggests the limitation of these models, and finally proposes an integrative model that accommodates some measure of coordination between various decision makers and implementations. In order to achieve these objectives, the methodology utilized is based on situation analysis within the framework of linguistic and political changes. The principle difficulty encountered in this regard is that materials are not easily obtained due to decades of UN and Western backed-sanctions, as well as decades of public sector dominance and government control. Furthermore, many of recent materials regarding current geopolitical reforms in the Arab World have not yet been categorized nor collected. Therefore, the study relies mainly on information that is available on the World Wide Web and, wherever possible, informal conversation with individual linguists, institutional language specialists and officials.

**Key Words:** Language Planning, Language Policy, Arabic, Arab Spring and sociolinguistics.

## I. Introduction

To a certain extent, Libya is unique among other Arab countries where popular uprisings have occurred – notably Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Yemen – not only for its strategic geographical location that has always been a point of attraction to foreign powers, but also for the unstable radical political regime<sup>i</sup> for the last 42 years that has influenced Libyan society by introducing political, economic, social reforms. Located between the Maghreb countries in the west and the countries of the orient in the east and bordered by the Mediterranean Sea and Europe to the north and the rest of Africa to the south, Libya has been a crossroads where great civilizations of the ancient world met and commingled. It has throughout its history been the target of many conquests by Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Turks (Ottoman), and more recently Europeans (Italians, English and French). The name of Libya is originally derived from *Libo*, a name by which a single Berber tribe was known by the ancient Egyptians. The name was later applied by the Greeks to the most of North Africa and the term Libyan to all of its Berber inhabitants. Only since 1934 these names have been used to designate the specific modern territory of Libya and its people. The Arabs constitute the majority of Libyan population (about 6 million according to the latest census, which was carried out in 2006). However, there are some minority groups in Libya, such as Amazigh, who live mainly in Nefusa Mountains, about 60 miles east of Tripoli and stretched into the south eastern area of Tunisia. Other Libyan Amazigh live in the Cyrenaican oases of Augela, Hun, Socena, and Zuara of Tripolitania. They all speak a Tamazight dialect called Zenata or Zanatiyah. In southwest Libya, live Tuareg tribes who speak another Tamazight dialect called Tamahak or Senhaja, live scattered in the area east of Ghat and around Ghadames. Both Libyan Arabic and Libyan Amazigh regional dialects are mutually intelligible to most Libyan Arabs and Amazigh respectively, although they vary to some extent, but as a unified language, MSA is considered the lingua franca of the entire country. Most, if not all, Libyan Amazighes are bilingual and speak Arabic as a second tongue.

One month after the start of the revolutionary movements that begun sweeping the Middle East and North Africa in January 2011 in Tunisia (also referred to as ‘Arab Spring’), the protests and demands for changing and removing the world’s longest-ruling sitting leader *Muammar Al-Gaddafi* started on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011 in the city of Benghazi (the term ‘17 Feb. Revolution’ is used henceforth to designate the period after Gaddafi regime). The protests led to months of violent confrontations between forces loyal to Gaddafi and the majority of Libyan people whose aim was to oust the Gaddafi and his government. The armed conflict lasted until the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2011 when he was captured and killed in his hometown Sirt and the National Transitional Council NTC declared the liberation of Libya a week later to put an end to more than four decades of corruption and an authoritarian regime.

### Historical background of Arabic Language in Libya (Arabization or Islamization)

The appearance of Arabic language in Libya is inextricably intertwined with the arrival of the Arab conquest and with the rise of Islam as a major religion in North Africa, which started with the conquest of Egypt in 637 under the rule of *Omar Ebnl\_Khtab*, the second Caliph after the death of the prophet Mohammad. By the end of tenth century, Arabic was widely spoken and written by all North Africans from Egypt to the western borders of Morocco, displacing Berber languages, the oldest languages spoken by the indigenous people. Before the arrival of the Arabs, the Berber language ‘Tamazight<sup>ii</sup>’ was the native language to the majority of Libyan population.

The status of the Muslim nation during that historical phase (the 7<sup>th</sup> century) gives the Arabic language (Classical Arabic CA) an early prominence and dominance. Early in the seventh



century and not long after the conquests of the Arab armies from Arabian Peninsula, the Arabs introduced the unity of Islam and the Arabic language, a concept based on the principle of the unity between the Muslims' sacred text (the Qur'an) and Arabic. Muslim scholars have emphasized the untranslatability of the Qur'an and the use of Arabic language by non-Arabic Muslims in their daily prayers and other religious purposes such as Qur'an recitation. They have stressed the importance of the Qur'anic verses that explicitly states that only Arabic is the vehicle of the divine word, such as

{ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ. } (Qur'an 12: 2)

“*in-naa anzalnaahu qur'aanan 'Arabiy-yal la'Al-lakum ta'Aqiluun*”

“We have revealed the Qur'an in the Arabic tongue so that you may grow in understanding”

Therefore, any attempt to reproduce the text in another language is futile. This conviction, as a matter of fact, is still widespread among Muslims, i.e., “the doctrine that classical language as codified by the Arabic philologists, the language in which are written the sacred Qur'an and the classical works of Arabic literature is unchangeable and is the only one to be used when writing” (Blau 1981, p. 7). As a result, non-Arabic speaking Muslims, like the Amazigh who converted to Islam, began to utilize Arabic script. They had to learn Arabic so that they can use it in their Qur'an recitations and daily prayers, ‘*salah*’. Being the language of the Qur'an, CA and Islam became inseparable, with the result that Arabic spread widely in the region as part of the new religion as the only suitable tongue with which the masses of newly Muslim Amazigh could approach Allah ‘God’.

### Development of Arabic (from CA to MSA)

The development of Arabic may be divided into two varieties of Arabic language: CA and Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). CA is the language of the Qur'an, the Sunna (prophetic tradition), and the literature of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods; precisely, between the seventh and the ninth centuries. Being the language of sacred text, CA is still enjoying a great literary and religious tradition. It can be learned in schools and mosques alike. MSA, on the other hand, is the medium of contemporary learning and culture for Arabic societies and is considered to be a development of CA. For the most part, it shares most of its syntax and morphology with CA. MSA is mainly used as a medium of communication in a narrow demographic form only among educated Arabic speakers in conferences, the gatherings of Arabic scholars and for formal school education in terms of reading and writing. The reason for this limitation is the discrepancy that Arabic demonstrates between written and spoken forms. It is also used in printed media (newspapers and magazines) and as a spoken medium in various degrees in radio and television news.

MSA, in its modern form, was born in the period of Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258 AD) It has developed since Arab philosophers – who themselves were translators<sup>iii</sup> – began to translate texts, particularly from Greek – but also from Chinese, Persian, Sanskrit, Sicilian and Spanish to meet the increased research and scientific needs. In this way, they modernized CA with respect to lexicon and phraseology by adding a large amount of vocabulary from these languages into Arabic. Because CA originally was a group of diverse unstandardized dialects spoken by Bedouin tribes in the Arabian Peninsula that were not standardized, Arab philosophers began to standardize CA grammar because of the common belief among them that CA was insufficient for the needs of the time. They began to systematically create new words, grammatical structures



and stylistic elements in order to express new concepts. In this respect, Abdulaziz (1986) points out that “classical Arabic, which further developed in the Middle Ages, was not equipped to cope with the new conceptual demands. It was now a question of developing within a few decades, in response to the various socio-cultural and psychological stimuli, a new and refined Arabic capable of expressing a material and intellectual civilization that had evolved over centuries in Europe” (p. 16).

In spite of the fact that the distinction is sometimes hard because CA and MSA share a number of linguistic features, and many grammatical rules that were deduced out of CA are still applicable to MSA (Van Mol 2003), they are different in their phonology, morphology, and syntax. MSA is more flexible in its constructions. In other words, grammatical components are distributed differently in the two language forms. For instance, unlike CA, MSA has an alternative acceptable word order subject verb object SVO (الرئيس غادر, *The president left.*) in addition to the unmarked order verb subject object VSO (غادر الرئيس, *Left the president.*). CA, on the other hand, has a pragmatically unchanged and controlled word order VSO due to the above mentioned religious insistence on keeping the language of the Qur’an and the tradition pure. Its sentences usually start with the verb followed by the subject (غادر الرئيس, *Left the president.*).

Furthermore, when many western scholars started to take an interest in Arabic, their unfamiliarity with CA often resulted in their imposing structures of their own native tongues, such as passive sentences with expressed agents, onto Arabic (Alotaibi and Hussian, 2009). The frequent use of these alien structures in the informal Arabic media has created the impression, particularly among students, that these structures are acceptable and natural in MSA. Stetkevych (1970) states, in this regard, that MSA deviates strongly from CA. For him, “Modern Arabic is moving away from both the classical and the colloquial languages. While retaining the morphological structure of classical Arabic; syntactically and above all, stylistically it is coming ever closer to the form and spirit of the large, supra genealogical family of Western culture bearing languages” (p. 121). One of these imposed alien structures is the agentive passive structure. In English, the agent can occur in passive sentences, e.g., ‘The dictator was killed by the rebels,’ whereas CA normally uses only the agentless passive. Passive is used when the agent is either unknown or ignored. If speakers want to mention the agent, they must use the active form. There is “No formal equivalent of agentive construction is found in Standard Arabic” (Aziz 65). Farghal (1991) supports Aziz’s claim as he points that there is no natural way in Arabic of mentioning the agent in a passive sentence. Thus, the above English passive sentence could be translated into an active Arabic as:

قتل الثوار الدكتاتور.

*Qatala althowar al-dctator*

The rebels killed the dictator.

The effect of Western languages, mainly French and English, has resulted in the introduction of new expressions like ‘من طرف’ *mintarافل*, ‘بواسطة’ *biwasetat*, etc. (the equivalents of the agentive ‘par’ in French and ‘by’ in English) to indicate the agent in passive sentences, which are basically agentless in CA. Both agentive and agentless structures are now commonly used in MSA:

قتل الثوار الدكتاتور. (active)

*Qatala althowar al-dctator*

The rebels killed the dictator. (active)

قُتِلَ الدكتاتور. (agentless passive)

*Qotela Al-dctator*

The dictator was killed. (agentless passive)

. قُتِلَ الدكتاتور بواسطة الثوار. (agentive passive)<sup>iv</sup>

*Qotela Al-dctator bewasitat Althowar*

The dictator was killed by the rebels. (agentive passive)

### Libyan Arabic dialects

Arabic shows different dialects not only between countries but also within the same country. In Libya, there are three major dialect areas: 1. the western Libyan dialect known as *Gharbawia* 'western,' which is spoken in the areas of Musrata, Tripoli and the West Mount, or what is commonly called Tripolitanien. It is similar to the Arabic dialect spoken in the southern Tunisia. 2. The eastern Libyan dialect (also referred to as *Shergawia* 'eastern') is spoken in the areas of west and east of Benghazi (Cyrenaika or Kyrenaika), and extends beyond the borders of Libya into the western area of Egypt. 3. The west-southern Libyan, spoken in Fessan and the whole area south from Tripoli.



Libyan Arabic dialects

These dialects vary to some extent, but as a unified language, MSA is considered the lingua franca of the entire country. It is more or less comprehensible for any citizen in Libya with a certain level of education. MSA, however, is structurally and functionally different from the spoken dialects.

### Indigenous languages (Tamazight)

Besides Arabs there are a number of minority groups in Libya, such as Amazigh, who live mainly in Nefusa Mountain, about 60 miles east of Tripoli and stretched into the southeastern area of Tunisia. Other Libyan Amazigh live in the Cyrenaican oasis of Augela, Hun, Socena, and Zuara of Tripoltania. They all speak a Tamazight dialect called Zenata or Zanatiyah. In southwest Libya, Tuareg tribes who speak another Tamazight dialect called Tamahak or Senhaja, and live scattered in the area east of Ghat and around Ghadames. Both Libyan Arabic and Libyan Amazigh regional dialects are mutually intelligible to most Libyan Arabs and Amazigh respectively, although they vary to some extent, but as a unified language, MSA is considered the lingua franca of the entire country. Most, if not all, Libyan Amazigh are bilingual and speak Arabic as a second tongue. An Amazighan might speak Tamazight at home with her/his family, listen to the news and read books in MSA, use CA at the mosque and in Qur'an recitation, and use Arabic local dialects in everyday interactions with Arabs.

**Language planning and policy LPP**

Since the early 1980s, the interrelated concepts of language policy and language planning (LPP) have been the major focus of research in the general language disciplines, particularly in sociolinguistics, politics and applied linguistics. Prator (cited by Markee 1988) considers language policy as political decisions or orientations to guide and implement language planning proposals. He defines language policy as “a process of decision-making concerning the teaching and use of language and the careful formulation by those empowered to do so, for the guidance of others.” Spolsky (2004) also considers LP as one of the components of language policy. He distinguishes two other components besides LP: language practices and language beliefs. The former concerns the choices of community members among varieties available for use, whereas the later includes attitudes and beliefs towards these varieties. LPP has recently undergone significant theoretical shifts in the understanding of LP more broadly.

**LPP in Libya (Top-down vs. Bottom-up model)**

In many developing countries, LPP is generally top-down, and involves an engineering process through which a linguistic group is manipulated by policy makers, usually politicians who do not leave anything to individuals to decide. It determines the number of languages to be developed as official languages (e.g., monolingual, bilingual or multilingual) and thus functional languages for educational, administrative and political systems. Many decisions regarding LPP are initiated and formulated by government agencies and largely underpinned by political government objectives, according to which “Nothing is valued in politics unless it is believed to be useful as a means of keeping a stronger group in power or of embarrassing or defeating one’s opponents” (Hudson, 1978, p. 121).

In Libya decisions related to LPP have been made by the government and its representatives, who hold the highest positions on the administrative pyramid and who dominate the economy. They lack the competence to make policy or language strategic planning. They even lack basic principles in, for instance, psychology and sociology, which can improve the quality of language education output. Policies tend to come directly from the authority, without any consideration for independent sources of expertise.

Since Libya obtained its independence in 1954, the country undertook a policy of Arabization<sup>v</sup> as an attempt to eliminate the presence of any other language, foreign or local, and restore Arabic and Islamic identity. MSA was immediately imposed as the national language in the constitutions. It became the language of the governments, the administration and the vehicle of teaching in national school systems. It has been a national priority to promote Arabic as a component of national identity and to advocate a ‘monoglot ideology’, a phenomenon defined by Silverstein (1996, p. 8) as an “Ideologically configured belief that a society is monolingual coupled with a denial of practices that point toward factual multilingualism and linguistic diversity”. No significant efforts, as a matter of fact, were made to consult professionals and specialists in areas such as academia, sociology, etc. for their view on language planning. However, decisions concerning LPP are often influenced and determined by both individuals (e.g., linguists, researchers, teachers, etc.) and formal organizations and institutions (e.g., universities, schools, professional associations, printing and publishing houses, etc.). They also require official intervention (by governments and their representatives) in order to be effective.

The fact that LPP ultimately requires political decisions does not imply that societies cannot have any kind of implementations and influence on their linguistic environment. Grin

calls this ‘public policy’ and Fishman (1968) states that these efforts are frequently overlooked as topics in the field of LPP. Fishman writes that:

[t]he role of individual language planners has also been slighted in our deliberation. Many languages have benefited from the contribution of particularly charismatic and authoritative advocates, innovators and normifiers. We really know all too little about more than a mere handful of them, and as a result, we really lack any theoretical approach to their success and failure. (p. 423)

For example, private operators may run television channels to promote a minority language or to improve foreign language skills among a school population without state intervention. He argues that “government should not intervene, and that maximum welfare [feeling of safety and satisfaction in one’s identity] will automatically flow from the de-centralized actions of people (individuals, firms, third-sector organizations)” (ibid).

### **The status of Tamazight in Libya before the 17<sup>th</sup> Feb. Revolution**

The use of the Tamazight language in Libya has always been in a critical condition. Until recently, it has been restricted to family circles, although there is a graphic representation for Tamazight known as *tifnag*, but it is going through a static phase due to a lack of use as a written form over the centuries. The strong wave of nationalism accompanying the September coup of 1969 found expression in a campaign designed to elevate the status of the MSA. As a result, the Tamazight language has been officially excluded from prestigious linguistic domains for many decades by Libyan politicians in favour of MSA. The former Libyan leader, Gadaffi, never gave full recognition to the Amazigh and their language. For him, “... the will to use and maintain the Berber [Tamazight] is reactionary, inspired by colonialism ...” He neglects any distinct Amazigh identity and considers them as being *genus Arabs*. In a speech to Tuareg tribal leaders in Niger in 2007 Al-Gadaffi went so far as to deny the existence of Amazigh in the whole of North Africa. He stated that “Berbers are the Arabs that came via *barr* البر [*land* in English] ... then colonialism arrived and said that Berbers are not Arabs to divide and dissipate us.” Therefore, the phenomenon of Amazigh language and culture was not publicized and people had troubles talking about it, thus very little work on research questions dealing with LLP and the sociolinguistic structure in general has been conducted in Libya. During Gadaffi era no empirical or descriptive research, to the best of my knowledge, had been conducted *in Libya* that addresses LLP and Libyan sociolinguistic structure.

Although there is a significant large population of Amazigh in Libya (estimated 10% of the entire population<sup>vi</sup>), the 1977 Declaration of the Establishment of the Authority of People (DEAP) repeatedly places emphasis on the Arabic nature of Libya. Even the 11 December 1969 Libyan constitutional declaration (replaced later by the DEAP) defines Libya as an Arab nation (e. g., the official name of Libya was *The Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*) and stresses that Arabic is the country’s only permitted language. This requires that all street signs, shop window notices, signboards, and traffic tickets be written in Arabic. There is no mention of the Tamazight, and accordingly it was not officially recognized, despite the fact that it was, and still is, a living reality in Libya.

Amazigh and their language are also regarded to be a threat to Arab Muslim identity (Brenzinger 2007). For this reason, according to a report about the Amazigh of Libya, which was submitted in 2004 to the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination CERD, Arabic

language had succeeded in weakening Tamazight language and seriously threatening its survival although it has been able to resist almost all the conquering empires (Phoenicians, Byzantines, Romans, etc.). The negative attitude toward Tamazight held by Libyan officials is also reflected in general public view. For most Libyans, Tamazight is a dialect that is neither a language of wider communication nor a language with a rich written literature. These are seen as grounds for believing it is not worth introducing into schools because it is neither standardized nor codified, which, in turn, resulted a decrease in Tamazight speakers in Libya.

### **The status of Tamazight After the 17th Feb. Revolution**

The geopolitical re-composition of the Arab World in general and in Libya in particular, and the emergence of new democratic trends will definitely made room for the reassertion of a wide range of local and regional identities which had been suppressed for decades and which give rise to new linguistic contexts. In Libya today, the Tamazight language has a historical opportunity to be recognized as an official language, or at least, to be protected against the hegemony of Arabic language in the new Libyan institution, in spite of the fact that the NTC has made no mention of Tamazight as an official language in its recent Constitutional Declaration of August 2011. The Language, which has been marginalized in Libya for centuries and has been officially excluded for many decades by Libyan politicians, has in recent two years experienced a dramatic change in fortune thanks to the current economic and political reform and the emergence of democratic trends. For instance, after the 17th February revolution against the dictatorial Gaddafi regime, the Tamazight language has gained significant status with Arabic language in Libyan's media because of the Amazighs' pivotal role in the uprising; they participated massively in the protests and fighting the regime as well as in supporting the interim government<sup>vii</sup>. Therefore, in a short time, a number of Tamazight printed and online journals and publications have sprung up in Libya and abroad, radio and TV stations broadcasting in both Arabic and Tamazight. A situation that is summed by Peter Graff, a correspondent of Reuter News Agency, who was reporting from the Amazigh town of Jadu during the uprising:

For a few weeks, a radio station has been broadcasting from here in both Arabic and Amazigh, in what Berber activists believe are the first conversations in their language over Libyan airwaves in four decades. An Amazigh publishing house has printed four books so far over the past month, billed as Libya's first publications in the language since Gaddafi seized power (RNA 2011).

Libya now has the most positive prospects for the future of Tamazight language and culture. There are growing demands to allow for the recognition of Tamazight language, along with Arabic, as a national and official language, and that support be offered in educational institutions, governmental and public offices and media. For instance, the Libyan National Amazigh Conference (LNAC) (also known as CNAL), which was held in the capital Tripoli on September 17<sup>th</sup> 2012 to demand the protection and development of Amazigh cultural identity, has specified one of its goals and objectives as "the recognition of Tamazight language, along with Arabic, as a national and official language, and provision of support to be made available in educational institutions, governmental and public offices, media, and public use." The conference also called for the immediate termination of all suppressive orders and actions imposed during Gaddafi era against Berbers and their rights.



**The status of English in Libya before the 17<sup>th</sup> Feb. Revolution**

Since independence in 1951 and until the mid-1980s, the English language enjoyed a significant status in Libya. Although Italian language is well understood especially by elder generations, because Libya was subject to Italian colonialism between 1911-1943 and of course there are linguistic remains from that period, English is the main foreign language. With the speed of industrial, economic and social development, Libyan authority at that time realized the need for Libyans who are capable of speaking and understanding English as a common means of communication. Thus, the overall framework of the Libya Ministry of Education is to provide English language training as a compulsory subject from elementary level through the preparatory and secondary levels to the tertiary level in all institutions. However, the plan to introduce English into the elementary curriculum was abandoned due to the critical shortage of qualified teachers (for further details see in particular UNESCO, 1968).

The discovery of oil in the late 1950s also plays a major role in the development of English language in Libya. Major foreign petroleum companies such as Shell, British Petroleum BP, and ExxonMoble rushed to Libya for exploration and drilling. By the end of 1977, there were forty two foreign companies conducting exploratory and drilling activities in Libya (Hassan and Kendall 2008). Therefore, the oil and gas industry has become increasingly the main job market for Libyan people in which English language is the means of communication between Libyans and native and non-native speakers of English alike. Upon entering the industry, all workers are required to have at least basic knowledge of English for the effective and safe operations (National Oil Corporation 2009). This, in turn, brings a very significant requirement for English language learning and training, particularly with regard to technical operations. English is, therefore, seen not only as the key to securing a better job in the Libyan oil sector, but also as the means of developing social, economic, commercial and scientific relations with non-Arabic companies and individuals from within Libya and internationally.

However, the status of English has undergone tremendous changes in the past decades for pure political reasons. Influenced by Nasser's Revolution in Egypt, Libya proclaimed a Cultural Revolution in 1973. The authority sought to shift from a Western-oriented capitalism into a strongly nationalist and socialist country (which was at the time perceived as 'anti-Western'). Thus, everything originating from the West and from the United States and United Kingdom in particular is unacceptable and prohibited, including language, which was considered as an imported culture that has to be rejected. As a result, English books, magazines and newspapers and even western musical instruments were collected and burned in public squares. These measures were extended, according to Maghur (2010), to private schools and foreign centers; several private foreign schools and foreign centers such as the British Council and the American Cultural Institute were shut down. An acute subsequent problem now exists, where Libyan schools and universities in general do not enjoy having a satisfactory stock of books and other references related to foreign language teaching and learning. In fact, most, if not all, of Libyan students depend on their teachers to provide them with the books and references they need. There is also unsatisfactory infrastructure related to language teaching industry in general, for example, in the field of information technology, both hardware and software, due to the restrictions that the government imposed. A specific permission had to be obtained from the Interior Security Office in order to be able to own a computer, fax machine, internet connection and even a printer.

Since the early 1980s the status of English in Libya has deteriorated considerably as a result of political tension between Libya and the West. The air raid on Libya on 15 March 1986



and the accusation against the Libyan regime for the bombing of a Pan Am flight over Lockerbie Scotland in 21 December 1988 led to Libya's political and economic isolation for almost a decade. In 1986, as retaliation on the part of Libyan authorities, the teaching of English was banned from schools and universities across the country, and was replaced with Russian as the primary foreign language in education (Abdullah, 2006). Nevertheless, teaching in certain science faculties, such as medicine, pharmacy and engineering, remained mainly in English (Maghur 2010). Libyan English teachers were also ordered to teach other subjects such as history and geography. Non-Libyan teachers and professors of English and even French, especially those from western countries, were notified that their contracts would not be renewed for the following school year (Najeeb and ELdokali 2011). Later, the government realized the error of this decision and determined to re-incorporate English into the curriculum in 1997. Therefore, non-Libyan teachers and professors were replaced by Libyan graduates who were neither qualified nor well-prepared to carry out the task of teaching English after. The government went so far to the point that a law was passed in November 2007 requiring all visitors from the US or UK to have an Arabic translation of their passports. The negative consequences of this isolation with regard to the English language were becoming evident. The policy was leading to inadequate standards of English teaching and the lack of a sufficient number of trained English teachers, a phenomenon which lasted for the next few decades. Orafi and Borg state that "English language teachers in Libya typically graduate from university with undeveloped spoken communication skills in English" (Orafi and Borg, 2009, p. 251). The same view is found in Alhmali (2007), who points out that "a common feature shared by the majority of graduates from the English departments of Libyan university is their undeveloped listening and speaking skills" (p. 20).

Starting with the coup in 1969 all mass media were controlled by the government through the Secretariat (Ministry) of Information. The media were structured and centralized to support the objectives of the coup and to promote faithfully the ideology of its leader. McDaniel (1982, p. 187) states that "the Libyan broadcasting system has been a primary vehicle for political development along with the revolutionary goals set by Qadhafi." As a result, the number of newspapers and periodicals has declined sharply. Fewer than a dozen of newspapers were published in Arabic language and three in English; Al-fajr aljadid (the official mouthpiece of the regime which was published in Arabic); Az-zahf Alakhther (the ideological journal of the Revolutionary Committees RC<sup>viii</sup>); Al-Watan Alarabi (devoted to promoting pan-Arabism); Al-Jamaheria (a political journal of the RC); Reesalat Al-jihad (monthly published in Arabic, English and French to promote the Palestine case) and Aldawa Alislamia (a weekly journal published in Arabic and English by the World Islamic Call Society). All these newspapers were printed and distributed by two governmental-publishing houses; Aldar Al-arabia Lil-keetab and the General Company for Publishing. The number of works translated from and into Arabic also declined in Libya due to this centralization of publishing as well as the negative attitude towards foreign language, particularly English. For instance, in 1985 only two book were translated from Arabic into English.

### **The status of English language after the 17<sup>th</sup> Feb. Revolution**

Today, English language is booming in Libya after the interim authority restored its relations with the West. Following the government decision to reintegrate English in the curriculum of Libyan schools at the elementary level, many decisions have been issued to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning. These include, but are not limited, to the decision to start teaching English in Libyan schools starting in the fifth grade

instead of at the seventh grade<sup>ix</sup>, and the decision to pursue sending students abroad, especially to the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, on government scholarships. Nevertheless, many students have been unable to obtain admissions, simply due to their lack of English language proficiency. Currently there are more than 2000 Libyan scholarship students in the United States and about 500 in Canada according to the Canadian Bureau for International Education CBIE, many of whom have returned back to Libya after a year in ESL university schools as they could not meet the required English language proficiency. English is a mandatory subject that is first introduced at the elementary level, and it is the language of instruction in most faculties in national universities. Many university subjects such as medical and computer sciences, except for Arabic, are taught in English. However, the current shortage of qualified English language teachers and the unavailability of adequate teaching and learning materials, among other factors, will have a negative effect on the output of the English language teaching proves in Libya on the long run.

English is also increasingly playing a significant role in the popular culture of Libya; it is used alongside Arabic in road signs and names of the shops and cafés. Printed materials in places such as hotels, restaurants, banks, airports, travel Agencies and post offices are usually written both in English and Arabic. Global company's names such as MacDonalD's, KFC, Subway, StarBucks, etc., are written only in English using the Latin alphabet and without any kind of translation, a practice that was completely forbidden during Gaddafi era whose aim was to eliminate foreign influence.

Moreover, thanks to the vast improvement in mass communications Libyan people, particularly younger generations, are more exposed than ever before to the English language through satellite television, the Internet, electronic and printed materials (videos, newspapers, magazines, etc.) and thus are aware, as never before, of western culture and civilization. English teaching centres are opened in major cities like Tripoli and Benghazi, and radio stations and TV broadcasts are encouraging wide public interest in English language and culture. For instance, before the uprising, Benghazi city had only two printed publications, *Benghazi Akhbar* and *Al-Qurnya*. Both were established during the limited reform period led by Gaddafi's son Saif Al-Islam. After the uprising, around 60 new print publications have been registered with the Benghazi Municipal Council with another seven pending by late May 2011 (Ghannman 2012). Many of them are produced on external printers and are all run by volunteers. To name some, *Intifahat Alahrar* (published weekly in both English and Arabic by Attawasul Foundation); *Libya Post* (published weekly in English and Arabic). According to Libya Post editor 'Tawfik Mansurey', "it [Libya Post] aims to provide both Libyan news and link to an international perspective, reproducing international stories with the aim of bringing the Western view to a Libyan audience".

In spite of the fact that the use of English in Libya is becoming increasingly widespread at both formal and informal levels, Arabic is without question the dominant language. It is the language of choice for most Libyans, not only when they speak informally in their everyday communication, but also in more formal contexts such as communication in higher education, business and policy.

### **Future scenarios and conclusion**

The official LPP was long exploited by the Libyan regime as a mechanism for controlling the ethnic identity of Libyan Amazigh and for excluding their language and culture from education, media and administration. It was also used to resist the introduction of foreign

languages such as English, which was considered to be an imperial language that had to be rejected. Therefore, LPP in Libya was less about the function and structure of languages; rather it was more about ideology and hegemony. It gave privilege authority and legitimacy to Arabic language and thus created a hierarchy in which other languages and cultures were neglected and marginalized.

Given the current state of affairs in Libya, adopting a monolingual official language in which Arabic is the only official and dominant language would be the most unenviable future scenario. Even if the Libyan government constitutionally adopts a policy of equality between Arabic and Tamazight, Arabic remains the dominant language in Libya. A typical example is South Africa; in spite of the post-apartheid South African constitution that makes all the eleven major languages equal and official in South Africa, Afrikaans and English are still privileged languages among the others (Brock-Utne 2002). Nevertheless, the new democratic trend will provide the opportunity for Tamazight to be acknowledged as an unofficial sub-national language. One of Tripoli LNAC recommendations is to constitutionalize Tamazight as an official language along with Arabic. It also is expected to provide educational rights to Amazigh population and will give practical support for Tamazight language and its implementation, e.g., teaching Tamazight in Amazighian educational settings as a second language with an adequate number of hours. The immediate challenge in this regard is the shortage of the implementation materials (school curricula, textbooks, assessment criteria, resource materials, etc.). Furthermore, the current language ideology connected to Arabic language as the only language permitted in educational system may also function as a handicap in learning and teaching Tamazight. Moreover, the collapse of Gaddafi regime in February 17, 2011 and the increased prominence of English as an alternative option which gives access to advanced technology and science as well as the current shift in social attitude toward English are introducing it as another powerful competitor in the linguistics landscape of Libya.

In stead of a top-down approach, the future LPP may be derived from a bottom-up model in which governmental and nongovernmental organizations as well as individuals play an influential role in determining the basic principles of this policy. LPP, in fact, is a multifaceted phenomenon; it is basically controlled and constructed from above, but cannot be understood unless analyzed from below by the ordinary persons who are the object of the above actions from governments and their spokesmen and activists for national movements (Hobsbawm 2012). Decisions influenced by these activities are determined by both individuals (linguists, researchers, teachers, etc.) and formal organizations and institutions (universities, schools, professional associations, printing and publishing houses, Islamic schools, etc.). They also require official intervention (governments and their representatives) in order to be effective. Therefore, LPP in Libya should be an interdisciplinary, two-way process "*integrative model*" in which various external factors have influence and thus have to be considered, and neglecting these factors will endanger the success of this policy. Concerns include: demographic factors, cultural factors, ethno-linguistic factors and socio-ideological factors. Some of these factors, however, which may influence policy decisions, cannot always be predicted (e.g., political and economic changes). Surveys of attitudes toward Arabic, Tamazight and foreign languages, questionnaires and census reports carried out by the Ministry of Education, universities, researchers, etc., could be useful at this point in order to develop real assumptions and decisions on LPP based on empirical evidence. These activities may be helpful for Arabs and Amazigh alike in investigating and understanding their relationship to the particular sociolinguistic setting of which they are part of.

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<sup>i</sup> Since his coupe in 1969, Gadaffi had kept the country in a continuous political turmoil and economic unrests in order to maintain his iron grip on the country.

<sup>ii</sup> Different terms are used by different Berber groups to refer to the language they speak, e.g., Algerian Berber call their language 'Taznatit', while in Tunisia, the local Berber language is usually referred to as 'Shelha'. The term 'Tamazight' is used throughout this study to refer to all Berber languages because this term is commonly used by many Berber linguists. The term 'Amazigh' is also used to refer to Berber people.

<sup>iii</sup> Such as Al-Kindi who translated many Greek scientific and philosophical texts into Arabic and Thabit Bin Qurrah who translated ancient Greek philosophers like Apollonius, Archimedes, Euclid and Ptolemy.

<sup>iv</sup> This structure is unnatural in modern Arabic standards.

<sup>v</sup> In this context, Arabization is a post-colonial policy that attempts to stamp out the presence and influence of foreign languages, mainly French and English, and restore Arabic and Islamic identity in the Arab World.

<sup>vi</sup> The exact population of Amazigh in Libya is hard to ascertain because the government did not record Amazigh population in its census data. Official's population statistics usually group Arabs and Amazigh together.

<sup>vii</sup> One of the famous songs that Amazigh people sang during the uprising was a song called 'الثائر نجمنًا' or 'Rebel Is Our Star.' This song helped in overthrowing Gadaffi as it was used as a homage to the fighters.

<sup>viii</sup> RC is a Movement that was established in 1985 mostly of youth individuals with modest education to promote and defend Gadhafi's revolutionary vision.

<sup>ix</sup> Primary education in Libya includes six grades (1-6). This basic education covers lessons in Arabic language, mathematics, science, history, geography, Islamic studies and Qur'an, art and recently English. The next three years (grade 7-9) take place at the preparatory level (middle school) followed by three years at secondary level (grade 10-12) where students may choose between studying science or arts to prepare to go on to university.

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## Visual Impairment and Majoring in English as a Foreign Language

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### Abstract

This study is intended to investigate visual impairment and majoring in English as a foreign language (EFL). A qualitative approach is adopted to explore the experiences of five visually-impaired Palestinians during their BA program in EFL. Despite the difficulties they faced while studying at the university, the five participants managed to excel in a major that is not common to the visually-impaired in Palestine. Four key themes are highlighted in this study: why the participants chose to major in English, what challenges they faced during their BA program, how they coped with these challenges and what final results they obtained, and their recommendations for better inclusion of the visually-impaired in the Palestinian higher education context. As there is no specific research addressing the issue of visual impairment and majoring in EFL at the university level, this study is intended to fill a gap in the literature.

**Keywords:** English as a foreign language, higher education, visual impairment

### Visual Impairment and Majoring in English as a Foreign Language

People with visual impairments are either blind or partially sighted, depending on the degree and type of their vision loss (Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2007). According to the World Health Organization, it is estimated that 39 million people in the world are blind and 285 million have significant low vision conditions (WHO, 2012). For educational purposes, students are considered to be visually impaired if their vision condition, even after correction, adversely affects their educational progress in a classroom setting (Spungin, 2002).

Extensive research has been conducted on first language (L1) acquisition by visually-impaired children (Bishop, 2004; Corn & Koenig, 1996; Dimnovic & Tobin, 1998; Dunlea, 1989; Everts, 2013; Gillion & Young, 2002; Holbrook, 1996; Jackson, 2007; Kekelis & Prinz, 1996; Landau, 1997; Milian & Erin, 2001; Pérez-Pereira, 1999; Rose, & Meyer, 2002; Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2007; Webster & Roe, 1998; Warren, 1994; Wolffe, 1999). It has been found that visual impairment does not seem to interfere with the development of basic interpersonal communicative skills. Speech production and the acquisition of vocabulary and syntactic structure have been found to be quite normal in visually-impaired children. However, it has been noted that the meaning of words for sighted children is richer and more elaborate than the meaning for children with visual impairments, and that certain semantic developmental areas seem to be problematic for visually-impaired children, such as deictic expressions (e.g., first and second person pronouns and demonstratives) and joint attention (i.e., shared focus of two individuals on an object by means of eye-gazing, pointing or other verbal or non-verbal indications).

Second language (L2) acquisition researchers have also investigated visually-impaired learners of foreign languages (Aikin, 2002; Barnes & Kashdan, 1998; Conroy, 2000; Eljevin, 2009; Gray, 1997; 1998; Guinan, 1997; Hamilton, 2008; Kashdan, 2002; Kashdan & Barnes, 2003; Ko, 2000; Kormos, 2001; Milian & Ferrell, 1998; Nikolic, 1987; Orsini-Jones, 2009; Wu, 1994). There has been a generalized assumption that visually-impaired and sighted students follow the same patterns of learning a foreign language; as literacy skills transfer across languages (Cummins 1984), it is argued that a second language is learned successfully provided that there is reasonable competence in the learner's mother tongue. In both types of research on L1 and L2 acquisition by the visually-impaired, it has been emphasized that these learners should have proper training and opportunity to achieve their potential for learning.

Although a significant body of literature on L2 acquisition has paid special scholarly attention to visual impairment and learning English, it seems that there are no specific studies addressing the issue of visual impairment and majoring in English as a foreign language (EFL) at the university level. In order to fill a gap in the literature, the present study was conducted; a qualitative approach was followed to explore in-depth the learning journey of a sample of visually-impaired undergraduates with a major in EFL. The study includes a discussion of the challenges these students faced during this program and how they coped with these challenges. It also provides recommendations for better inclusion of visually-impaired students in a tertiary EFL education context.

In view of the purpose of the study, the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) was chosen for conducting this study. The IUG was established in 1978 as the first Palestinian university in the Gaza Strip. It has gained a reputation for its commitment to high quality learning, teaching, and training. The IUG English Department was founded in 1980 as part of the Faculty of Arts, and the admission to this department is highly competitive. It serves students who major in English from both the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education. The students in the two majors study

almost the same English courses; however, those who join the arts English major take additional English courses (18 credit hours) which are substituted by educational courses in Arabic that help the education English major students be prepared to teach at school in the future. The arts English major students interested in teaching after graduation should take a diploma in education.

### **Research Questions**

Four central research questions guided this study: (1) Why did the visually-impaired participants interviewed in this study choose to major in English? (2) What challenges did they face during their BA program and what final results did they obtain? (3) How did they cope with these challenges? (4) What recommendations did they suggest for better inclusion of visually-impaired students in the Palestinian higher education field?

### **Methodology**

#### ***Participants***

According to the IUG records, about three hundred Palestinian visually-impaired students have studied at the University since its establishment. These students were of different majors, such as Islamic Studies, Arabic, English, Journalism, Social Work, History, Geography, Mathematics, Law, and Information Technology. Only ten of these students have graduated from the English Department. The researcher, who is a lecturer at the Department and taught some courses to these ten alumni, managed to get contact information for eight of them (i.e., email addresses and telephone numbers) from the IUG Admission and Registration Deanship. In order to meet ethical requirements, the researcher sent each of them an initial email message with some background information and an invitation to participate in this project. Five alumni responded, confirming their interest in participation. These participants were three males (Munir, Ibrahim, and Nabil) and two females (Fatima and Huda); all are pseudonyms. Munir, Ibrahim, and Fatima are blind, whereas Nabil and Huda are partially sighted.

Like many other Palestinians with visual impairment in the Gaza Strip, the participants attended their first six grades at the Rehabilitation Center for the Visually Impaired (RCVI), run by the United Nations for Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA), and later, they attended the government Al-Nour School for the Blind until they finished their 11<sup>th</sup> grade. However, their senior high school study (i.e. grade 12) took place at their closest ordinary high school. This means that those who are visually disadvantaged in the Gaza Strip spend this school year within the general education program, normally without any special facilities to scaffold them in their areas of difficulties.

The participants came from middle socio-economic backgrounds and were at the age of 18 when they started their 4-year BA program in English. They speak Arabic as their mother tongue, and none of them had been to an English speaking country.

#### ***Data Collection***

The researcher sent each of the five participants, who provided their informed consents, an email message with a list of questions to answer (see Appendix), which is a kind of a standardized, open-ended interview. The information sought from these questions included the reason for choosing English as a major, graduation time, grade point average or percentage, challenges encountered in the BA program, ways to cope with the challenges, support received, and recommendations to help other visually-impaired students.

Email interview, a computer-mediated communication, has been considered in literature as a research tool (Bowker & Tuffin, 2002, 2004; Hine, 2000; Illingworth, 2001; Madge & O'Conner, 2005; McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). According to McCoyd and Kerson (2006), email interviewing has its advantages and disadvantages. Advantages include responding at convenient times, no necessity to travel to geographically diverse locations, having sense of privacy or safety, and getting already written texts. On the other hand, the disadvantages of email interviewing include the researchers' inability to observe the subjects' clothing, body movements, tone of voice, and emotions, cues which could provide more clarification. Taking these issues into consideration, the researcher of this study complemented the email messages with follow-up telephone calls for further exploration of the participants' experiences. The language of the emails was English; however, the follow-up telephone calls involved a mixture of English and Arabic (and the researcher did the translation for the write-up).

### ***Data Analysis Procedures***

For the purpose of data analysis, hard copies of the participants' responses to the questions were used. These responses were read a number of times and highlighted in different colors for commonalities and themes that directly related to the four research questions guiding this study. The color-coded hard copies were used as a point of reference, and chunks of text from the soft-copy were copied and pasted to a spreadsheet of color codes. The data on the spreadsheet were organized into separate pages which were organized according to the study themes for discussion.

### **Findings and Discussion**

In this study, a qualitative approach was adopted to provide a deeper understanding of visual impairment and majoring in EFL. In light of the guiding research questions, there are four key themes to be highlighted: why the participants chose to major in English, what challenges they faced during their BA program, how they coped with these challenges and what final results they obtained, and their recommendations for better inclusion of the visually-impaired in the Palestinian higher education field. Many of the findings are presented as forms of quotes from the participants in order to reflect their real, lived experiences during their BA program in EFL.

#### **Why the participants chose to major in English**

The participants finished their high school with very good results. Although none of them had joined the science section, their results in the arts section still opened several options to them to study at the university, such as Islamic Studies, Journalism, Law, History, Geography, Social Work, Arabic, and English. Nevertheless, they preferred to major in English.

As noted above, the IUG English Department was founded in 1980, two years after the establishment of the IUG. However, no visually-impaired student joined this department until 1998, when Munir was admitted to the IUG. In fact, Munir was the first visually-impaired student in the Gaza Strip majoring in English. The other four participants joined the Department in 2002.

When asked why they chose to major in English, the five participants had similar answers. Munir said, "I wanted to rebel against the concept that blind people should join a religious field." Nabil said, "Visually-disabled students should not be confined to Arabic, religion, and social studies; they should open new windows with regard to their university choice of specialization." Ibrahim said, "Blind students usually join Arabic majors, so I chose this

program [i.e., English] to challenge my disability. It gives me more acceptance in the society.” Huda majored in English to “refute the conventional view that the visually disabled are helpless, careless, passive and narrow-minded.” “We can do things like, and sometimes better than, normal students,” Fatima commented.

These responses emphasize reactions to certain negative attitudes a lot of sighted people hold towards the visually-impaired, such as helplessness, passivity, and incompetence. These negative attitudes have been highlighted in literature and considered as stereotypical images that often lead to prejudice and stigmas (Aikin, 2002; Barnes. & Mercer, 2010; Covey, 1998; Lee & Park, 2008; National Federation of the Blind, 2013). The participants believed that those with visual impairments should not be viewed as inferior to sighted people; they have abilities that should be recognized.

In addition, the participants underscored the importance of learning English. They all believed that mastery of English is a valued asset in the Palestinian labor market. Although the unemployment rate is high in Palestine (PCBS, 2013), the participants brightly had the hope that graduating with a major in English would secure them a good job.

There were, however, other reasons why the participants considered learning English important. Good English would help Ibrahim “communicate with people from other countries.” Munir wanted to be competent in English to “learn about other cultures and know how other societies perceive the issue of visually-impaired people.” Nabil felt that his command of English would help him talk about the suffering of the Palestinian people over the past six decades, and that “being well-versed in English facilitates any possible future study in the English speaking communities, such as the USA and UK.” He hopes that he would get a scholarship to pursue his study and get a Master’s degree in Political Science from an American university.

A significant bulk of research has paid special attention to learning English as a second/foreign language as it has become the center of many globalization mechanisms (Canagarajah, 2007; Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006; Meierkord, 2004; Wardhaugh, 2006). There is no doubt that fluency in English has increasingly been viewed as a sign of upward mobility, especially in developing countries, including Palestine, the site of this study. Therefore, it is not surprising that more and more people, including visually-impaired ones, are engaged in learning this global language.

### **What challenges the participants faced during their BA program**

In their learning journey at the university, the participants encountered different challenges. First, they felt that the society, including the university administration, did not easily accept the idea that visually-impaired students could join an English department. “We couldn’t choose our majors like other normal students because of our disability,” Huda said, “so we were restricted to very limited majors.” Nabil and Huda were interested in majoring in English within the Faculty of Education; however, the university admission office did not allow them to do that. The dean of the Faculty made it clear for Nabil, “It is required that applicants to the Faculty of Education, who would be teachers in the future, be well-sighted in order to attend this faculty.” Alternatively, the participants majored in English within the Faculty of Arts. It should be noted, however, that the Association of Visually-Impaired Graduates in the Gaza Strip discussed this matter with the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education, and fortunately, this policy was changed in 2008, as Nabil said. That is, Palestinian visually-impaired students in the Gaza Strip can join a faculty of education. Mona (a pseudonym), for example, is a blind student who graduated in 2013 with a BA in English from the Faculty of Education at the IUG.



Traveling from home to university and vice versa was a further challenge to the participants. They acknowledged that due to visual impairment, they are less mobile than sighted people, which necessitated them making special commuting arrangements. They had to invest more time and sometimes more money than sighted students in order to get to class on time. They all except Munir used public transportation for commuting; their journey took them about an hour. However, Fatima reported that her family sometimes sent her to university in a taxi with a sighted sister. Munir's family house was within walking distance from university; nevertheless, he had to walk for twenty minutes, using his cane or with the help of a friend or relative.

In addition, the university environment was also a hard experience for the participants, especially at the beginning of their program. "The new world was much larger than school," Fatima said. The participants found it difficult to get acquainted with the place. They said that no orientation session was conducted to make them familiar with the campus map: lecture rooms, library, administration offices, and other facilities. Munir, Ibrahim, and Fatima reported that they had to use their canes or receive support from others to get around campus. The other two participants, Huda and Nabil, voiced less complaint about commuting. Being partially sighted, both of them managed to move on their own, but still not as fast as sighted people.

Moreover, the participants had difficulty being updated with the news of the university. Different offices (e.g. Academic Affairs, Student Council, departments) had their events and activities printed in 'small-font' notices posted around the campus. These activities included exam schedules and invitations to attend conferences, workshops, or special lectures. As these notices were not designed with visually-impaired students in mind, the participants felt they were often marginalized.

The university classroom itself created an additional burden for the five participants. Classrooms at the IUG traditionally had bench-style seating for two or three students with a table in front of them. As a general education environment, almost all the students were well-sighted, and the teachers seemed to know little about the challenges of students with visual impairments or the resources necessary to support their needs. The participants reported how lectures were board-centered, which required reading (something beyond the participants' capacity). Huda, a partially sighted participant, said, "Although I could see my way and could move easily by myself, I faced problems inside the class as I couldn't see what was written on the blackboard and needed someone to read for me." This was a problem for all the participants; each had to sit next to a colleague student who told him or her what the teacher wrote on the board. However, it was very difficult for the participants to fully process and comprehend modules that include a lot of drawings like sentence tree diagramming in Syntax and phonetic transcription in Phonetics and Phonology. Moreover, the participants found it difficult to take notes, and when they wanted to record the lecture, some teachers, disappointedly, did not let them do that. Ibrahim said, "Some teachers prevented me from recording the lectures; my recorder is the main source of my study." Commenting on such an experience in his freshman year, Nabil said, "It was very frustrating for a freshman student like me, who was in a pressing need for support from his professors to cope with the initial demanding days of his university study." On the other hand, when permitted to record a lecture, sometimes the participants did not fully understand what they had recorded due to some noise they experienced in the classroom or the low quality of their recorders.

Furthermore, studying for their courses was a significant challenge for the participants. The amounts of their assigned reading and writing were so much that they could not study as independently as their sighted peers. It should be noted, however, that the IUG offers some

educational accommodation services to its visually-impaired students through the university Assistive Technology Center (ATC), such as adapted materials (i.e. large-print, Braille, text-to-speech), training courses on using assistive technology devices, and access to the Internet. Although the participants expressed their appreciation of such facilities, they reported that sometimes there were certain technical problems and the ATC could not transform course materials to meet the participants' needs. In addition, as Fatima reported, it was difficult to use the library resources designed for well-sighted students, and alternative versions in digital or Braille form of such resources were not available. Moreover, Nabil said that librarians were not qualified enough to support the research needs of visually-impaired students.

Testing also caused certain troubles for the participants. Although they usually had writers to whom they dictated their answers in a separate testing room, the participants were not fully satisfied with this service. The writers were often not English majors, whose unfamiliarity with certain technical terms (e.g., in linguistics and literature) negatively affected the participant's flow of ideas and answers to the exam. For example, Fatima had a writer specializing in engineering to write for her on the Literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century exam; as a result, the writer was not familiar with many of the concepts and names Fatima was dictating. Similarly, on his Metaphysical Poetry exam, Nabil got frustrated as his writer asked many times about how to spell certain technical terms. In addition, the participants felt that they may have lost some marks because of the bad handwriting and misspelling of some of their writers. Furthermore, as they were often tested in a separate room, the participants reported that their course instructors did not visit them while going round other testing rooms to clarify points related to the exam, which the participants considered a violation of the principle of equal opportunity. On the other hand, the participants took some of their exams in the same room with the other non-disabled students. Commenting on this hard experience, Huda said, "In Listening and Speaking 1, I had to take the exam in the same room with the well-sighted students. This negatively affected my grade."

The participants also complained that the time pressure on some of their exams negatively impacted their performance. "Due to the length of the final exam of my Writing 1 course, I could not concentrate and did not do well," Fatima commented. A considerable body of literature has explored the test accommodations which visually-impaired examinees should receive, and it has been recognized that they are likely to require more testing time than the non-disabled people receiving the test under standard conditions (Shute, Graf, & Hansen, 2005). The 1985 and 1999 *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, produced by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education, note that the provision of extra time is a test accommodation strategy intended to compensate for the information-processing deficits of learners with disabilities. The participants in this study reported that they almost never received such an accommodation. In order to seek clarification, the researcher contacted the ATC. The center director said that generally the visually-impaired students are not offered extra testing time, and they have adapted accordingly; however, he pointed out that, in few cases and after consultation with the course instructor, about ten minutes may be provided in a two-hour exam to the visually-impaired examinees as an additional testing time.

### **How the participants coped with their challenges**

The participants acknowledged that they received valuable support from different people, which contributed to their coping with the difficulties they had throughout their university study.

First, the participants' families were strongly supportive; they tried their best to address the participants' social, financial, and academic needs. For example, despite the high price of computers and recorders in Palestine, the participants' families bought them these vital educational tools. Munir's brother scanned materials for him so that he could study them through his text-to-speech software program. Fatima's father, a school teacher of Arabic, helped her with the Arabic modules, and he asked one of his friends, a teacher of English, to help her with some difficult English subjects like Phonetics. Moreover, one of Fatima's sighted sisters sometimes accompanied her to university, attended lectures with her, and took notes for her. Huda's family were proud of her and never treated her as a disabled person. On his admission to the IUG, Nabil's mother gifted him a talking dictionary; "it's an extremely valuable reference for blind and visually-impaired learners," he commented. In general, the participants' families encouraged them and did not underestimate their abilities. The participants concluded that this supportive behavior motivated them and added to their self-confidence.

The IUG was another source of support for the participants to cope with their challenges in several aspects. On the one hand, the IUG granted the participants four-year scholarships. These grants relieved the participants from significant financial obligations as university tuition fees are considerably high in Palestine.

Not only does the IUG provide financial support to students with visual impairments, but also it offers them educational accommodation services through the ATC. As the first university-based assistive computing center in Palestine, this ATC was established in 2000 with the mission "to enable people who are blind or partially sighted to achieve their full potential" (Elaydi and Shehada, 2007: 178). The services provided by the ATC include adapted materials (i.e. large-print, Braille, text-to-speech), training courses on using assistive technology devices, and access to the Internet. Furthermore, in cooperation with the IUG Academic Affairs Office, the ATC holds special exam sessions for blind and partially-sighted students. Moreover, in cooperation with the IUG e-learning Center, the ATC has been working on developing computer-based instructions, which would help students to independently participate in activities related to the curriculum (Elaydi and Shehada, 2007). Munir was in his junior university study when the ATC was established; however, he, like the other participants, appreciated the services they received at this center.

Moreover, the five participants highly valued the support they received from some of their teachers at the English Department who drew upon the participants' strengths, provided them with materials in digital form, let them record lectures, and met with them in their offices for clarifying certain difficult points. For example, writing English poetry was among Fatima's hobbies. She frequently showed her poems to her teacher of English Poetry to comment on, and she was very happy with the positive and encouraging feedback he gave her.

A further source of support to the participants came from their student colleagues. The participants' natural abilities gained them much admiration from their peers, and strong friendships were maintained. They easily found colleagues to sit next to in order to know what the teachers wrote on the board. They also had colleagues to form study groups. Huda had colleagues who lent her their notes and explained to her what she could not understand in the class. Similarly, Fatima had colleagues who recorded her some lecture notes at their homes. As one of the participants' university teachers, the author of this article could feel the intimate relationship between the participants and many of their colleagues.

In addition to these main sources of support, the participants referred to some resource assistance that they received from the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs (e.g. Braille paper,

recorders, and some blank audio tapes), and from the Association of Visually-Impaired Graduates (e.g. having some of their textbooks recorded).

### **What final results the participants obtained in their BA program**

There is no doubt that the support the five participants received from different people alleviated the hardships they endured during their BA program in English. However, the participants' hard work and dogged perseverance were the key to their success in this unusual specialization for the visually-impaired in Palestine. Huda said, "I always have the will to succeed in my study and change my life to the best."

Throughout their university program, the participants invested great efforts not only to avoid falling behind, but also to surpass many of their peers. As noted above, Munir finished his BA program in 2002, whereas the other four participants graduated in 2006. Regarding their final results, all the participants, except Ibrahim, had very good grades. The following table presents the participants' final results in percentage terms.

#### *Participants' final results in their BA program*

Munir	Ibrahim	Fatima	Nabil	Huda
82.7%	77.8%	87.8%	83.8%	84.3%

It should be noted that graduating with an excellent grade (i.e., 90% or higher) in this challenging major is rare at Palestinian universities. According to the IUG records, 47 students finished their BA in English (Arts section) in 2002. However, only one of these students graduated with an excellent grade. Similarly, in 2006, only one out of 45 finished the program with an excellent grade.

As one of Ibrahim's teachers, the researcher was impressed by his intelligence, dedication, and active participation in the class discussions. However, worried about Ibrahim's 'low' result (i.e., 77.8%), the researcher called him for clarification. Ibrahim explained that he finished his high school as the second top student in the school, which had about 250 students. In addition, he did very well in his freshman and sophomore years. However, the sudden death of his mother while he was a junior was a traumatizing experience for Ibrahim. His father remarried and had a new baby, and Ibrahim struggled hard to cope with the new situation. When he was a senior, it was suggested that Ibrahim himself get married. He got engaged to a girl and the wedding was planned to take place after Ibrahim's graduation. However, a few weeks before his senior study finals, he had a problem with the girl and the decision was to break up the affair. Ibrahim stated that these miserable experiences posed critical adaptive problems for him. Although his 77.8% final result did not meet what was expected from him, it was still an achievement that was much better than the grades of many of his sighted peers.

### **Recommendations for better inclusion of the visually-impaired in the Palestinian higher education field**

The participants were asked to make recommendations on how to help other Palestinian students similar to them. The recommendations can be classified as: to the society as a whole, to the government, and to the university.

**To society.** The participants recommended that the Palestinian community should change the prevalent negative attitudes towards blind and partially sighted people. An attitude of acceptance of the visually-impaired should be fostered in the Palestinian community. Let's hear some of the participants' voices on this issue:

The society should change the prevailing idea associated with the visually impaired; they are perceived as helpless, careless and narrow-minded. Accordingly, they are viewed with a sense of mercy and pity from the surrounding people (Nabil).

I do recommend the society to deal with the visually impaired people in an active way by trying to let them participate positively in different life aspects (Munir).

I hope that the society would change its attitude toward us because we are not disabled; we are *enabled*. Of course we need their help and support, but we don't want them to think that we depend on them to do everything for us (Huda).

The society should respect the rights of the blind and the disabled in general, as they are part of the society (Fatima).

**To the government.** With regard to the government, Nabil recommended that the Palestinian government should work on the implementation of the disability rights law, which states that every institution either governmental or non-governmental should include in its body 5% of the disabled people. Nabil believed that this integrating practice would “lead to more understanding, harmony, and cooperation in the society.” Munir suggested that “a rehabilitation project should be established in the Gaza Strip to help the visually-impaired people to market themselves actively.” For Ibrahim, in order that the visually-impaired people can overcome their disability, it is imperative that the government provide them with certain services, such as special libraries and computer audio programs.” Huda believed that “the visually-impaired can really be so creative if they have the chance, encouragement, and facilities.”

**To the university.** Finally, the participants' recommendations to the Palestinian universities represented an accommodation system that would ease the visually-impaired students' life at the university. The suggestions included the following: (1) Orientation sessions targeting visually-impaired students should be conducted to familiarize them with the university services and regulations. (2) University newsletters and announcements should be emailed (or sent in Braille language) to visually-impaired students. (3) In order to get an accurate picture of the capacities of these students, teachers should carefully consider the materials and tools available to their students in the classroom. The participants reported that they had difficulty with certain modules, such as Syntax and Phonetics and Phonology. Such a difficulty has been addressed in literature (Englebretson, 2009; Jackson, 2007; Wells-Jensen, 2005). Jackson (2007) suggests that the curricula of such modules should “undergo myriad transformations (e.g., Braille and large print) and translations (e.g., visual concepts pre-taught by a teacher of the visually impaired) in order to be made palpable for the student with visual impairment” (p.32). (4) When testing visually-impaired students, visual questions should be minimized, a Braille version of the exam should be used, good writers should be provided, and extra time should be given when necessary. The participants' recommendations provided above are of significant pedagogical value, particularly in the area of teaching EFL to visually-impaired students.

### **Conclusion**

This qualitative study used computer-mediated interviews to explore visual impairment and majoring in EFL. Five visually-impaired Palestinian EFL undergraduates participated in the study, and the major findings were presented, reflecting the participants' real, lived experiences.



The study included a discussion of the challenges the participants encountered during their university study and how they coped with these challenges. In addition, the participants offered their perspectives on how to better include visually-impaired students in the Palestinian tertiary education context. Certain pedagogical implications can be deduced from the study. Although the sample surveyed here has its size limitations, this study can enhance our understanding of visually-impaired EFL students, particularly as no specific research has addressed this issue.

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## **Appendix**

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for accepting to participate in my research study about visual impairment and majoring in English as a foreign language. For the purpose of data collection, could you please answer the following questions at your earliest convenience? Use as much space as necessary.

I do appreciate your time, effort, and consideration!

Best regards,

Hassan El-Nabih

### **Questions**

1. What caused your vision problem?
2. Why did you choose English as your major? Did this major meet your needs?
3. When did you finish your BA program? What was your grade point average (or percentage)?
4. What challenges did you face as a university student?
5. What support (from university teachers and administrators, family, peers, etc.) did you get to minimize your problems?
6. Describe how you coped with the challenges you were facing during your university study.
7. What have you been doing since graduation from the IUG?
8. What difficulties have you faced in your new career? How can you manage such difficulties?
9. Are you happy with this job? What are your future plans/dreams/ambitions?
10. What suggestions/recommendations (to university, society, government, etc.) do you have that can help other people of your case?

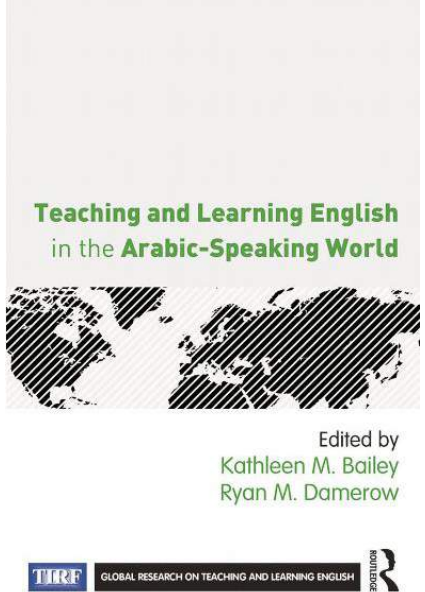


## Book Review

**Title: Teaching and Learning English in the Arabic-Speaking World**

**Reviewer: Reem Al-Samiri**

King AbdulAziz University, Saudi Arabia

 <p>Teaching and Learning English in the Arabic-Speaking World</p> <p>Edited by Kathleen M. Bailey Ryan M. Damerow</p> <p>TIRF GLOBAL RESEARCH ON TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH ROUTLEDGE</p>	<p><b>Teaching and Learning English in the Arabic-Speaking World</b></p> <p>Edited by: Kathleen M. Bailey &amp; Ryan M. Damerow</p> <p>Published: 2014</p> <p>ISBN: 978-0-415-73564-3</p> <p>Paperback: US \$44.95</p> <p>200 pages</p> <p>Publishers: Co-published by Routledge and The International Research Foundation for English Language Education (TIRF)</p> <p>NY, New York</p>
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Global research done on language learning, though valuable, isn't always relevant or applicable to teachers and learners in the Arab world. There are only a handful of books that are specifically devoted to teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Arab countries. *Teaching and Learning English in the Arabic-Speaking World*, however, is a book that contributes to the necessary, yet somewhat limited, educational research pertaining to a region which is experiencing rapid modernization, and accordingly has an increasing need for skillful English speakers.

The book is intended for teachers, researchers, teacher educators, and policy makers within the Arab world. It also serves as a valuable resource for English language professionals seeking job opportunities in that region and researchers interested in how education and EFL in Arab countries compare to other parts of the world. It is a research-based book containing twelve chapters written by different authors on educational research related to teaching EFL in six different Arabic contexts: Egypt, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. The work is organized into three main parts: An introductory chapter that is written by the editors to demonstrate the need for this work and to map out the forthcoming studies in the book, followed by ten chapters of original research performed by professionals in the region, and a concluding chapter to summarize and provide general observations about the preceding studies. Although each chapter represents a separate research topic, there are some recurring themes, such as teaching academic writing at a college level (Chapters 2 & 3), the effects of first language transfer and common difficulties faced by Arab students (Chapters 2 & 4), teacher education (Chapters 5 & 6), and common challenges for teachers in that region (Chapters 6 & 7). There also themes that stand alone, such as the perceived role of the English language in the region (Chapters 5), instructional techniques currently used in the region (Chapter 8), vocabulary learning (Chapter 9), language assessment tools (Chapter 10), and factors effecting language learning (Chapter 11). Another trend throughout the book is the urge for change and advancement of EFL teaching and teacher training methods, as well as the need to move teaching away from traditional teacher-centered practices (those relying on rote-teaching and memorization drills) towards implementing more communicative and interactive teaching practices.

The book provides much insight on the EFL situation in the Middle East and challenges some perceptions about Arabic-speaking language learners and language learners in general (Chapters 2, 5, & 11). Although almost all the studies included in the book are geared towards adult learners and teachers of EFL (due to the fact that English in many Arab countries is introduced around seventh grade), implications from the studies extend to younger language learners as well. Moreover, the chapters of the book are similarly structured using the following subheadings: Issues that motivated the research, context of the research, research questions addressed, data collection and analysis procedures, findings and discussions, and implications for policy, practice, and future studies. Even though not all chapters fit into this structure neatly, it makes it easier for the reader to follow and predict subsequent segments.

There are, however, some drawbacks. While the studies are based on empirical research, chapter 7 by Esseili appears to be lacking objectivity when discussing challenges in foreign language teaching in Lebanese schools and in some cases contains biased statements that are not based on empirical evidence. An example of that is the statement that “Parents do not seem to be doing anything at home to help their children learn the language.” (p. 111). Another shortcoming is observed in chapter 5 by van den Hoven’s overuse of direct quoting throughout the chapter resulting in drowning out the author’s own voice. Nevertheless, each chapter provides worthy observations that enhance the readers’ awareness of underlying issues and concerns that are prevalent in the region.

Among the informative research is an intriguing study by Al-Thubaiti that explores the effectiveness of starting foreign language education at an earlier age in Saudi schools (Chapter 11). The results of the study challenge the Critical Period Hypothesis (which suggests that

success in language learning is determined biologically by starting at an early age) by suggesting that the quality of instruction and input are more important than age in affecting proficiency, especially in foreign language settings. In addition, the author's commendable use of the term "target-like" in describing the students' performance, rather than referring to the abstract notion of "native-speaker proficiency," provides a more realistic, measurable, and attainable goal for language learners (Leung, Harris, & Rampton, 1997).

Another interesting study is in chapter 6 by Gardiner-Hyland which addresses the crucial issue of teaching reading in English within Arabic-speaking countries. The chapter demonstrates complications that Emirati pre-service teachers face in their attempts to abandon traditional teacher-centered methods, which are common in most Arab settings, and adopt a Constructivist approach that cultivates the culture of reading for pleasure. The study explores these challenges practically, providing the reader with experiences and observations of teachers who were able to successfully apply the new approaches, others who were able to integrate new techniques with traditional ones that their students were familiar with, and some who unconsciously resisted this change. The investigation is valuable because many teachers who were educated in a traditional setting find it challenging to shift to an interactive approach. It was found that when new teachers felt overwhelmed in the classroom, they reverted to the type of teaching that they were familiar with, repeating the cycle of ineffective teaching that they themselves rejected as students and as pre-service teachers. The author emphasizes the importance of teacher education programs in the Middle East that provide transformational experiences so that future English reading teachers are able to develop their identities beyond their past experiences as students in a traditional setting.

I would suggest this book for English language professionals who are searching for research opportunities in the Arab world as it offers a breadth of subjects as well as suggestions for future research.

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