

CAN TEACHING READING AND WRITING INTEGRATIVELY ENHANCE ESL STUDENTS' INTELLECTUAL PROCESSES IN WRITING?

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Abstract

A quasi-experimental study was conducted to test the hypothesis that teaching reading and writing integratively in L2 classrooms enhances students' intellectual processes in writing compared to the teaching of these two skills separately. The subjects of the study comprise 43 Form 6 students of SMKTK, a high school in the suburb of Kuala-Lumpur, Malaysia. Two classes were randomly selected for the study. The subjects were given writing tests before the start of the study. Then the two classes were randomly assigned into experimental and control groups. The experimental group was taught reading and writing integratively while the control group was taught reading and writing separately. At the end of the study the two groups were post-tested. The findings showed that the integrative teaching of reading and writing enhances students' intellectual processes in writing ($t=2.110$, $df=36 < 0.05$). The study recommended integrative teaching of reading and writing in L2 classroom.

Key words: *integrative teaching of reading and writing, intellectual processes, meaning construction, systemic thinking*

Theoretical background

There has recently been a general dissatisfaction with the traditional approach of teaching reading and writing separately. Carson & Leki (1997) and Furneaux (1999) claim that in traditional approaches of teaching writing, for example students are not invited to genuinely engage in real writing, they are only taught how to practice correct grammar and rhetorical patterns. It is erroneously assumed, as they advocate, that the important elements students should be armed with are the knowledge of how to write a good introduction, topic and supportive sentences and good conclusions. Once students are equipped with such skills they can produce any type of text. They caution that enhancing students' competency in English should not be seen as residing on mastering skills, for this will inculcate in students the habits of reading for information retrieval only, consequently they will miss many of the ideas implied in the text, Rivas (1999); Shih (1992). They insist that too much concentration on teaching skills could deprive students from engaging with other aspects of literacy which Zimmerman (1997) describes as meaning construction, competency and flexibility in dealing with texts as readers and writers.

The lack of emphasis on meaning construction in the L2 classroom was emphasised by Greene (1993), Linda (1987), and Auerbach & Paxton (1997), who argue that teachers should draw students' attention to the importance of meaning construction while reading or writing. They believe that negotiation of meaning, whether as readers or writers, is necessary because it enables students to integrate their prior knowledge with the new information in the text and therefore understand the text better.

Marshall (1997) stresses further that the ability to think in different ways with a variety of texts develops slowly through many reading and literacy experiences. Students must become aware of the stance they take as readers to know the purpose of their reading and to develop their own criteria for evaluating ideas in the text. If these aspects of literacy are ignored, teachers will be inculcating in students what Kennedy (1997), Kubota (1998) term as fixed routines and dogmatic treatment of skills. Such skills, they maintain, will make students develop one-way thinking that rejects whatever does not conform to what the students already know. Students will develop a convergent type of thinking that will hinder their abilities to deal with tasks that require complex thinking. This in turn, could retard students' abilities to develop multiple skills required for success in their academic life (Spack, 1988)

Further emphasis on meaning construction came from Flower (1996) who advocates that reading and writing are social acts. It is therefore important that students should be encouraged to engage seriously in a true comprehension of a text if they are to make sense out of it. They should be trained how to create and adjust their strategies to make the passage more meaningful. Besides this, they should be alerted to the importance of assimilating the ideas found in the text to their own world and input. He goes on to say that if students are encouraged as learners to take the responsibility of building meanings (reading) or the responsibility of communicating meaning (writing) then they are given the right skills. Instead of the teacher explaining the meaning of a text, he (the teacher) should ask students to explain what meaning they have discovered out of the text. Through this way they will be able to integrate new information with what they have

already known, thus learn and understand the new information better (Auerbach & Paxton, 1997) and Gordon & Hanauer, 1995)

One of the disadvantages of separate teachings of reading and writing, as Bazerman (1980), Grabe (1986), Rummelhart (1977), Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987), and Flower (1990) all cited in Carson & Leki (1993) claim, is that it reflects a negative effect on both domains. One of its negative effects is that it divorces reading of its natural purposes and ignores its social dimensions. In addition, without readings L2 classes will depend entirely on what they call expository writing. Although they acknowledge its importance, they believe it is not the kind of writing required in most academic fields. This is because reading as a major source of new knowledge is ignored. As a result, students are not encouraged to develop the ability to select and integrate new knowledge with the knowledge and information they already possess. This ability is the one underlying notion of what is called knowledge transformation.

As the spoken language is best acquired through interaction with native people, literacy skills are acquired through interaction with texts. Teachers should introduce students to the complex abilities of writing from academic texts. This could be by allowing them to encounter the writings of others through reading and thus cultivate various techniques of absorbing, reformulating and commenting if they have to be prepared to be involved in the written exchanges of their chosen disciplines (Horowitz, 1986). As Bizzell (1986) and Bazerman (1980) in Spack (1988) put it, an intelligent response to reading begins with an accurate understanding of a text, not just the facts and ideas, but also what the author is trying to achieve. However, it is not easy for L2 readers to get involved in such activities simply because they lack competency and skills that

could prepare them to do so. Therefore, cultivation of these skills should be the main object of all L2 learning environments.

To change attitudes and enhance ESL students' proficiency in English, they have to do various classroom activities since, in most cases; they have little chance of doing so outside the school. ESL students need to do a lot of reading, writing, thinking, talking and listening. Such classroom activities will provide a rich environment and allow them to practice their language skills. In addition, it will expose them to different skills simultaneously, which is more effective than one by one skill mastering. Through reading, students will gain new vocabulary and grammatical accuracy, and will be exposed to different styles of writing, and they will be able to put these new skills into practice by applying them into their writing. ESL students do not only need to know a lot of vocabulary but also need opportunities to use the new vocabulary. If such new vocabulary is not used they will certainly be forgotten. The mastery of different skills can only be facilitated through approaches, which engage students in diverse activities (Carl, 1986, Eskey, 1993 and Nelson, 1993).

The subjects

A quasi-experimental study was carried out in February 1999 at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tinggi Kajang, a secondary school in the suburb of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The students were mainly form 6 students (A level). They were waiting to sit for STPM examination, a public examination that would, if they qualify, enable them to be enrolled at university. The students were in two different classes, Arts and Science. Students are assigned to either Arts or Science classes after completing Form 5, those who scored high marks in arts subjects would go to arts classes and those

who received high marks in science subjects would go to science classes. The medium of instruction in both classes is Bahasa Malayu, the national language in Malaysia, with English taught only as a subject. However, in both classes English was not a core subject in their STPM examination and students did not usually sit for it. The subjects of this study were from the three major races in Malaysia with Chinese forming the majority in both classes. In addition, the majority of the students in both classes were female. In the Arts class, 21 out of the total 24 students were Chinese. Out of these 21, 19 of them were female and 2 male. The remaining 3 students were all Indian females. In this class there were no Malay students.

For the Science class, the total number of students was 19. Out of this number 12 were Chinese with females forming the majority (9 students). Of the remaining 6 students, 5 of them were Indians, 3 female and 2 male and the remaining one student was a Malay female. All the students in both classes were from middle social class. The average age of the students was twenty years. For all the students, English was a second language. With the exception of the Indians the rest did not speak English in their homes.

The selection

Students were given a one-hour written composition test before the start of the study and no significant differences were found. The two classes were then randomly assigned into experimental and controlled groups. No individual randomisation was done; each group was left intact in their own class.

Data analysis and interpretation

The instrument used for measuring intellectual process in writing was intellectual measurement scale created by Odell (1977). The reliability and validity of the instrument was well established. For more explanation, see appendix 1

For the data analysis, T-test was used and the SPSS package for the interpretation of the results. Independent t-test was run on the scores of pre-test and post-test of the two groups to investigate whether there were any significant differences between them. Later T-test match samples were run on the score of each group's pre-test and post-test to demonstrate whether there were any significant differences.

The raters

Two English teachers in the school were selected to rate students' scripts. Both obtained their first degree in TESL and have been teaching English in secondary schools for more than ten years.

The researcher conducted three sessions with the raters to explain the use of the instrument. On the first session the researcher explained the principle concepts behind the instrument and how it is used in rating writing, and some sample papers were rated jointly. On the second session each rater was given sample papers to rate. After they finished the rating, the researcher collected the sample papers to examine how far they understood and applied the instrument correctly. Feedback on their weakness was provided and discussed. On the third session there was a further discussion; most of the principle ideas about the instrument were revisited and raters' questions were thoroughly discussed to their satisfaction. After this session each rater was given 43 composition

papers to rate. They were advised not to exhaust themselves by rating too many papers at one time and to concentrate while rating. They were given two weeks to complete the rating. During these two weeks the researcher kept in touch with them.

The study period

The two classes were taught differently for a period of 9 weeks. The materials used in both classes were articles selected from various sources, textbooks, daily newspapers and magazines.

The teaching methods

1-The controlled group

The teaching method used with this class was the audio-lingual approach where reading and writing are taught separately. The researcher met with this class twice a week and each lesson lasted for a period of 25-30 minutes. The researcher divided these two periods into two different classes: reading classes and writing classes with reading classes taking the majority of the periods.

2-The experimental group

For this class, reading and writing were taught integratively. The researcher taught this class twice a week and each period lasted for 25-30 minutes. To create a conducive classroom atmosphere to enhance a reading and writing connection, the following teaching strategies suggested by Carl (1986) were adopted:

(a)- Conferencing

Two types of conferences were used, oral and written conferences. For oral conferences, the researcher selected an article from a daily newspaper, magazine or a textbook. Selection was based on the articles that discussed social problems. Students were usually divided into two groups, one to argue in support of the article and the other against. The role of the teacher was to give prompts, directions and occasionally to help the weaker group. At the end, students were asked to write two papers, one in support and the other against the article. In most cases such conferences took more than one period.

The second type were written conferences where a student was asked to select a topic of interest or any interesting article he/she had read and present it to the class. The student had to explain the reading or the topic and indicate why he/she was interested in the topic, and the lessons he/she had learnt from it. After that there was a class discussion where other students would ask him/her questions and give their opinions.

The principle goal of the conferences was to encourage and stimulate students' to become more engaged in reading and writing. Through them, the researcher managed to gain some insight about students' interests and needs and thus was able to give them constructive and relevant advice.

(b)-Discussion of the text progressively exposed

The second strategy used was the discussion of a progressively exposed text. The text would be discussed paragraph by paragraph starting from the title up to the end of the text. The importance of this teaching strategy was that students approached this kind of task in a problem-solving manner. It motivated them to think more critically. Students were also expected to extend this strategy in revising their own writing. During the

discussion periods, students were given enough time to think and discuss the contents of the reading at length and to express their opinions freely.

(c) Cloze text/ jumbled text

The third teaching strategy used was cloze/jumble text exercises. In this method, students were given some passages with missing words and they were asked to fill these blank spaces with suitable words; or they were given jumbled sentences and then asked to re-arrange them to make a meaningful passage.

The overall emphasis was on the process involved in determining a suitable word or sensible re-arrangement and why the chosen words or re-arrangement was considered the most suitable. Students' attention was always drawn to the fact that they should look at the links between the overall organisation and the use of structural cues in determining the missing words or disordered sentences. Another importance of this strategy was that it creates awareness of anticipation and review of the links in a text and to hypothesize what information might have preceded and what might follow.

(d)- Semantic webbing

In this strategy, the topic was organised and discussed in the form of diagrams. Students were asked to identify fragmented items of the topic then later asked to write about the topic, synthesising these fragmented items. For example, students were asked to talk about Malaysia, its size, population, states and the produce of each state, in the form of webbing. Then they were asked to write compositions about Malaysia using the fragmented items discussed earlier. The importance of such organisation was that it worked as a good way of planning topics before writing. Moreover, it helped students not only to identify fragmented items, but how these items can be combined into a logical

framework. It also allowed students to see how much they learned as a result of their discussion and reading which later could be applied in their writing.

Besides the four teaching strategies mentioned above, students were also given some writing topics using the process approach method. These writing topics started with reading first. The importance of the process approach was that it served as a means of self-reflection and as a basic step toward creating writing ability. It was used in the study to inculcate students' self-confidence in writing.

At the end of the study period students in both classes were given a one-hour written composition test.

The findings

The hypothesis tested in this study was that teaching reading and writing integratively will enhance students' intellectual processes in writing. The probability level of significance was established alpha 0.05. Independent-samples T-test was run on the pre-test scores measuring the variable: intellectual processes to determine if there were any significant differences between the experimental and the control group before the study. This pre-test was to determine whether students in both groups were starting at the same level. The results showed no significant differences between the two groups ($t = .70$, $df = 41$, $p > 0.05$)

Next, independent-samples t-test was run on the scores of the final composition test (post-test) to determine if there were any significant differences between the experimental group who were taught reading and writing integratively, and the controlled group, who were taught reading and writing separately. A significant difference in the

scores between the two groups was found ($t = 2.1$, $df = 36$, $p < 0.05$). The mean score for the experimental group was 111.24 while the mean score for the controlled group was 97.78. Furthermore, the pre-test and post-test of each group was computed to determine whether there were any significant differences. When paired-samples t-test was run on the experimental group scores, a significant difference was found ($t = 29.15$, $df = 34$, $p < 0.05$). The mean score of the experimental group in pre-test was 96.07 while their mean score in post-test was 111.24. The paired-samples t-test was also run on the scores of the control group and the result showed no significant differences ($t = 34.70$, $df = 46$, $p > 0.05$).

When the total scores between the pre-test and the post-test were broken into their components and statistically examined, and when the teachers' reports were analysed, the following results were found:

- 1- The experimental group showed a significant improvement in their intellectual processes in comparison to the control group. The mean score for the experimental group was 111.24 whilst the mean score for the controlled group was 97.78.
- 2- The experimental group showed more improvement in the logical organisation of its ideas and writing style than the control group.
- 3- The experimental group was more analytical in their writing and supported their arguments with more examples than the control group.

Discussion

The findings of this study, as illustrated above, suggest that integrative teaching of reading and writing in L2 classrooms can offer opportunities for ESL students to improve their intellectual abilities in writing. The main assumption behind this combination is that as students become aware of how readers and writers approach their tasks, organise their ideas and construct their meanings, they can later use such knowledge to improve their reading and writing skills.

Campbell (1998), Carl (1986), and Davis (1995) state that reading, whether it is a class reading or voluntarily reading in L1 or L2, is a crucial element for the improvement of writing skills. Nevertheless, not every reading leads to the improvement of writing skills. Belanger (1987) claims that reading that does not focus students' attention to the common features between reading and writing would not be necessarily sufficient for the acquisition of writing skills. In this study, the control group lagged behind the experimental group. The reason is assumed to be the teaching method used. The separate teaching of reading and writing, as Carl (1986) claims, does not equip students with abilities to transfer skills gained in one language skill to another. The control group had not shown any signs of transference of their reading gains to their writing, or vice versa, as the experimental group did. This may be because the method did not provide different activities in the classroom that would help students to do so. In order for students to transfer skills gained in reading to their writing, they need to do a lot of reading, thinking, discussing, writing and re-writing. Such activities will bring about students' awareness of different reading and writing strategies and, once they become aware of these differences, they can transfer them into their writing.

Separate teaching of reading and writing was also found to be ineffective in providing different ranges of classroom activities. This is because it treats language skills as different entities. It was observed during the study that it did not give students wider chances to participate in the class activities as the teacher dominated all the talks. The lesson planning and development in the control class have followed one rigid routine. For example, in reading classes the teacher always started by reading the passage then explained the difficult words...no variation in the class activities. The procedures were always the same in all reading classes, likewise writing classes. Students always felt unmotivated over such repetitive procedures. Students were always passive recipients, non-innovative and felt reluctant to participate and express their views about issues being discussed in the class. This was not because of their low proficiency in English. In fact, some of them spoke English very fluently. The reason was seen to be the gap between the student and teacher created by the teaching method used. It made students completely dependent on the teacher. This complete reliance on the teacher was observed to be a barrier towards students' initiative and creativity in the class.

However, with the experimental group the teaching situation was different. Various class activities were introduced, such as conferences, webbing, re-arrangement of sentences in a passage and filling missing words. These class activities, which combined reading and writing, were found to have helped students gain access to more information, analyse their assumptions and develop new insights into the act of reading and writing. It also fostered the idea that language skills are interrelated and should be looked at as one body. As a result, in their final composition test many students incorporated in their texts certain expressions, vocabularies and styles they encountered

in the class readings. This was a good indicator that some positive progress had taken place. Learning-from-text strategies must be practiced regularly over a sustained period of time before students can show signs of transfer.

Another factor that benefited the experimental group was the introduction of process approach. This approach was found to be useful for young writers, particularly if it is used in conjunction with reading and writing activities. It can help the young writers to reflect on themselves and discover their potential writing capabilities. As Horowitz (1986) says, many students believe that once they put down their ideas on paper their job is finished. The process approach makes revision an important aspect of the writing process.

One advantage of multi-draft method was that students became self-monitoring individuals in their writing. This self-monitoring is important because it encouraged students to look critically and analytically at their writing. It also helped students to place themselves in the position of readers and locate and identify the source of their dissatisfaction with the text and therefore learn to take more responsibility for what they wrote and for getting their meaning across to the reader. It was clear during the study that some general aspects of writing can be taught. Instruction on general aspects of writing, such as organisation, supporting ideas with examples and, above all, exposing students to other writers' work can further strengthen writers' development.

In the study, as a result of the method used, the experimental group made use of a great number of intellectual processes. This was thought, initially to be a result of the long texts they produced, but when the papers were re-examined, it was found that some students who wrote short texts displayed greater use of intellectual processes than those

who wrote longer texts. This indicates that the length of the text may not be the sole determiner of the number of intellectual processes, but the degree of intellectual activities that the student had exerted as reported by Mukundan (1993). Both groups displayed a good shifting of focus in their writing; however, all were focusing on “I” what Odell (1977) calls egocentric writing. This concentration on “I” was because students were writing in narrative mode, which reflects, in most cases the individuals’ experiences and the past events in their life. However, there was a minimal use of change and classification by both groups. This coincided with what Odell (1977) and Mukundan (1993) reported.

Conclusion

From the above discussion it can be concluded that teaching reading and writing integratively can be effective in enhancing students’ English skills. It does not only enhance reading and writing skills, but also listening and speaking. Through reading and writing activities students participate in a lot of activities that require them to talk, and listen to others talking. Taking time over writing, reading, thinking, talking and listening are essential for L2 students to enhance their skills. Moreover, responding to another’s writing helps students to revise and improve their writing skills. For L2 classrooms to be enriched, students should be given opportunities to practice their different skills, and to read and write widely during their class periods.

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Appendix 1

Intellectual Measurement Scale

Odell (1977) claims that competent student writers use a greater number and variety of intellectual processes compared to basic student writers. He observes that competent student writers display an awareness of audience. They distance themselves from their personal selves and accommodate the reader. In his research he found that basic student writers focused on themselves while the competent writers focused on other aspects of the experience. He says basic writers focused on “I” 40% of the time while the competent writers focused on “I” only about 25% of the time. Although he says this frequent focusing on “I” is appropriate if one is trying to create a highly egocentric persona, the high proportion of clauses focused on “I” decreases the number of clauses that might focus on important aspects of the experience the writer is trying to convey. Odell explains that a thorough description of intellectual processes would enrich evaluation at three important levels:

- 1- Diagnosis
- 2- Formative evaluation in the classroom
- 3- Growth measurement

He argues that although most people would think that the thinking process is a complex activity, the success of Pike (1964a, 1964b) in identifying a number of intellectual processes have strengthened the claim that the number of conscious mental activities involved in thinking may not be infinite. He goes on to say that the intellectual processes identified by Pike help us describe what people do consciously when they examine information, attitudes or concepts. Odell elaborates on the description of these processes

by providing information on how writing researchers and teachers can identify linguistic cues, or specific features of the surface structure of written language that can help them determine what intellectual processes the writer is using. The intellectual processes described by Odell are:

- 1- Focus
- 2- Physical Context
- 3- Sequence
- 4- Contrast
- 5- Change
- 6- Classification

To measure the intellectual process is to the number of times the student uses the six intellectual processes mentioned above. Frequent use of these intellectual processes indicates the writer's competency in writing. Instruction in the use of these processes can result in writing that is mature, carefully thought out and more persuasive.

Like other qualitative measurements, the intellectual scale has been criticised on the grounds that it lacks reliability. Its holistic evaluation approach which Cooper describes in Wong (1989) as procedures that stops short of enumerating linguistic, rhetorical, or information features of a piece of writing is also criticised. But, in spite of these criticisms it has been recently found that it is still a valid instrument for measurement of intellectual growth in writing. Raters trained in this instrument could produce more reliable results Lloyd-Jones (1977); Cooper (1977); Gere (1980); Wong (1989); Mukundan (1993). For more description of each of these intellectual processes, see Odell (1977)

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TRAINEE TEACHERS' COGNITIONS ABOUT CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE AND THEIR REFLECTIONS IN CLASSROOM PRACTICE

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Abstract

This paper reflects on what 65 trainee teachers of English think, know, and believe about three classroom discipline problems- dealing with large classes, creating a positive environment, holding attention- and examines the relationship of these mental constructs to what trainees do in the language classroom. Within a framework suggested by more general mainstream educational research on teacher cognition, language teacher cognition in this paper is discussed with reference to *cognition* and *classroom practice*. The study concludes that the more teaching experience a trainee has the better teacher cognitions develop.

Key words: *teacher cognition, pre-service teacher education, language teaching, EFL, classroom discipline*

Introduction

Due to recent changes in English language teaching (ELT) policy in Turkish education system, English has been started to be taught from the fourth grade of primary education (age 10) until the final year of secondary education (age 17). This important focus of ELT calls for researching on the relationship between teacher cognition and classroom practice. The term ‘teacher cognition’ refers to “the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching”, that is, “what teachers know, believe, and think” (Borg 2003, p. 81, p. 86). The term ‘classroom practice’ is used here to refer to trainees’ teaching sessions at the placement school.

Teacher cognition and classroom practice

Several studies have investigated the relationship of teacher cognition and classroom practice in the field of language teaching (Bailey 1996; Bartels 1999; Breen 1991; Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver and Thwaite 2001; Burns 1996; Gatbonton 1999; Golombek 1998; Johnson 1992a; Nunan 1992; Richards 1996, 1998a, 1998b; Richards, Li and Tang 1998; Smith 1996; Ulichny 1996; Woods 1991, 1996). These studies collectively show that teachers’ cognitions emerge consistently as a powerful influence on their practices. However, it is important to acknowledge that these studies draw on different research traditions. One derives from the educational literature on decision-making (Shavelson and Stern 1981) and the second from that on teachers’ personal practical knowledge (Elbaz 1981; Clandinin and Connelly 1987). For the purpose of this study, the research tradition of decision-making is adopted here as it focuses on

identifying the antecedents for teachers' interactive decisions and describing effective decision-making procedures.

One strand of studies of teacher cognition examines what second and foreign language teachers, at any stage of their careers, think, know, or believe in relation to various aspects of their work. Borg (2003, pp. 84-86) lists the studies on language teacher cognition focusing on two curricular areas (grammar teaching and literacy instruction) (e.g., Mitchell and Hooper 1992; Mitchell, Brumfit and Hooper 1994a, 1994b; Brumfit, Mitchell and Hooper 1996 for grammar teaching; Johnson 1992b and Meijer, Verloop and Beijaard 1999, 2001 for teaching reading; Burns 1992 and Tsui 1996 for teaching writing). Another strand of research on teacher cognition entails the study of actual classroom practices and of the relationships between cognitions and classroom practices (e.g., Freeman 1993; Crookes and Arakaki 1999; MacDonald et al. 2001). The second type of research focuses rather on more general processes, such as knowledge growth during teacher education and decision-making, and illustrating these within a language teaching context. This study falls in the second category as it both examines decision-making procedures of senior trainee teachers of English on three topics relevant to classroom discipline and illustrates decision-making procedures within trainees' language teaching contexts.

The reference to discipline problems rarely seems to be an issue in the classrooms described in the literature on language teacher cognition (Borg 2003, p. 94). The term 'classroom discipline' is used in this study as "a state in which both teacher and learners accept and consistently observe a set of rules about behaviour in the classroom whose function is to facilitate smooth and efficient teaching and learning in the lesson" (Ur

1996, p. 270). The contribution of this study to the field is that it investigates trainee teachers' cognitions about the discipline problems they experience in their teaching contexts. Richards and Pennington (1998, pp. 187-188) examines the impact of large classes, unmotivated students, and students' resistance to new ways of learning in their research. Similar to those, this study examines the teacher cognition about dealing with large classes, creating a positive environment, and holding attention.

Two studies on teacher cognition have been carried out in Turkey. Cabaroğlu and Roberts (2000) works with 20 students on a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) secondary in Modern Languages at a British University. They examine the change in teachers' beliefs during a one-year postgraduate course and assert strong claims about the manner in which trainees' cognition do change during teacher education. Tercanlioğlu (2001), on the other hand, works with 132 pre-service EFL teachers in Turkey and examines their views of themselves as readers and future reading teachers. She reports that pre-service EFL teachers were not very enthusiastic about teaching reading, though they accepted they would need to teach it as part of a language course. The study concludes that 51.51% of the pre-service teachers rated their teacher education program as satisfactory in this domain. This study is similar with these two studies in terms of the research's nature as a large scale survey and with the second study in terms of context. However, this study differs from them in terms of the research aim, which is to examine the decision-making procedures of trainees on three classroom discipline problems.

Context

The study takes place at Muğla University, Faculty of Education, Department of English Language Teacher Training. The trainees are studying at the second semester of their third year in a 4-year undergraduate programme. By this time, they have been taking courses related to teaching methods and approaches and classroom management in addition to other courses. In the final year of their undergraduate study, they are required to attend the school placement in both terms.

The fall term in training module is characterized by both building relationships with the mentor and the placement school and foundational knowledge by writing weekly tasks, and establishing a critical perspective for exploring ways to overcome discipline problems in the language classroom. In addition to that, they are advised to teach at least once during a school term and comment on their teaching sessions by writing a tutor log. The spring term moves toward an increased role for trainees within the professional development process. Trainees are required to conduct actual teaching during ten class hour (each lasts 45 minutes) at a school term.

The trainees are grouped in five's or six's and each group works with a volunteer mentor. 10 mentors, whose teaching experience ranges from 10 to 15 years, are participated in this study. The study involves a year and half collaboration among senior teacher trainees, mentors at the placement schools, and teacher trainers at the university. The cornerstone of the study is the practice of three teacher-centered, sustainable professional development strategies that are related to understanding discipline implementation at the classroom level.

School placement takes place in six different secondary schools within Muğla city centre. The schools are government-funded state schools and mix gender. They are

selected randomly by the Faculty of Education. Borg (2003, p. 98) points out a research gap where “classrooms in state schools, taught by nonnative teachers, and where syllabuses are to various degrees prescribed. The setting of this research reflects these characteristics.

Description of classroom discipline problems

Dealing with large classes

The first discipline problem is how to deal with large classes. As the rate of young population is high in Turkey, large class size is one of the mostly encountered educational problem by in-service high school English language teachers. ‘Large’ is a relative term, and what a ‘large class’ is will vary country to country and even place to place in the same country. In some countries a group of twenty students at language classrooms may be considered large, in my own research context, 35 - 40; in some places numbers may even go up. A study done by the team of the Lancaster-Leeds Language Learning in Large Classes Research Project (Project Report No. 4 of Coleman 1989) indicates that an average perception of the large class may be around 50 students. Probably, however, the exact number does not really matter: what matters is how the teacher sees the class size. Therefore, the definition of ‘a large class’ should be understood as relevant to any class perceived as large, regardless of the actual number of learners in it.

Creating a positive environment

Unmotivated learners is another classroom discipline problem that most of the

teachers may experience. There are some studies which discuss both the importance of motivation in language learning (Gardner and Lambert 1972; Gardner 1980; Khan 1991) and the types of motivation (Gardner and Lambert 1972; Brown 1987). This study, however, focuses only on the teacher's responsibility to motivate learners (Girard 1977) by creating a positive classroom environment.

Holding attention

Fluctuations in learner attention are the last discipline problem that will be described here. Some temporary lowering in learner interest can be caused by factors beyond the teacher's control such as "the need of the learner to take a short break" (Ur 1996, p. 282) or external distractions. There are also certain teacher behaviours which can quickly catch learner interest such as "addressing the whole class rather than individuals", "writing on the board", "conducting pair and group work" (ibid., p. 283). Apart from teacher behaviours, "an interesting topic, the need to convey meaningful information, a game-like fun task, attention-catching materials, appeal to learners' feelings or a challenge to their intellect" are suggested in the literature (ibid., p. 23).

Materials and methods

Qualitative research methods are used extensively in previous studies investigating the relationship between teacher cognition and classroom practice. Richards (1996) analyses data from a corpus of teacher narratives and interviews. Woods (1996) conducts a longitudinal study of planning and decision-making in English as a second language (ESL) classrooms in Canada. Drawing on interviews, observations, video-based stimulated recall, teachers' logs, and document analysis, this study tracks a group of

teachers as they go through the process of planning and teaching their courses. Through observations and elicitation procedures, the study by Breen et al. (2001) investigates the relationships between cognition and practice in language teaching. Kagan's (1990) study in teacher cognition relies on questionnaire responses without examining the cognition in relation to practice. In this study the data is collected by means of:

- Questionnaires:

For the purpose of the study, a questionnaire is designed with some open-ended questions that allow trainees to reflect their views on three classroom discipline problems. There are no correct answers, no word limit, and no time limit in filling in the questionnaire. Each trainee is required to write their names on the questionnaire in order to track the changes in their views over the three academic semesters. However, these names are not used in this paper for ethical purposes.

- Tutor logs:

The notion of tutor log comes in different names and forms in the literature such as observation tasks by Wajnryb (1992) or student feedback sheet on teaching by Ur (1996, p. 324). The objective of having trainee teachers write tutor logs is though the same; which is to get them to start taking responsibility for their own self-assessment (Ur 1996, p. 358).

- Development sessions

Various models of teacher learning have been suggested, one of the three main ones, which matches best with the research design is 'the reflective model' (Wallace 1993). In the reflective model of teacher learning, the trainee observes (first semester) or teaches (second semester) lessons; then reflects alone (e.g., writing tutor logs) or in

discussion with others (e.g., discussing with the tutor and peers in development sessions), in order to work out theories about teaching; then tries these out again in practice (i.e., at the placement school). Such a cycle aims for continuous improvement and the development of personal theories of action (Schön 1983).

- Classroom observations

Classroom observations are carried out by peers, the mentor, and the tutor.

Questionnaire

The first phase of the data collection procedure involves the application of the questionnaire to the third year prospective English language teachers at the end of the spring semester of 2004-2005. The questionnaire (Appendix I) is first applied at that school time period in order to receive the participants' views on three educational cases right before taking school placement module, in other words, while they have still 'no experience' in teaching at actual language classrooms. Answers in questionnaires are clustered under some headings and converted as tables. The range of answers are discussed with the light of comments on tutor logs.

Tutor logs

The second phase of data collection starts at the fall semester of the final (4th) year of undergraduate programme (2005-2006) while the participants are taking the school placement module. Each teacher trainee is grouped in five's or six's and assigned a placement school. One mentor (at the placement school) and one tutor (at the university) are responsible for a group of five or six trainee teachers. The attendance to the placement schools is 10 weeks (approximately one academic semester). Each trainee

teacher attends three lesson hours (each 45 minutes) per week at the placement schools. The main task at placement schools is to observe the classroom teacher's teaching each week. The second task is to write weekly reports (10 in total) according to a set agenda of topics. The third task is to teach during one lesson hour at least once in 10 weeks. After the teaching experience, each teacher trainee is required to fill in the tutor log (Appendix II).

Development sessions

Development sessions are those when trainee teachers discuss their weekly written reports (in the first semester) and their teaching practices (in the second semester) with their tutors at the university. These sessions can be named as development sessions because they involve the three stages of teacher development (Ur 1996): Teaching practice, private reflection, sharing with colleagues (Edge 1991; Lansley 1994). Development sessions took place between a group of trainee teachers, who are assigned at the same high school, and the tutor of the group. They are designed particularly to discuss the problems of trainee teachers in their professional practice. The core aim of development sessions is to get across the message that 'first-time stress' is an entirely normal phenomenon and to suggest some ways of dealing with it. Collaborative discussions about the lesson plans, teaching materials, reflections on teaching practices are highly encouraged in development sessions.

Classroom Observation

The third stage is also done in the 4th year but in the second semester. Each trainee teacher stays in the same trainee groups and placement schools assigned in the first semester. However, the language classroom, the mentor and the tutor are changed for the sake of experiencing different educational contexts and being in contact with different academics. The attendance to the placement schools is 10 weeks (approximately one academic semester). Each trainee teacher attends three lesson hours (each 45 minutes) per week at the placement schools. The main task at placement schools is to teach a lesson each week. What to teach each week is arranged with the mentor according to the ELT syllabus applied at the placement schools. The trainees are required but not limited to follow the coursebook. They are encouraged to produce their own teaching materials and create some classroom activities. Each teaching session of a trainee is observed by the peers, the mentor and the tutor. The trainees are required to fill in tutor logs after their teaching sessions. The mentor and the tutor together discuss and fill in a teaching evaluation form after each trainee's teaching session. Each trainee teacher interviews with the tutors for 30 minutes each week. During interviews not only tutor logs are collected and discussed but also teaching evaluation forms are distributed and discussed. By the end of the academic semester, each teacher trainee organises a teaching portfolio, in which there are weekly 10 lesson plans, 10 tutor logs, 10 teaching evaluation forms and the teaching materials used by the trainees.

Results

Questionnaire

Table (1) Dealing with large classes

Classroom Practice to Overcome the Discipline Problem	Trainee's Cognition
<i>Divide students into groups</i>	1-students ask questions to each other 2-a student tells what s/he understands to another student in the first language (Turkish) or the second language (English) 3-carry out peer evaluation 4-give responsibility to each group member 5-do groupwork (GW) and/or pairwork (PW)
<i>Use observation technique</i>	1-assess speaking 2-check facial expressions 3-Teacher makes a mistake to check whether students are listening
<i>Ask questions</i>	1-choose a student from the class list and ask a question 2-grade questions from easy to difficult 3-use different question types E.g., fill-in-the-blanks, open-ended 4-relate questions to students' daily lives
<i>Do classroom activities</i>	1-design interesting activities using Total Physical Response (TPR) Method 2-use different activity types E.g.; visual, auditory, kinesthetic 3-design story making activities 4- show pictures 5- choose interesting topics
<i>Evaluate</i>	1-make mini quizzes, pop-up quizzes, exams 2- record students' speech 3- ask students to write what they've learnt 4- do portfolio assessment 5- give feedback
<i>State the goal</i>	1-explain the importance before the lesson 2- make each student aware of the goals of an activity
<i>Improve physical conditions</i>	1-wander in the classroom 2- put desks into U or circle shape 3- have breaks

The fact that the teacher is very much less able to attend to every individual in the class means that in order for the class to function well, the students themselves must help by teaching each other and working together (Ur 1996). The following is a similar

account suggested by a trainee teacher who emphasises the use of peer-teaching and collaboration:

“In a large class, I try to make all pupils participate in the lesson by using an activity. For example, one student says a sentence and another contributes to it, then another adds something so they create a story. It requires listening and understanding.” (Trainee 1)

Table (2) Creating a positive environment

Classroom Practice to Overcome the Discipline Problem	Trainee’s Cognition
<i>Use various activity types</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-encourage GW,drama, role play,games, songs, stories, jokes, pictures, flashcards 2- focus on multiple intelligences 3- do TPR activities 4- use additional teaching materials 5- have a 10 minunte break after 20 minutes
<i>Choose appropriate tasks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-tasks must be not too demanding but not too easy 2- personalise the topic according to students’ hobbies 3- topics should be familiar so that students can talk 4- use the first language (L1) 5- introduce the new item in a context
<i>Phyhsiological aspects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-behave friendly 2- spend time with students in/outside of the classroom 3- help students with their learning problems 4- make students believe that they can achieve 5- make students feel relaxed by being a counsellor rather than a controller 6- love your students
<i>Feedback</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-use different types of feedback 2- ask volunteers to answer 3- carry out self-assessment tasks 4- provide peer correction 5- give rewards to winners
<i>Course syllabus</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-give alternative course syllabus 2- involve students to select the syllabus

<i>Physical conditions</i>	1- U-shaped classrooms, heat, light, size 2- make the classroom colourful with pictures, posters, photos, play music in the lesson 3- put a message box 4- use name tags/labels
<i>Classroom management</i>	1- decide the classroom rules with students

In order to create a positive environment for learning in the language classroom, some trainees mention about story telling activities. Stories are mostly associated with young children (Brumfit et al. 1991; Kennedy and Jarvis 1991) but older learners can also benefit from the successful use of stories. Ur (1996, p. 113) states that “if the story is well-chosen, learners are likely to be motivated to attend and understand in order to enjoy it”. The following is an extract from a trainee teacher’s questionnaire:

“First of all, before the lesson starts, to motivate students, I would tell them a short story or refer to news or talk about the weather. Then, the lesson starts.”

(Trainee 2)

Involving the learners in choosing the content of the course may also increases the positive environment in language learning (Johnson 2000). The following is an extract about designing a course syllabus from a trainee’s questionnaire:

“Choosing the goal is very good issue at that point. First of all I would give a list that we would study during that term and I would give a list again as an alternative and let my students choose what they want. Since they like topics that they are good at.” (Trainee

3)

In principle, the teaching processes of presenting, practising, and testing correspond to strategies used by many good learners trying to acquire a foreign language

on their own. They make sure they “perceive and understand” (O’Malley and Chamot 1990) new language. The following is a trainee’s extract on choosing appropriate task:

“I would prepare activities or tasks that are related to students’ interests and level. For example, boys like football very much. And one day, I would prepare an activity related to football. And girls, as to say, like astrology, for example. And the other day I would prepare an activity related to astrology. This activity is liked by girls. Or another option is an activity which is loved by both girls and boys. For example, both girls and boys love ‘love affairs’ and such an activity can be given to them. If they like the topic, they achieve most of the activities. And the more they achieve, the more they are motivated.” (Trainee 4)

Good learners make conscious efforts “learn it thoroughly” (O’Malley and Chamot 1990). The following is a trainee’s extract on maintaining psychological aspects:

“There were lessons I did not like in my school days. And the reason of this is the attitudes of my teacher toward me and my friends. In order to create a positive environment in class, firstly, I approach to my students in a positive way. I make them love not only me but also my lesson. If there is a student who doesn’t like me, I try to find what the problem is with him/her by meeting him/her out of the lesson. Because it is important that the student sees that the teacher concerns with him/her.” (Trainee 5)

Good learners “check themselves” (O’Malley and Chamot 1990). The following is a trainee’s extract on giving feedback:

“First of all, we should not have a judging attitude. A student being corrected by the teacher might be irritated or feel himself insufficient for the lesson. That is why we should provide peer correction in the classroom.” (Trainee 6)

Improving the physical conditions of a language classroom is another factor that some trainee teachers emphasise in creating a positive learning environment.

“First of all, we should create a good atmosphere in the classroom. In the class, the shape of desks, light, etc. are important in learning. I make a U-shape in the classroom. So students can see their faces and interaction between them can be increased. In order to motivate the students, I ask questions or I tell a short story. I try to make them relaxed. For example, lights are important. We should use the appropriate light in the classroom. And also heat and the size of class are important.”(Trainee 7)

Some classroom strategies to improve the physical conditions in language classrooms are also suggested:

“I put a message box to the class. Students can send and receive message to each other with the help of teacher. Teacher also can send messages to students. It improves their literacy skills.” (Trainee 8)

“Labels: Children’s names are written on the chair or classroom tools’ names like chair, board can be written. Posters: Children’s birthday dates, or the books that they have read can be written on the colourful poster. Messages: Classroom rules or the things that children shouldn’t forget should be written on message box. For example; do not forget to bring your crayons on Friday.” (Trainee 9)

Table (3) Holding Attention

Classroom Practice to Overcome the Discipline Problem	Trainee’s Cognition
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<i>Activity types</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-add variety 2-tell memoirs 3-use Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT) 4-keep students busy 5-design fun and interesting activities 6-encourage GW, competition, reward 7-draw pictures
<i>Teacher-related issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-adjust voice tone 2-make use of non-verbal communicaiton 3-pay attention to timing 4-raise curiosity 5-give breaks 6-apply questionnaires

In addition to the strategies suggested at the beginning of this paper to hold learners' attention, a trainee suggests talking about out-of-topic issues such as giving some personal information to learners:

“To hold bored and restive children’s attention, I would tell some stories or memoirs from my own life as students are always interested in teachers’ life (of course in a language in their level).”(Trainee 10)

Effective timing and appropriate use of teaching materials are also emphasised:

“The reason why they are getting bored is because of the same way of teaching during the whole-lesson time. Even a cartoon can be boring when it is shown more than it is necessary. Timing is important, for all kinds of activities, teaching and application time should be adjusted.” (Trainee 11)

Applying questionnaires to find out the reasons for learners’ lack of attention is included is another suggested view:

“At first, I would try to make general picture (for myself) of what they dis/like, what they are interested in, what kind of learners they are, what kind of people they take as models, etc. By handing out questionnaires, for example. Then, I may apply these when I see that they have lost their attention to the lesson.” (Trainee 12)

Tutor logs

Table (4) Reflections from trainee teachers’ tutor logs

Classroom Practice	Trainee’s Cognition
<i>Placement School (Observation Stage) 4TH year, 1ST semester</i>	1-feel like neither student nor teacher 2-cannot familiarise himself/herself with the teaching context
<i>Placement School (Teaching Stage) 4TH year, 2ND semester</i>	“we planned before but in the class we couldn’t apply” 1-feel like inexperienced in teaching 2-have negative psychological mood (i.e., feel excited, nervous) 3-have poor lesson planning

The points summarised in the first column of Table 4 reflect the trainee’s ideas about the teaching which they did at least once in the first semester of their final year. From their views we may come to the conclusion that at the observation stage of the placement module, trainees find it difficult to fit themselves in the school atmosphere. They stated that they feel themselves neither students nor teachers in the language classroom. They are not students because they are both equipped with the necessary information about teaching and responsible for communicating with the academic staff at the placement school. They are not teachers because they own neither a degree nor a classroom of their own. Being at the placement schools just one day within a week for only three class hours make them feel unfamiliar with the educational context. That may be one of the reasons why trainees do not feel themselves as teachers.

In the second stage of the placement module, trainee teachers emphasise that due to being inexperienced in teaching at actual language classrooms, they cannot follow the time slots that they devote for each classroom activity. They also mention that before teaching, they prepare lesson plans, teaching materials, some activity types but on the spur of teaching they miss some points in their lesson plans. They sometimes experience that what they have prepared and written in their lesson plans are below or above the learners' proficiency levels. Thus, they need to adjust themselves to the actual teaching context.

To compare the tutor logs written in the first and second stages of school placement, trainee teachers show similarities in expressing the nervousness in teaching. However, the nature of reflections written at the tutor logs towards the end of the second stage of school placement changes in a positive way. The trainee teachers feel more confident as they spend more time at the placement schools with the mentor and students and have more experience in teaching.

Discussion and conclusion

This study explores the cognitions of 65 trainee teachers of English on three classroom discipline problems over one and a half year time period. The evaluation of the data received from the questionnaires reveal that trainee teachers possess wide range cognitions about the three discipline problems. Development sessions enable trainees to further express their cognitions and the relationship between their cognitions and classroom practice. The categorisation of cognitions presented in the tutor logs implies that the senior trainee teachers transfer their reservations, which they have at the

observation stage at the placement school, to the second semester –teaching stage at the placement school. However, it is important to note that the reservations start to fade away after a few weeks of teaching experience at the placement schools at the second semester. By the end of the second semester, most of the teacher trainees state that they feel themselves ready to start their teaching careers and overcome the difficulties they face at the beginning of the teaching experience. Similar result can also be seen at Borg's study "Cognition not only shapes what teachers do but is in turn shaped by the experiences teachers accumulate" (2003, p. 95).

This study can be further expanded by comparing experienced and less experienced language teachers in order to shed light on transformations in teacher cognition which may occur over time. A longitudinal study can only deduce some of the possible processes language teachers go through in developing cognitions and skills more characteristic of experienced teachers.

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Appendix I: Questionnaire

1-Dealing with Large Classes:

How can you check that your pupils are listening and even more important, that they understand?

2-Creating a Positive Environment:

Remember your own school days. Did you like the subjects you were good at? And if you felt you were 'bad' at a subject, was that a turn-off, so that you didn't want to continue? How would you create a positive environment in which your students and you feel a sense of achievement?

3-Holding Attention:

You have a class of very lively students, who are always keen and well-behaved at the beginning of lessons, but, who soon get bored and restive. What can you do to keep them interested throughout a 45 minute lesson?

Appendix II: Tutor Log

Name:

Date:

Tutoring Location:

1. Lesson Plan

Objective:

Approach:

Materials:

Activities:

Plans for error correction:

2. Problems Encountered:

Plans for resolution of the problem:

3. Self Evaluation

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Comments:

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A STUDY OF PRIMARY CLASSROOM INTERACTIONS: IS THERE STILL GENDER IMBALANCE IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM?

KE CHEN

Abstract

This study investigates the current situation of some gender issues in primary (key stage one) education, such as gender imbalance of classroom interaction and pupils' concentration levels at different stages of class. The present study is based on the observation of the classroom interactions of a carefully selected primary class in Northeast England. Throughout the observation which lasted two months, a modified version of INTERSECT was adopted to record the classroom interactions among teacher and pupils of different genders. Three findings became apparent after the study: there was no statistically significant gender imbalance in term of attention allocation from the teacher in the classroom; however girls tend to receive more positive responses from the teacher than boys do; boys tend to be more active in the early period of class while, in contrast, girls are getting more attention from their teacher in the later period of class. Above findings could have significant psychological and pedagogical implications although require further studies.

Key words: *gender, classroom interactions, attention allocation, interaction types, concentration*

1. Introduction

The present study aims to examine the classroom interaction, particularly the attention allocation of primary teacher and the different concentration periods of pupils in mixed – sex classroom. Based on the observation, the implications of classroom interactions for the construction of pupils’ gender identities are also to be discussed.

1.1 Teachers’ attention allocation in mixed – sex classes

The tendency of boys receiving more attentions from teachers in mixed – sex classroom has been widely accepted and proved by many scholars. Brophy and Good (1970) argued that boys tend to attract more attention from teachers and ‘appear to be generally more salient in the teacher’s perceptual field’; French and French (1984), after their observation of primary school lessons, worked out the conclusion that male pupils did get more attentions from teachers due to a small group of active boys. Also in their study, French and French pointed out that a small group of active male pupils who successfully attracted significant amount of attentions from their teacher was the main explanation for the imbalanced attention allocation of the teachers. In contrast Duffy et al (2002) argued that apart from the gender of student, gender of teacher and ‘gender’ of classroom subject can also influence the way teachers allocate their attention to boys and girls. They pointed out that although boys tend to have more interactions with teachers, ‘this tendency was not the result of male students having initiated more direct verbal interactions with teachers’.

In short, the idea of boys receiving more attentions and, therefore, are more valued by educators has been proved again and again by a great number of scholars.

Those mentioned previously are just some representatives of them. However, some noticeable changes have occurred in the education world during the past decade.

Reasons behind these changes are complicated: social changes, economical changes, political changes are all important factors that are constantly pushing education into new situations.

Here in the UK, one of the major changes in education in the past decade is that girls have narrowed the gap with boys, and even over performed boys in many subjects, including some subjects traditionally considered as male's subjects. Noble and Bradford (2000) describe what is happening as 'a crisis' (however I suggests this is inappropriate as it is gender biased to put it this way) for boys. According to their study, at key stage 1 level, girls perform better than boys do in literally all subjects, including English, Mathematics, and Science (1998). In the same year, 51.3% of girls gained five or more GCSE grade A* - C, that is 10.2% more than the boys' figure. In fact, Gorard (2002) pointed out that 'in examinations at all key stages, General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), and A level, there was no gender gap'. Recent study of Younger et al (1999) even revealed that more classroom interactions are initiated by girls nowadays: 70% questions and requests in classrooms are from girls. However in their study the idea that boys receive more attention from teachers remained unchallenged.

Since the balance of performances of boys and girls has shifted to a different direction in the UK, I believe there is a need to review the traditional belief of unequal attention allocation in classroom, which was frequently used to explain the success of boys in education in the past.

1.2 Education and the construction of pupils' gender identities

A major task of this study is to examine the role of classroom interactions, particularly the way teachers' attention is distributed, in the construction of pupils' gender identities. It is believed that the construction of gender identities is an extremely complicated process which combines both biological and social components. Here I have no intention to join the debate between biological determinists and social determinists. But I do believe that pupils' gender identities are both shaping and shaped by the education they go through. This view is supported by a school of scholars. For example, Walker and Milton (2006) suggested that teachers play key roles 'as sexuality educators of primary – school – age children' in the UK and Australia. Murphy and Gipps (1996) also, in their book, highlighted the importance of school education in shaping children's gender identities.

Anthropologists believe the forming of gender identities of children is actually part of the socialization process. School education is, without a doubt, one of the important venues where children are socialised. It is generally believed that children, under normal circumstances, acquire their gender identities and recognize gender constancy before the age of seven, which is the end of key stage one education (Gorard, 2002; Kohlberg, 1966; Measor and Sikes, 1992; Nicolaisen, 1988). Therefore the present study focuses on the classroom interaction of key stage one, with the hope to identify the trace of the influence of the classroom interaction on children's' gender identities.

1.3 Pupils' concentration allocation

In the present study an interesting phenomenon is discovered: boys and girls seem to have different concentration levels at different stages of a teaching session. In short, boys tend to be involved in classroom discussion in a quicker way but also withdraw their interests quickly and easily; meanwhile, girls need more time to be fully involved, and they will dominate the classroom interactions of the second half of the teaching session. This is a message sent out by almost all observed teaching sessions of the present study. Detailed discussion will be provided in the following chapters.

2. The database

The observation took place in a primary state school in the north east of England between January 2007 and March 2007. The class observed is one of the year one classes in the school. The majority of the class pupils are five years old, a small number of them (3 out of 27) are six this year. Throughout the two months period 11 primary sciences teaching sessions were observed. Each observation lasts 30 minutes. In fact each class last approximately 45 minutes, but the teacher normally leaves the last 10 to 15 minutes for group activities in which the interactions between teacher and pupils are minimized. Therefore the observation only focuses on the first 30 minutes which promise continuous and sufficient classroom interactions.

2.1 The school and class choice

There are some reasons why the author to chose this school and this class.

Firstly this school is a typical British state school located in an area where the majority of local residents are working class. Compared with those private schools, I suggest it is a better representative of the sort of education that most pupils in Britain go through at primary level.

Secondly, year one is the first year of formal education for pupils. What they see and learn in this year is apparently different from what they got from nursery level. Therefore the author suggests year one is a vital year for pupils to adapt themselves in formal educational environment and reposition themselves, consciously or unconsciously. It is also at this stage their gender identities start to show. As Nicolaisen (1998) pointed out that the differentiation of children's gender roles is 'traceable to age two and pronounced about age five or six'. This is the time when boys and girls are about to pronounce their gender identities. The author, therefore, believes that the education they get from school at this stage is influential in the forming of their gender identities because school is one of the major venues for children of this age to socialise themselves.

Apart from the above reasons, there are some other points that help the author to make this choice. The size of this class is reasonable and manageable given the purpose of the observation. There are 27 pupils in this class; among them are 15 boys and 12 girls. This ensures that neither gender can dominate the classroom simply because there is a greater number of it. Another plus point of this class is the way they arrange the seats in classroom: there is no seats arrangement at all. Actually during the class pupils sit on the floor mat instead of on fixed chairs and desks. This means that pupils are free to choose where they want to sit, who to sit next to, as well as how close

to be from the teacher in the class. They are even free to move to a more preferable place throughout the class. Normally the teacher will not intervene unless some extra 'naughty' pupils sit too close to each other. From time to time, the teacher may ask pupils who are not behaving in the front rows to move to the back rows as a sort of punishment. But this rarely happens. This provides the author with an opportunity to observe the way pupils arrange seats for themselves and leads to some interesting findings.

2.2 INTERSECT

In their study, Sadker et al (1984) developed the so called INTERSECT (Interactions for Sex Equity in Classroom Teaching) as a tailor made instrument for classroom interaction observations with the purpose of detecting gender differentiated attention allocations. Duffy et al (2002) suggested that INTERSECT 'aids in the conversion of general classroom interactions into organized, measurable elements'.

The present study adopts a modified version of INTERSECT given the fact that although it is designed for similar purpose of this study, Sadker aimed to use it at high school and college level. Before the actual observation started, the author conducted several piloting observations which indicated that the original INTERSECT is not 100% fit for observations at the primary stage, year one level. Throughout the observation, some characteristics of the teaching at year one level became clearer. Firstly the interactions between teacher and pupils are mostly verbally initiated by the teacher; secondly the interactions at this level tend to be short and simple due to pupils' lack of abilities of understanding and communicating; thirdly most children

take being selected for individual interactions by the teacher as a praise, therefore they will put their hands up whenever the teacher ask questions, even when they have no idea about the answer at all.

Given the above characters, the author modifies the INTERSECT into a simpler version. Two major changes have been made here: (1) remove the element of the initiation of interactions from the original INTERSECTS; (2) in term of the interactions type, combine Praise and Accept to form a new type: *positive interaction*, which refers to teacher being positive towards pupils. On the other hand, Remediate and Criticise are also combined together to form *negative interaction*, which means the teacher holds a negative attitude in the interaction.

3. Analysis

Throughout the observation, the author noticed that some common features are shared by those teaching sessions. First of all, neither gender showed any statistically significant tendency to dominate classroom interactions with the teacher. However boys and girls do tend to receive different treatments in term of types of interactions. One interesting finding of the observation is that boys and girls demonstrated different cognitive style by showing different concentration levels at different teaching periods. In this chapter above findings will be elaborated and discussed by providing detailed analysis of one randomly selected teaching session.

3.1 Distribution of Interactions

27 pupils were sitting in the classroom in the selected session, among them there are 15 boys and 12 girls. A female teacher was in charge of the science class. The teaching topic of the session is 'to tell the differences of young and adult animals'.

A SPSS frequencies analysis reveals that during the 30 minutes, 86 one to one interactions took place between teacher and pupils. In average, each child had 3.19 one to one interactions with their teacher. However the author noticed that 5 pupils have had only one interaction with the teacher. Another 5 pupils did not participate into any sort of individual interactions at all. Among them there are 3 boys and 2 girls. On the other end, there are extremely active pupils. One boy had 10 individual interactions. Two girls each had 9 and 7 interactions with the teacher which are both way above the average level. In other words, 10% of the population had 30% of the interactions. In their study, French and French (1984) claimed that 'the distributional imbalance between boys and girls is manifestly due to a particular, small subset of boys taking a disproportionately high number of turns'. In contrast, the present study demonstrates that there are both boys and girls in the classroom that take high number of turns. This new situation, in theory, should lead to some noticeable change to the traditional way of distributional imbalance.

Indeed the analysis shows that the direction of the imbalance has been shifted in the classroom. A One way ANOVA analysis reveals that the average number of turns taken by girls is 3.58, in contrast, the figure for boys is only 2.87. Apparently girls are, in average, receiving more attention than boys do in the classroom, but a high decile range (7.40 in this case) indicates it is dangerous to make any conclusion base on those figures. In fact, given that $p=0.513$, it lacks any statistical significance to make a

conclusion about any association between pupils' genders and amount of attentions received.

After the above analysis, the author suggests that in the present study, gender inequity in term of number of turn takings has not been detected in the selected classroom. A study did by French and French (1984) 20 years ago proved the existence of classroom inequity and pointed out a small number of extremely active boys is the reason of the imbalance. In the present study, a small number of equally active girls are identified and changed the situation. In fact, although no statistically significant conclusion can be drawn in the present study, throughout the observation the author failed to sense any disadvantages upon girls in term of attention allocation from the teacher.

3.2 Types of interactions

American researchers Sadker et al. (1984) suggested that classroom interactions can be put into different categories. In their study, four major types of interactions were identified: praise, accept, remediate, and criticise. However, given the much simpler structure of the conversations that occur in the early stage of key stage one classroom, the present study uses a modified model for analysis purpose. Throughout the observation, message from teacher are categorized into positive and negative message. A positive message could be anything that makes pupils feel good. In the piloting observation, the author noticed that at this age pupils are easily impressed. In fact, receiving messages from the teacher itself could be a positive message for most pupils unless the message is negative in obvious ways.

In the selected teaching session, there were 86 interactions between teachers and pupils recorded within the 30 minutes. Among them 43 messages were sent to boys by the teacher and the other 43 messages were for girls. The observation reveals that among the 43 messages for boys, 18 were categorized as positive messages. In those messages, boys' behaviours (intellectual performances or non – intellectual conducts) was praised or accepted by the teacher. The remaining 25 messages were pretty negative. In those messages boys were either criticized or their behaviours were rejected and corrected by the teacher. On the other hand, girls received 33 positive messages and only 10 negative ones.

Based on the above data, girls seem to receive more positive responses from their teacher than boys do. A One way ANOVA test proves the statistical significance of this trend. The result shows that each boy, in average, received 1.13 positive responses in the 30 minutes, in contrast, each girl managed to receive 2.75 positive messages. $P = 0.026$, which promises the feasibility of making a conclusion that the gender of pupils is a factor that influences the amount of positive and negative responses they receive from their teacher in classroom interaction. Further analysis indicates that Pearson Correlation score of it is 0.427. Therefore the author suggests that the gender of pupils is playing a pretty heavy role in teachers selecting of positive or negative evaluations in the classroom.

In the present study, the attention allocation to each gender seems to be irrelevant with the gender factor. However, in term of interaction types, boys and girls are apparently receiving different treatments. Girls are receiving more positive responses than boys do in the observed classes. This did not only happen in the single

teaching session that is being discussed here, it is a common feature demonstrated by all 11 observed teaching sessions. This phenomenon could be explained by that girls simply perform better than boys do in the classroom, or teacher's perception that girls are more fragile and sensitive than boys are. But it still lacks of tangible evidences for making any conclusion, and the author is aware that this is not the place to pursue the causes further because it is not the aim of the present study.

According to Delamont (1990), schools 'develop and reinforce sex segregations, stereotypes and even discriminations which exaggerate the negative aspect of sex roles in the outside world'. Howe (1997) also suggested that 'regardless of the implications for academic achievement, classroom interaction may effect perceptions of occupational suitability by making pupils of one sex or the other feel uncomfortable with certain occupations and/or associated subjected. The author suggests that what was going on in the observed class surely reminded the pupils of the differences between each gender. The unequal allocation of positive and negative responses could also easily lead to pupils' different perceptions of their future development. In this case, positive responses are likely to inject more confidence and interests about primary science into girls. More positive responses from the teacher could also be seen as extra protection from the teacher. Different treatment like this could contribute to children's awareness and acceptance of differences between the two genders, either consciously or unconsciously. This, in a long run, could lead to further narrowing down of the gender gap in terms of academic performance (or even create a reversed gap), and widening the gender gap in term of children's gender

identities as a result of socialization. This implication will be further elaborated in the following chapter.

3.3 Change of pupils' concentration level

According to French and French (1984), pupils are actually in the driver's seat in classroom interaction. Throughout the present observation, one trend has become apparent: boys tend to be more active in the early period of class while, in contrast, girls are getting more attention from their teacher in the late period of class. The author suggests that it is the change of pupils' concentration level in the classroom that changed the balance in it.

In the present study, in order to observe the trend, each teaching session was divided in to three 10 minutes periods. In the first 10 minutes of the selected teaching session, boys had been involved in a total of 18 one – on – one conversation with the teacher, while girls only had 11. Move to the second period, girls started picking up speed from here. Throughout the 10 minutes, girls had 16 turns to take, while boys had 15. In the last 10 minutes, 15 turns were directed to boys and another 16 to girls. Given the above observation, the author suggests that boys receive more attention from the teacher at the early stage of a teaching session while girls have more attention from their teacher in the later period of the class.

But, is this situation simply a result of the change of teachers' perception, or it is, as suggested by French and French (1984), a result of the change of the pupils' attitude? The author believes that by having a look at the change of the seating arrangement of the classroom the truth can be revealed. As mentioned previously,

pupils are free to choose and change their seat throughout the teaching session in the selected class. Therefore the picture of the classroom is constantly changing. Three pictures are used here to demonstrate what was going on in the classroom. Picture 1 shows the scene of the classroom at the beginning of the class. At that point, boys (shown as small squares) were occupying the centre of the room and generally closer to the teacher. It is also in this period that more of the teacher's attention was allocated to boys. Picture 2 is the scene at the beginning of the second period. Some changes can be seen here: boys started to withdraw from the teacher and the centre of the room, while more girls were getting closer to the teacher. In picture 3 which was taken in period 3 we can see an obvious contrast with picture 1 of period 1. In it girls were surrounding the teacher while more boys moved to the far end of the classroom. However some boys reoccupied the centre of the room (See picture 1, 2, and 3 in Appendix).

In fact it is not only the seating that reveals the change of concentration of pupils. As the observer sitting in the classroom, the author could sense the change of the atmosphere. In the earlier stage of the class, boys are more active and tend to give quality answers towards teacher's questions. However in the later stage, girls took over and gained more positive responses from the teacher. The pedagogical implications of this trend are to be further discussed in the next chapter.

4. Discussion and conclusion

By observing classroom interactions in a class of a local primary school in England, the present study demonstrates some interesting findings. Firstly the traditional view of

gender inequity in classroom has been challenged in the present study. A modified observational framework was adopted and the result revealed that in the selected classroom, male students are no longer, as traditionally suggested by a school of scholars, the group that enjoys privileges in classroom. Analysis points out that there is no statistically significant imbalance in the classroom interaction between teacher and pupils. In fact, girls were actually receiving slightly more attention from their teacher in the selected class.

However, by having a close look at the types of interactions, the author suggests that a different mode of gender imbalance occurred in this case. It is suggested in the present study that girls tend to receive more positive responses from their teacher than boys do. This trend is proved to be statistically significant.

The above findings can be used to provide some explanations to some changes that are currently happening in education. As Noble and Bradford (2000) suggested in their book that the traditional gender gap in education (which refers to boys over performing girls in school) is quickly disappearing, a new reversed gap in favour of girls has started to show in the past decade. The immediate implication of this change could be that boys' lack abilities needed to compete in the job market in the near future. In fact this is already happening in UK as suggested by Noble and Bradford. A long term implication of this change is to the construction of pupils' gender identity. As mentioned previously, key stage one is a vital stage where pupils' gender identities are formed. It is at this stage that most pupils start to realise and show their gender identities. In the present study it was suggested that boys receive less privilege than they used to do in the past. This is an indication of

the increased confidence in girls. On the other hand, it could also be a signal of frustration for boys. In fact throughout the observation, the author noticed that girls were normally in command in mixed – sex group during group activity time. Noble and Bradford (2000) pointed out that an ‘anti – swot culture’ is dominating boys nowadays: boys are generally more rebellious. They do not want to cooperate with school and parents, and refuse to work hard. In contrast more girls are willing to work hard and behave in school. Many teachers believe this is part of the nature of boys and girls. However the author suggests that receiving more critiques in the classroom could be playing a role in pushing boys into the state of rebellion. In contrast, more praises encourage girls to perform well and boost their confidence in classroom.

Another finding of the present study is that boys and girls tend to vary their concentration levels at different stage of class. Generally speaking boys are more likely to kick an early start and also give up quickly. Girls take over the classroom at the second half of the class and gain more attention (mostly positive responses) from their teacher. I believe this finding has got long term pedagogical implication once being confirmed at a wider scale. For instance, teachers could use a teaching plan to attract girls’ attention at the early stage of a class to help them to make an early start as well. Things like arranging more boy – friendly topics in the later stage of a class could also be done to boost boys’ attention level. However given the limited scale of the present study, the author suggests that further studies are needed before any of the potential implications could become a reality.

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Appendix

Pictures 1, 2, and 3 show the seating arrangements of the classroom at different stages of a teaching session.

Picture 1 is the scene of the first 10 minutes.

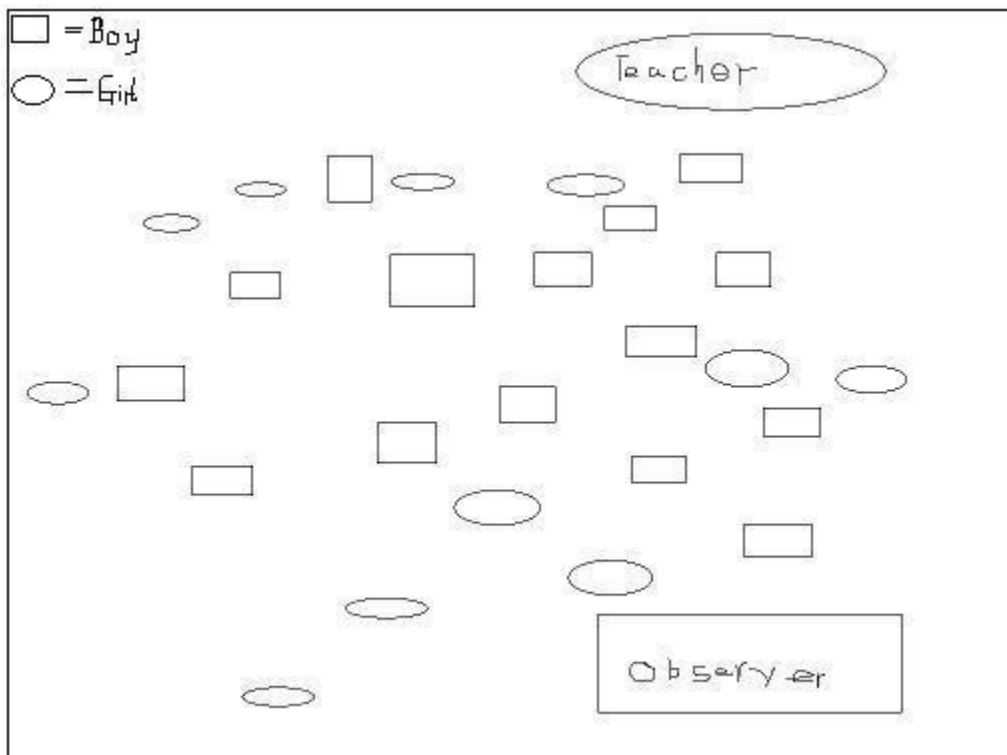
Picture 2 is taken at the beginning of the second 10 minutes.

Picture 3 is for the last 10 minutes.

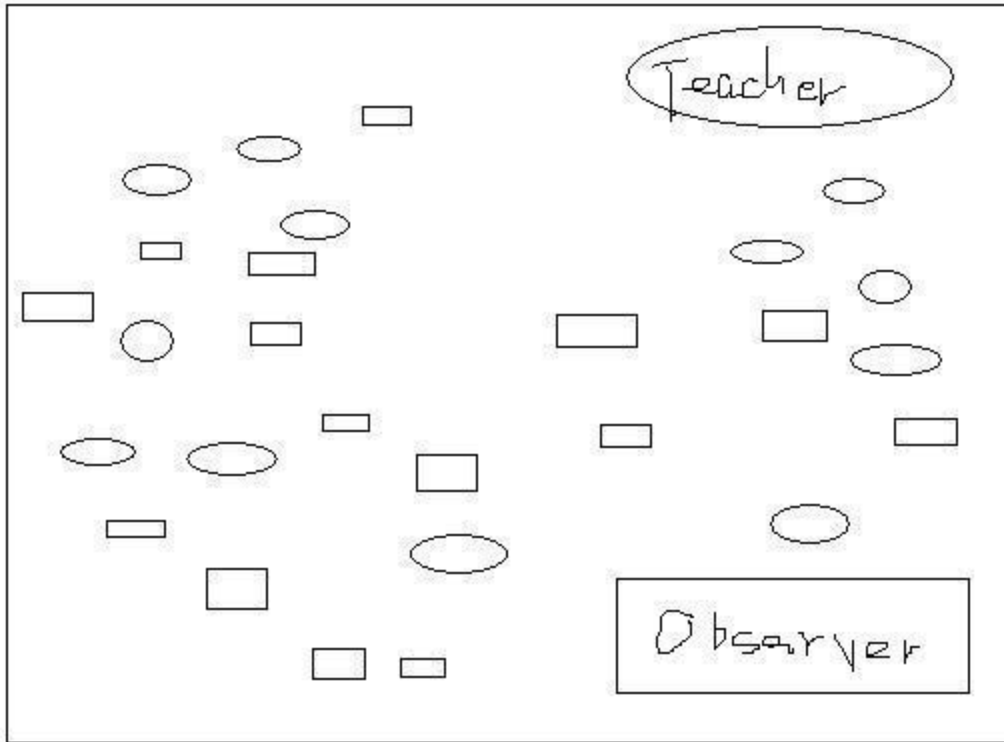
□ = boys

○ = girls

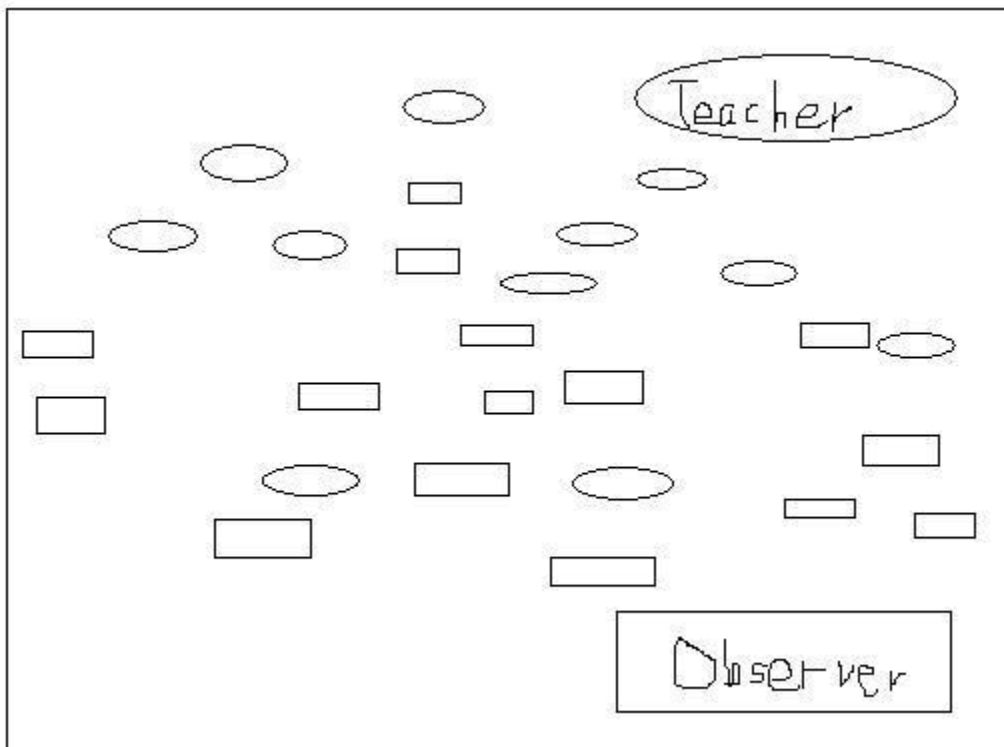
Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



About the author:

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***THE EFFECT OF CONJUNCTIVE TYPES ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
READING COMPREHENSION OF LIBYAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS***

ABDUSSALAM A. INNAJIH

Abstract

This paper investigated the effect of conjunctive types: additives, adversatives, causals and temporals on the reading comprehension of Libyan university students. By revising the related literature, it appeared that so far there is no consensus on the actual effect of the explicit presence of conjunctive types on foreign language text understanding. Many studies came to the conclusion that different conjunctive types have different effect on the reading comprehension of foreign language readers. Two experiments were organised: pre-post-test and only-post-test experiment to collect data for the study. Participants were assigned randomly to comparative groups and treatment groups. The participants of the treatment groups were explicitly taught conjunctive types and their relation to reading comprehension for three months before they, together with the comparative groups, were post-tested. The findings suggested that the treatment groups

benefited most from the additives and least from the adversatives and the causal conjunctives. It is recommended that conjunctives are taught individually not in groups with more focus on the difficult conjunctive types.

Key words: *reading comprehension, conjunctives, additive, adversative, causal, temporal, cohesion, coherence*

Introduction

This study investigates the impact of textual cohesive conjunctives on the reading comprehension of fourth year English department students in two Libyan universities. The cohesion theory as suggested by Halliday and Hasan (1976) was adopted as the main theoretical background to this study. Consequently, the terms and conjunctives as defined and classified by Halliday and Hasan (1976) were followed. Only the conjunctives which join independent sentences and contribute to the local and global coherence of the text were examined.

According to their semantic function, conjunctives are divided by Halliday and Hasan (1976) into four types: additive/ *and* group, adversative/ *but* group, causal/ *so* group and temporal/ *then* group. Whether all types of conjunctives facilitate reading comprehension with the same level of effect is controversial. Contradictory findings have been revealed by many empirical studies. Some of these findings have confirmed the facilitating role of all conjunctive types to reading comprehension (Chapman 1983, Chaudron and Richards 1986, Geva 1992, Sanders and Nordman 2000, Chung 2000, Degand and Sanders 2002). They argue that conjunctives signal the semantic relations

existing in a text and make these relations explicit which help in facilitating reading for comprehension. A large number of studies have revealed that different types of conjunctives affect reading comprehension differently (Stoodt 1972, Cooper 1984, Caron, Micko and Thûring 1988, Goldman and Murray 1992, Millis and Just 1994, Murray 1997, Ozono and Ito 2003).

Other researches' findings, however, have challenged this positive impact, claiming that a text is coherent with or without the explicit presence of conjunctives (Irwin 1982). A handful of studies have even found that conjunctives have a negative impact on reading comprehension because they make the linked sentences longer and add extra load on the reader's brain (Millis, Graesser and Haberlandt 1993). "Thus, so far there is no consensus on the exact role of explicit [conjunctives] in text", (Degand and Sanders 2002, p.470).

Based on these contradictory findings, the researcher decided to shed more light on this topic by investigating the impact of all conjunctive types on the reading comprehension of fourth year English department students in two Libyan universities. However, after Innajih's (2006) study suggested that all conjunctive types facilitate the reading comprehension of foreign language readers, this study investigated the effect of every individual conjunctive type on the reading comprehension of Libyan students. It explored whether the conjunctive types affect reading comprehension in the same way or whether some of them are more facilitative of reading comprehension than others.

Literature review

In this review some of the studies which suggested that some conjunctive types are more facilitative to reading comprehension than others are discussed.

Stoodt (1972) examined the relationship between understanding grammatical conjunctions and reading comprehension. His reading comprehension test included conjunctives such as *and, as, because, but, either, since, so, for, if, while, and yet*. His second purpose of the study was to “explore the difference in the difficulty of various conjunctions”.

Stoodt’s (1972) study findings revealed a significant relationship between reading comprehension and understanding of conjunctions. In addition, he found that some conjunctions are significantly difficult and a few others were significantly easy. Conjunctions such as *so, but, or, while* were found to be difficult, whereas conjunctions such as *and, how* and *for* were found easy for readers to use in reading comprehension.

Even though the findings of this study suggested that there is a strong relationship between reading comprehension and the comprehension of conjunctions, it appeared that the sample of conjunctions Stoodt (1972) used did not represent the large number of this grammatical category. Furthermore, there was no clear distinction between the conjunctive types. This makes it difficult to decide which conjunctive type is more facilitative to reading comprehension than others. For example, he found *or* a difficult conjunction and *and* an easy conjunction though both of them are sisters of the additive family as Halliday and Hasan (1976) classify them.

Cooper’s (1984) research findings, which involved what he called practiced (skilful) and un-practiced students as participants, revealed that practiced readers were

better than un-practiced readers in identifying the cohesive relations which are signalled by cohesive devices such as conjunctions.

Cooper concluded that unskilled readers did not benefit from the explicit presence of conjunctions because they are uncertain of the meaning of conjunctions, especially the adversative type. It seems that "the only relationship that they seemed fairly sure of was addition, typically signalled by *moreover, furthermore...etc*" (Cooper 1984, p.132). Skilled readers were in a better position to benefit from the explicit presence of conjunctives in written texts since they managed to recognize the semantic relationships beyond the sentence level.

Caron et al's (1988) study is another contribution to the clarification of the contradictory findings related to the impact of conjunctives on reading comprehension. It examined the actual impact of conjunctives on the sentence processing in that whether different conjunctives lead to different representation, and whether this affects the recall of the sentences joined by conjunctives.

Caron et al. (1988) selected *because, and, and but* to be the representatives of causal, additive and adversative conjunctive types in their study. This choice was based on their assumption that causally related events are easy to remember, *and* suggests many semantic relations, and *but* could be as useful to inference as *because*, but it may act differently. Temporal relation was not represented by any conjunctive in Carol et al.'s study. The researchers gave no explanation for this exclusion which may affect generalisation of the findings to all conjunctives.

As expected, *because* sentences were found to be better recalled than *and* sentences and the unconnected condition. The unconnected sentences recorded the lowest percentage of the recall scores.

It deserves to mention here that the testing materials used in Caron et al's (1988) study included unrelated sentences which made the recall task difficult. This meant imposing any semantic relationship on unrelated clauses/sentences requires much of inference and elaboration which consequently consumes more time and faces the risk of failure in producing the correct interpretation. Only coherent events are encoded and remembered quickly and easily.

In Goldman and Murray's (1992) study several conjunctives were selected as representatives of all conjunctive types (i.e. additives, causals, adversatives, and sequential conjunctions). From the additives, *for example, for instance, in addition, in particular, in fact* and *indeed* were chosen. The causals were represented by *thus, so, consequently, as a result, as a consequences, and therefore*. The adversatives were *but, however, and nevertheless*. And finally the sequential conjunctives were represented by *briefly, first, finally, in short, second* and *third*.

The study findings suggested that the participants were more successful in choosing the additives and the causals than in choosing the adversatives and the sequential conjunctives. However, contrary to the researchers' expectations, confidence rating data revealed no significant difference among conjunctive types. As Goldman and Murray (1992, p.517) stated, it seems that "ESL students were no more confident of their adversative or sequential choices than they were of their additive and causal choices".

Murray (1997) investigated how different conjunctive types facilitate reading comprehension differently. This study intended to "explore the psychological mechanism underlying the differential contribution made by additive, causal and adversative [conjunctions] to integrative processes" (Murray 1997, p.228).

Three types of conjunctives were used: additives which represented by *moreover*, *furthermore*, and *and*; causals represented by *therefore*, *so*, *thus*, and *consequently*; and adversatives represented by *yet*, *nevertheless*, *however*, and *but*.

The findings of this study supported the 'continuity hypothesis' suggested by Murray (1997). It was found that conjunctives are "powerful indicators of continuity and discontinuity in text" (Murray 1997, p.231). The causal and the additive conjunctives signal continuity whereas the adversative conjunctives signal discontinuity. This meant that the adversative conjunctives have "the greatest degree of processing facilitation when they were used appropriately" (ibid. p, 235).

This conclusion contradicts many other research findings which revealed that the causal conjunctives are more beneficiary to reading process and reading comprehension than other conjunctive types (Canon et al. 1988 and Millis and Just 1994).

Ozono and Ito (2003) examined the effect of what they called 'logical connectives and the semantic relations they signal on the comprehension of written text.

Japanese university students studying English as a second language were the participants of the study. The research participants were divided into two groups according to their English proficiency: low proficiency group and high proficiency group. Three conjunctives representing three semantic relations were used. Adversatives were represented by *however*; causals by *therefore* and illustrative by *for example*.

The finding of the study showed that both low and high language proficiency groups benefited from the explicit presence of conjunctives in the texts used for testing their reading comprehension. However, it appeared that certain types of conjunctives are more useful to reading comprehension than others. For instance, “unlike the high group, the low group tended to find *however* more difficult than *therefore*, and *therefore* more difficult than *for example*”, (Ozono & Ito 2003, p. 290).

This finding could be explained by what Ozono and Ito (2003) called the ‘cognitive load’ which they defined as “the psychological load imposed on the reader's processing capacity by linguistic constituents within text” (ibid. p, 293). They argued that this theory could explain why *for example* is processed easier than *however*. With *for example*, there is a little amount of cognitive load since the direction of reasoning is coincided with the reader's direction, *however*, in contrast, collides with the reasoning direction.

Methodology

This paper tried to answer the question which asked whether certain conjunctive types are more facilitative to reading comprehension than others. To answer this question quantitative data were collected by the application of two intervention programmes. This quantitative approach included *pre and post- tests* and *post-test only* experiments. The first one organised in Gharian English Department and the second, i.e. ‘*post-test-only*’ experiment was held in Sabrata English Department.

The rationale behind adopting experimentation as the prime method of investigation was to examine whether the reading comprehension of Libyan university students improved if they were explicitly taught conjunctives in their reading comprehension course. In other words, there was a need to assess whether explicit teaching of conjunctives causes an improvement of the reading comprehension of Libyan university students. The participants of the experiments were randomly assigned to two groups. One group was explicitly taught conjunctive items (i.e. treatment group), and another group was taught the traditional syllabus (i.e. comparative group). And by pre- and post-testing both groups and comparing their tests results, it was possible to know whether the teaching of conjunctives had any significant effect on the reading comprehension of the treatment group.

Participants

Forth year English department students from two Libyan universities were selected to be the sample of this study. 30 students from Gharian University contributed to the first intervention programme and 70 students from Sabrata English Department participated in the next post-test only intervention programme. The sample selected for the two experiments which were organised in the Gharian and the Sabrata English Departments were assigned randomly to the intervention groups: comparative and treatment.

Testing materials

In this research a *multiple-choice rational cloze test* was used as the measuring instrument for both pre and post-tests. This test type has been used by many educational researchers because of its consistency and practicability. For example, Goldman and Murray (1992) used this test procedure to test the reading comprehension of their participants. Many other researchers have examined the validity of this test type and found it consistent. McKenna and Layton (1990) cited in Goldman and Murray (1992) stressed the sensitivity of the rational cloze test to the inter-sentential integration.

The test covered all conjunctive types. From the additive type *and, furthermore, not only, for example, in other words* were chosen; from the adversatives *still, yet, whereas, nevertheless, however*; from the causals *arising from this, therefore, since, consequently, thus*; and from the temporals *then, at this point, at this moment, firstly* and *finally* were selected.

Intervention materials

Selected materials were used as the main syllabus for the reading comprehension course of all fourth year students. However, the research intervention programme which was taught to the treatment groups was distinguished by the inclusion of different activities (suggested by Salimbene and Widdowson 1986). Those activities focused on explicit teaching of conjunctives and their facilitative role in reading comprehension. Apart from that, similar reading texts were used by both treatment and comparative groups and time period allocated to the intervention programme was similar: two hours per week for 12 weeks.

Data analysis

In Innajih (2006, p.18) it was found that “explicit teaching of conjunctions was found to be useful for better reading comprehension”. In this paper, post-tests results of Gharian and Sabrata treatment groups were analysed in relation to conjunctive types. Data collected were presented and analysed in relation to the research question by using SPSS for Windows software, version 12.0. Statistical t-tests were conducted to find out if there were any significant differences between the means of the conjunctive types scores in the post-tests of the Gharian and the Sabrata treatment groups.

Gharian post-test data

Every correct answer was given two scores which meant that the full mark of each conjunctive type was 10. The total marks of the test was 40 (i.e. 10 the full mark of each conjunctive type X 4 the number of conjunctive types = 40). The result of each conjunctive type was calculated separately. This helped to examine the level of difficulty for each conjunctive type in comparison with the other types. Frequency and percentage of conjunctive types' scores are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Conjunctive type scores out of ten are classified into categories

Score Of 10	Additive		Temporal		Causal		Adversative	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
0	0	00.0	0	00.0	1	6.66	5	33.33
2	0	00.0	0	00.0	4	26.66	3	20
4	1	6.66	3	20	5	33.33	3	20
6	6	40	6	40	4	26.66	4	26.66
8	7	46.66	5	33.33	1	6.66	0	00.0
10	1	6.66	1	6.66	0	00.0	0	00.0
Total	15	100.0	15	100.0	15	100.0	15	100.0
Mean	7.06		6.53		4.0		2.8	
Percent	70.7		65.3		40.0		28.0	

The types of conjunctives score means were arranged in an ascending in order to explore the highest achievement and the lowest one. It was suggested that the participants were able to score high marks with easy conjunctive type(s) and low marks with difficult conjunctive type(s). With this in mind, and by reviewing the means calculated for each conjunctive type, the following classification was suggested: easy, moderate, difficult, and very difficult conjunctive type(s). From the means of the conjunctive types obtained it was concluded that the additive conjunctives were the easiest and the adversatives were the most difficult. In between came the temporals which were classified as moderate and the causals as difficult as shown in the table below.

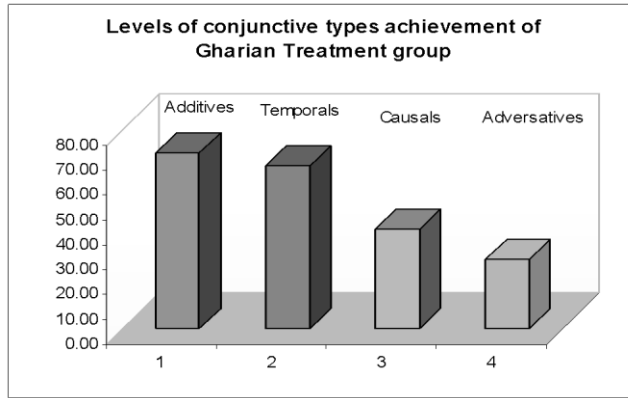
Table 2 Level of difficulty of conjunctive types

Level of difficulty	Easy	Moderate	Difficult	Very difficult
Conjunctive type	additive	temporal	Causal	adversative
Mean	7.06	6.53	4.0	2.8
Percent	70.7	65.3	40.0	28.0

Figure1 below illustrates the level of difficulty the participants of the treatment group found with the conjunctive types. This result answered the question of whether some conjunctive types are more facilitative to reading comprehension than others. It was clear that the participants of the Gharian treatment group performed much better with the

additive conjunctives. This was followed by the temporal conjunctives. The causals and adversatives appeared to be difficult.

Figure 1 Classifying conjunctive types according to their level of difficulty



Sabrata post-test data

The participants of the Sabrata treatment group were able to score high marks with easy conjunctive type(s) and low scores with difficult conjunctive type(s). By considering the calculated means of the conjunctive types we were able to classify them according to their levels of difficulty as follows. “Easy” label was given to the highest mean and “very difficult” for the very difficult mean. In between “moderate” and “difficult” levels were suggested as presented in Table 3 below.

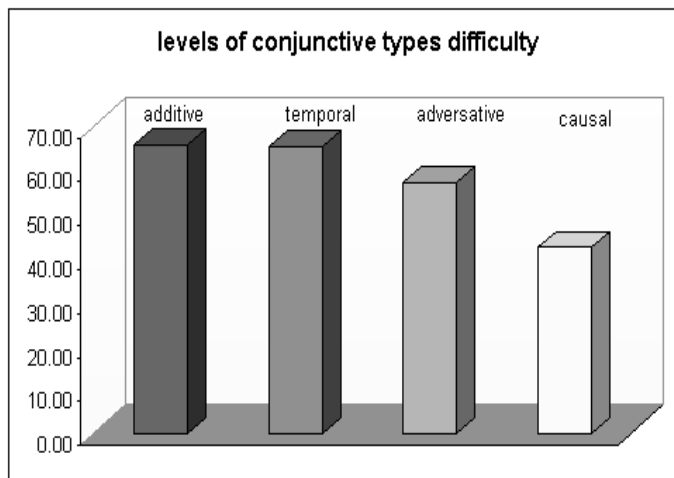
Table 3 Classifying conjunctive types according to their level of difficulty

Level of difficulty	Easy	Moderate	difficult	very difficult
<i>Conjunctive type</i>	<i>Additive</i>	<i>Temporal</i>	<i>Adversative</i>	<i>Causal</i>
Mean	65.7	65.1	57.1	42.3
Percent	65.7	65.1	57.1	42.3

By describing the scores of the conjunctive types of the reading comprehension test and presented them in the form of frequency and percentages, and by calculating the score mean of every conjunctive type, the question which asked whether some

conjunctive types are more facilitative to reading comprehension than others was answered. It was clear that the additive conjunctives were the most facilitative conjunctive type to the reading comprehension of the Sabrata treatment group and followed by the temporal conjunctive type, while the adversative and the causal conjunctives were the least facilitative types as illustrated by Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 Levels of conjunctive types' difficulty



By comparing the findings of the Gharian and the Sabrata post-tests results in relation to conjunctive types it was found that both groups were 75 per cent equal with regard to conjunctive type achievement as shown in Table 4 and Figure 3 below. These findings evidenced that the reading comprehension programme and the measuring instruments used in this study were highly consistent and had sufficient internal validity.

Figure 3 Conjunctive types achievements of Gharian and Sabrata treatment groups

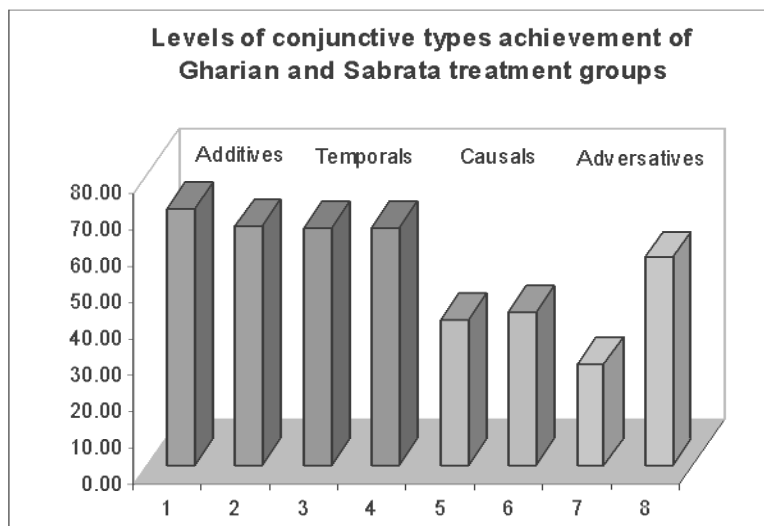


Table 4 Conjunctive types score means, significance, and percentage of similarity of Sabrata and Gharian treatment groups

	<i>Additives</i>	<i>Temporals</i>	<i>Causals</i>	<i>Adversatives</i>
Ghar. Tr. Gr.	70.7	65.3	40.0	28.0
Sab. Tr. Gr.	65.7	65.1	42.3	57.14
Significance	No significance	No significance	No significance	Significance
Percent of similarity	Seventy five percent (75%)			25%

Discussion

The findings of the study mentioned above were expected since they were in congruence with many other research findings. Goldman and Murray (1992) found that the additive conjunctives were the easiest to be chosen by their study participants, which meant that these conjunctives were the most facilitative textual cohesive items to reading comprehension. Similar to this, Ozono and Ito (2003) came to the conclusion that their experiment participants performed much better in their reading comprehension with the additive conjunctives' assistance.

Goldman and Murray (1992, p.506) argued that the additive conjunctives might be the easiest for their research subjects because “for additives, readers need only determine whether an elaboration relation exists between the ideas being connected.” There was also a possibility that Goldman and Murray’s participants overused this type of conjunctives because of the various semantic relations this type of conjunctives could represent. *And*, for example, can signal many other semantic relations existing between the sentences it joins beside the additive function as Carston (1993) reported. Caron et al. (1988, p.320-21) indicated that “the function of ‘and’ appears to be quite different. [...]

this conjunction can express not only a logical conjunction, but also a variety of semantic relations between sentences, including, in particular, causal/temporal relationship.”

Contrary to the above findings, Caron et al. (1988) and Murray (1997) found that their studies participants’ recall and comprehension did not improve with the presence of the additive conjunctives in the text they were asked to recall and comprehend. Other conjunctive types were found to be more effective to recall and reading comprehension than the additives. It is suggested that these findings could be exclusive to the additive conjunctive *and* since it is commonly used by researchers as a representative to the additives. Caron et al. (1988, p.321) found that “*and* sentences were recalled least of all.” (My italic)

Contrary to our expectation, the participants of the treatment groups in Gharian and Sabrata found the temporal conjunctives as easy as the additives. No statistical significant difference was recorded between their score means. The temporal conjunctives as cohesive ties usually impose local and global semantic relations on the segments of the written text. Because of this characteristic it was assumed that FL readers could find the global relations difficult to recognise. This was highlighted by Goldman and Murray (1992). They stated that the temporal conjunctives were “more difficult for all types of readers largely because they require reference to the more global discourse context” (ibid. p. 506). As reported above, Geva (1992, p.735) also stressed that L2 readers “may be unable to deal with global coherence, based on larger text chunks.”

The causal conjunctives had a significant impact on the reading comprehension of the participants of the intervention programme, but the effect was not as high as with the additives and the temporals. This finding is in agreement with the assumption of Sanders

and Noordman (2000, p.44) who expected that “problem-solution relation leads to slower processing because it is more informative (it contains more information) than the list relation is; after all, causal relations presuppose additive relations.”

However, this finding is inconsistent with Caron et al.’s (1988, p.320) who found that “pairs of sentences connected by the conjunction ‘because’ were much better recalled than the same pairs of sentences presented unconnected and, more so, when connected by the conjunction ‘and’.” Even though recall is different from comprehension, there is a close relationship between them since recall presupposes comprehension. Other studies also found that the causal conjunctives speed the integration of sentences and save the reader’s time, (Millis and Just 1994 and Traxler et al. 1997) though of the different description they had about the stages of integration.

The little effect of the adversative conjunctives on the reading comprehension of the Gharian treatment group was expected because, as Ozono and Ito (2003) argue, the adversatives add heavy cognitive load on the L2 readers who have limited cognitive reading capacity. Another reason could be attributed to the adversative conjunctives’ lower frequency of occurrence in text books which resulted in less exposure to them, (Goldman and Murray 1992). Furthermore, the adversative relations could be more difficult to construct than others, (Caron et al. 1988).

These findings were supported by Millis and Just’s (1994) finding. It was revealed that “*although* sentences resulted in lower comprehension accuracy and slightly lower reading times than *because* sentences, there is some reason to suspect that these sentences were tougher to comprehend” (ibid. p. 143).

Contrary to the Gharian treatment group, the Sabrata treatment group found the adversative conjunctives more facilitative to the reading comprehension than the causal conjunctives which had less effect than the additives and the temporals and with no significant difference between them. This surprising result is in accordance with Murray's (1997) continuity hypothesis. This hypothesis predicts that "additive and causal connectives should lead to less processing facilitation than adversative connectives because the former indicate continuity in the discourse whereas the adversatives indicate discontinuity" (ibid. p. 229).

In summary, the findings of this study are in agreement with the majority of the studies mentioned in the literature review which found that all conjunctives facilitate reading comprehension. However, it appeared that some conjunctive types are more facilitative to reading comprehension than others. Additive conjunctives are the most facilitative to English foreign language reading comprehension and adversatives are the most difficult.

Conclusion

An overview of the research findings suggested the conclusion that some conjunctive types were more useful to the participants of the study's reading comprehension than others. In the Gharian English Department, additive conjunctives were found to be the most facilitative type to the participants' reading comprehension and adversatives were the least. Causals and temporals occupied the second and the third position in the ladder of difficulty respectively. In the Sabrata English Department, the participants found the additives the most facilitative conjunctive type and the causals had

the lowest scores in the reading comprehension post-test even though no significant differences between the causals, temporals and the adversatives were found.

Based on the findings of this study, teachers and university professors teaching English as a foreign or a second language are recommended to focus on the explicit teaching of textual cohesive conjunctives in reading comprehension lessons. Nunan (1999, 260) recommends that “cohesive relationships should be taught explicitly. In particular, logical relationships should be taught in academic reading programmes”.

However, it appeared that some conjunctive types are more facilitative to reading comprehension than others. This requires explicit teaching of conjunctives with special focus on the difficult types.

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VOWEL LENGTH DISCRIMINATION AMONG MALAY SPEAKERS OF MALAYSIAN ENGLISH: AN INSTRUMENTAL STUDY

WAN ASLYNN SALWANI WAN AHMAD

Abstract

Malaysian English is considered to have a smaller vowel inventory compared to British English or American English, since some auditory studies indicate that Malaysian English tend not to discriminate between long and short vowels. The purpose of this study is to examine this claim instrumentally. With particular reference to two sets of vowels: /i:/, /ɪ/ and /u:/, /ʊ/. The pronunciation of these words of five Malay speakers of English were recorded and analyzed instrumentally. The durations of the vowel lengths were measured. The findings indicate that these speakers do not differentiate between long and short vowels.

Key words: *applied linguistics, instrumental phonetics, language contact, bilingualism, education*

1.1 Background

Malaysian English (ME) refers to all the varieties spoken by Malaysians. Gaudart (1997, p.47) asserts that ME ranges from the “pidgins of hawkers” to the more Standard English used for official purposes. In other words, similar to other varieties of non-native Englishes, ME comprises sub-varieties that are related to factors like ethnicity, socio-economic background and the level of education of speakers. These sub-varieties can be placed on a lectal continuum of ME (Baskaran 1998). Because ME has evolved since the time it was “transported” to and “transplanted” in Malaysia (Moag 1982, p.234), it has unique linguistic patterns.

In the spoken variety of ME, there may be first language (L1) influence in the pronunciation of speakers (Zuraidah 1997, p.35). This is because the phonological inventory of the speakers’ L1 may influence their pronunciation of English, since the type and number of vowels and consonants may differ in their L1 and English. For example, Malay speakers have the tendency to use a smaller vowel set in their variety of English consistent with the vowel inventory in Malay (Zuraidah 1999). There is also the possibility of L1 influence in the suprasegmental area, which includes intonation, stress and rhythm (Brown 1991)

1.2 Statement of the problem

Based on auditory analysis, it has been claimed that speakers of ME do not distinguish vowel length (Baskaran 1994; Platt and Weber 1980). For example, ME speakers do not contrast between the /i:/, /ɪ/ and /u:/, /ʊ/ vowels. Hence words containing

these monophthongs, such as *bit* and *beat* as well as *pull* and *pool* are said to be homophones. Indeed, Malay speakers have been found to pronounce these words as homophones (Zuraidah 1997), whereas there is a difference in length between these minimal pairs as in other varieties such as in RP (Gimson 1994).

Currently, the phonological inventory of ME lacks instrumental studies, specifically in examining the length distinction and qualities of vowels.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to perform an instrumental study of the two sets of vowels, which are /i:/, /ɪ/ and /u:/, /ʊ/, to examine if acoustic data matches auditorily based descriptions of these vowels in relation to vowel length as well as vowel quality. This study will limit itself to examining the vowels used by selected Malay speakers of English.

1.4 Research question

With reference to the objective above, this study aims to answer the following question:

1. To what extent is there a difference in duration between the /i:/ and /ɪ/ vowels, and /u:/ and /ʊ/ vowels as produced by Malay speakers of English?

The question aims to examine whether there is any acoustic evidence of vowel length discrimination.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study will contribute data obtained from instrumental analysis of the selected vowels which will complement the current descriptions of ME vowels specifically in relation to /i:/, /ɪ/ and /u:/, /ʊ/ vowels being realized by Malay speakers. It is also hoped that this study will help towards building a more endonormative pedagogical model for the teaching and learning of English as a second language.

2.0 Review of related literature

This chapter begins by exploring the production of vowels, in particular the /i:/, /ɪ/ and /u:/, /ʊ/ vowels. It then proceeds to examine related studies.

2.1 The production of vowels

Vocalic sounds refer to sounds produced “with a vocoid egressive airstream, without any closure or narrowing” (Gimson 1994, p.34). Phonetically, such descriptions apply to English /j, w, r/ since these sounds are also produced with little obstruction in the vocal tract (Gimson 1994).

However for the purpose of this study, only those sounds which phonetically fit the description mentioned earlier and also phonologically occur in the Nucleus of syllables (Gimson 1994) will be considered, since this study is restricted to the analysis of vowel length. Vocoids are typically produced by changing the shape and size of the vocal tract (Clark & Yallop 1992). This is achieved by changing “the shape and the position of the

tongue, and the shape and protrusion of the lips” (Clark & Yallop 1992, p.22). Thus, three parameters used to describe vowels are height of the tongue, degree of retraction of the tongue, and the position of the lips, whether rounded, spread or neutral.

In English, the same vowel might differ from one variety to another in terms of the height of the tongue and the retraction of the tongue. For example, in the Broad Australian accent, /ɪ/ is produced with more fronting and this sound is often diphthongized. (Turner 1966) In addition, Turner (1966, p.82) explains that in Australian English, /ɪ/ is “often lowered and centralized to approach /ə/”. This schwa in Australian English is identified as stressed /ə/. For instance, when speakers of Australian English produce the word *intended* as [l̩əntendəd], where the initial syllable is realized more like a schwa instead of /ɪ/. In contrast, in the New Zealand variety of English, the same vowel appears low and more neutral, hence an outsider might mishear *pan* as *pen* and *peek* as *peck* (Turner 1966, p.67). The reason for this is basically due to different phonetic realization. Figure 2.2 (Bauer 2002, p.77) compares the KIT (the term KIT instead of /ɪ/ is used following Wells’ (1982) lexical set description) vowel in Australian English, New Zealand English and RP. The three areas, which are shaded, indicate differences in how these three varieties pronounce the KIT vowel. In the Australian variety /ɪ/ is realized in a more front position, whereas it is slightly lower than RP in the New Zealand variety.

It is also interesting to note that people of different class and status in New Zealand have different allophones for short/ɪ/, where the lower working class will realize

it as a schwa, and in some areas it is possible to perceive it as /ʊ/ (Wells, 1982). This phenomenon of different realization of the same sound or phoneme based on social status has been shown in several sociophonetics studies, such as Labov's (1972) New York study of the post vocalic /r/.

The third description of vowels is the position of the lips. In English the /i:/, /ɪ/ and /u:/, /ʊ/ vowels are produced with different lip positions. /ʊ/ vowels are produced with rounded lips, whereas, /i:/ and /ɪ/ are produced with the lips spread.

2.1.2 Vowel length discrimination

In English, apart from the quality of the vowels, the length difference between vowels play a role in distinguishing different sets of vowels in order to determine the meaning of a word. Long vowels are said to be more "tense" such as the /i:/ in the word *seat* and /u:/ in *foot* whereby short vowels are produced in a more 'lax' manner since no great muscular tense is involved (McMahon 2002, p.22). However as Grimson (1994, p.89) points out "length is not a constant distinctive feature of the vowel but is instead depending upon context ...".

Gimson (1994) goes on to explain that in English, long vowels had to be shortened when they are produced in a syllable closed by a voiceless consonant. This phenomenon is known as pre-fortis clipping (Ladefoged 2001, p.47). Thus, /i:/ in the word *beat* tends to be shorter than in *bead* (Gimson 1992, p.92).

2.2 Related studies

Zuraidah (1997) examined the production of ME vowels by Malay speakers. The subjects were twelve native speakers of Malay who had to read aloud twenty words on a list containing twenty RP vowels. From the auditory analysis of the recording, Zuraidah found that vowels produced by these speakers like /i:/, /ɪ/ and /u:/, /ʊ/ tend to have equal quality and duration. According to her, for /i:/ and /ɪ/ subjects “seem to produce another realization whose quality correspond roughly to RP /i:/ but with less marked lengthening” (Zuraidah 1997, p.38). There is also tendency for the subjects to “collapse” certain sounds with the sounds that exist in the phonological inventory of Malay. In Malay inventory, the long vowel is absent (Ismail, 1994). For the sounds /u:/ and /ʊ/, the sets *pool/pull*, *suit/soot* and *luke/look* are pronounced as homophones. Zuraidah (1997) also found that the long /u:/ in Malaysian English was produced with shorter length and more marked lip rounding.

Other studies, which are also based on auditory analysis of ME also report a similar lack of distinction between these vowels (Baskaran 1994, & Platt et. al 1980). Studies on the sounds of Singapore English (SE) however have used instrumental analysis to examine vowel quality and quantity. For example, Deterding (2003) studied the monophthong vowels of Singapore English (SE). In his study, he compared SE to that of British English (BE). The main focus was to gain comprehensive view on the vowel space of Singaporean speakers. The study also identified which vowel distinction is not maintained in SE. Deterding assumes that there is often a neutralization of vowel length

and thus, no contrast can be found in minimal pairs between the vowels such as *hid* and *heed*.

Another study on SE conducted by Suzanna and Brown (2000), looked at the /e/ and /æ/ vowels in Singaporean English (SE). They first reviewed both non-instrumental and instrumental studies (Lim 1992, Ong 1993 and Nihalani 1995) of these vowels. The instrumental studies quoted by Suzanna and Brown (2001) indicate that Singaporeans do not distinguish these vowels in terms of quality or quantity.

In contrast, most of the speakers produced more steady static vowels (Lim & Lee 2001, p.101) in informal spontaneous speech. No movement in F1 was detected for the production of these sounds and therefore, it can be concluded that monophthongization is obvious in natural speech of SE. This feature is however not exclusive only to SE since some native varieties like Welsh, Scottish, Irish as well as Midland English are reported to have monophthongization in the realization of diphthongs (Brown 1988, p.140 cited Lim and Lee 2001).

Different realizations of vowels have also been reported in other studies. The effect of gender in the pronunciation of the KIT vowel was examined by McRobbie-Utasi, Starks and Fraser (n.d). Ideally this vowel is realized from a high front to a mid central in British English (Bauer 1992 and Trudgill 1997 cited McRobbie-Utasi, Starks & Fraser, n.d), but in the New Zealand variety of English, it is reported that this vowel has a distinguishable F1 and F2 quality since it is realized in a higher tongue position. There is also variation according to age groups. The young speakers tend to centralize the vowel, whereas, the older speakers have a less centralized realization.

In conclusion, these findings indicate that there is a variation in the phonetic realizations of vowels in different varieties of English. These researches suggest that gender and geographical elements may also influence the vowel pronunciation.

2.3 Teaching English pronunciation

According to Brown (1991), linguistics and the teaching of pronunciation are often seen as separate entities. However, it is important for language teachers to be equipped with basic phonological knowledge, so that they are able to teach the students the sound inventory of the target language. Phonological knowledge is essential not only for teaching second or foreign language but also the native language. The main implication of teaching pronunciation is to ensure that the students communicate orally with other speakers of the language, and to be understood in that particular language.

The phonological knowledge of a language teacher must be “economically accurate” in his or her work with students’ pronunciation. “Accuracy” in this context means the ability of the teacher to be precise and focused in his or her teachings, especially to produce the desired sounds (Brown 1991, p.23). Whilst “economy” is defined as the ability of the instructor to know when and how long it is productive to deal specifically with pronunciation.

Although some languages may have both segmental and suprasegmental elements, students will be able to master the segmental feature more than the intonation features of the language. This is because; it is an easily learned task. As in the case of English language, it is important for the learners to know both features, especially the segmental features. When focusing on the segmental features, language teachers should

stress out the different vowel lengths in English since these elements may affect the intelligibility of the message sent. However in connected speech, sometimes the intended meaning of a particular word can be interpreted by looking at the contextual clues.

The main issue in language teaching right now, as discussed by Kachru (1992) is that whether the teachers are to teach native- like pronunciation or make their own models. Later in this paper Kachru proposes that there is a need for the new Englishes to have their own models to refer to. The main reason of communication is to be understood especially when speaking with both native and non-native speakers of English.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Subjects

For the purpose of this study, the subjects comprising 5 speakers of Malay ethnicity from similar educational backgrounds were chosen. They can be considered as proficient speakers of English since they have a basic degree in the study of English or a degree in Teaching of English as A Second Language. The assumption is that being English teachers, the subjects are generally aware of the sound inventory in English; and should be able to distinguish long and short vowels in English, even if they do not actually produce this distinction. Furthermore, these speakers have the same L1, which is crucial to maintain consistency in the data collected. In addition to this, the researcher is able to see whether there is phonological transfer from Bahasa Melayu that influences their L2 pronunciation.

3.2 Recording

A battery operated audio tape recorder (Faber, FRW- 822) and a sixty- minute blank cassette (TDK B-60) were used to record the subjects as they read aloud the following:

A word list

A list of words from Wells (1992) Lexical Set was given. The list comprised twenty words. Each of the words contained either one of these vowels /i:/, /ɪ/, /u:/ or /ʊ/. Some distracter words were also included to make the subjects feel more relax and unaware what words being analyzed here.

A read text

The subjects read a short text containing the words given in the list A. The test words are embedded in sentences (See Appendix).

3.3 Analysis

Once the recordings are completed for all the five speakers, the data was digitalized using PRAAT, a software program for analyzing speech sounds on computer (www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat). The digital versions of these recordings were then edited. The researcher only obtained the words containing /u:/, /ʊ/, /i:/ and /ɪ/. The distracters as well as other words in the text were disregarded. The duration of each vowel was measured from the onset (left edge) to the offset (right edge). All the movements were recorded and put in a database file.

3.4 Limitations of the study

This work is limited to the study of the duration of only four vowels and their formant frequencies. Thus in the read speech, the suprasegmental section of the recording is disregarded. Furthermore, the samples studied consisted of only five speakers of Malay, therefore the findings can not be generalized to all speakers of Malay and ME in their realizations of /i: /, /ɪ/ and /u: /, /ʊ/.

4.0 Data analysis

4.1 Vowel length

4.1.1 Duration of /i: / and /ɪ/

From the findings obtained in the single word list and the words embedded in sentences, it can be seen that four out of the 5 speakers have relatively the same average duration of production for each of the vowels (see table 4.1), except for the first subject (S1), which has a rather short duration for both long (184.5 msec) and short (86.2 msec). The difference between the vowel lengths of each speaker is also significant. Overall it can be said that the average measurements indicate clear differences between the production of /i: / and /ɪ/. The range of each speaker will be discussed in detail in this section.

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
/i: /	184.5	481.8	433.5	480.2	393.5
/ɪ/	86.2	301.4	328.8	355.4	349
Differences	98.3	180.4	104.7	124.8	44.5

Table 4.1

Comparison of the Average Durations of /i:/ and /ɪ/ by all the Subjects (in msec)

In short, the findings for the production of /i:/ and /ɪ/ vowels, Figure 4.1 present the different set of /i:/ and /ɪ/ for each speaker. It can be seen that these subjects distinguish between the long and short vowels, although there is an inconsistency in the patterns since some subjects have a bigger difference than the other. This may be due to their own idiosyncrasy in way of pronouncing given sounds and words, since it can be seen that S1 has shorter duration for both vowels compared to the rest of the subjects.

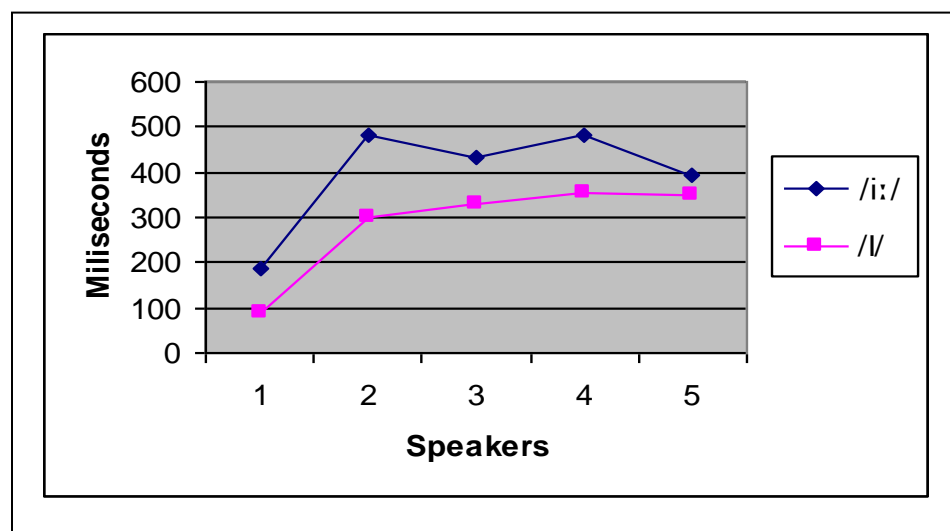


Figure 4.1
The Difference in Length (msec) between the Productions of the Vowels /i:/ and /ɪ/ by the Speakers

An assumption that can be made is that for the words with short vowels /ɪ/. The speakers produced a mean duration of between 21msecs and 49msecs, whilst the mean for the long vowel was between 31msecs and 40 msecs. There are phonotactic differences in some of the words in terms of the types of preceding and following consonants surrounding each. One example is in the word ‘bridge’

The /ɪ/ vowel was longer when it precedes /r/ and is followed by /d/. Both sounds are voiced, therefore there is a tendency for the speakers to voice and prolong this shorter vowel. The results indicate that the speakers produced the average maximum duration of 36 msec for this item.

In addition, the word 'myth', the result was a mean maximum duration of 48 msec, which is relatively long for a production of a short vowel. There is a possibility that the post consonant [vc#] made the speakers maintained the length of the vowel, in order to articulate the next sound, which is a voiced dental fricative /θ/. The findings for the long vowel /i:/ indicate that the data obtained from the subjects varies significantly. The minimum duration produced were 21 msec (*feel*) and 7.4 msec (*creep*). The conclusion that can be made for the minimum duration is that this particular speaker probably thinks that there is no difference in the duration, since it has not hindered understanding before, while the other subjects produced some differences, in the range of 31 msec to 45 msec. For this set of words, the greatest standard deviation can be seen in the word *creep*. The assumption that can be made is S1 probably misinterpreted it as a short vowel. However, it is noticed that the position of the vowel plays an important role since in the final position, the subjects tended to maintain and prolong the vowel length.

Figure 4.2 shows the summary of the vowel durations for /i:/ and /ɪ/. Although the long vowel has longer range, the range for the short vowel seems to overlap with the long vowel.

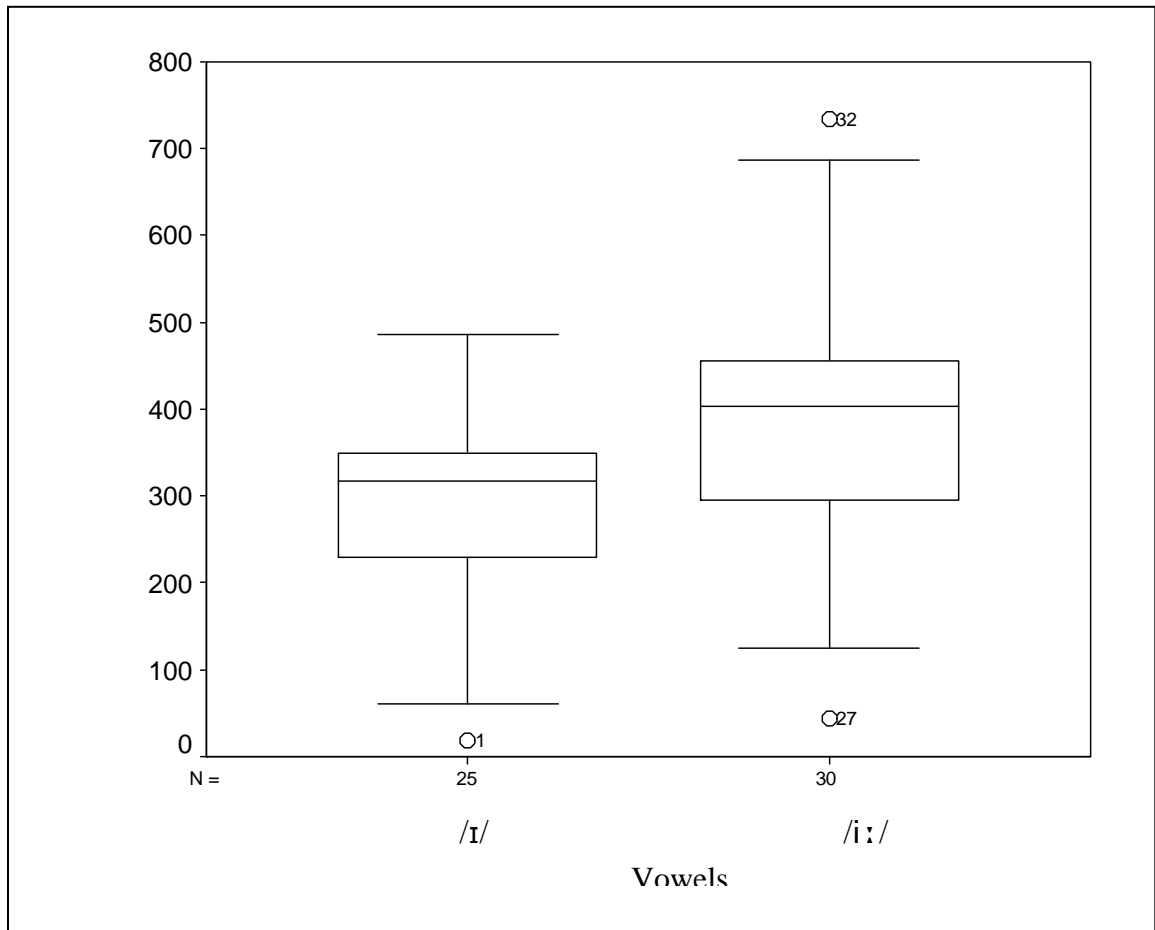


Figure 4.2

Box Plot Comparing Duration of /ɪ/ /i:/'

4.1.2 Durations of /u:/' and /u/'

The comparisons of the average lengths of /u:/' and /u/' produced by all the five subjects are tabulated in table 4.7. For S1 and S2, the results indicate that the lengths for short vowel /u/' is greater than the long vowel /u:/', with the average of 133.2 msec /u:/' for S1 compared to /u/' is 154.5 msec. S2 had an average duration of 361.4 msec for /u:/'

and 453.5 msec for /ʊ/. The other three subjects tend to have typical length distribution between the two vowels.

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
/u:/	133.2	361.4	459	540.2	496.6
/ʊ/	154.5	453.5	338.3	374.3	456.5
Differences	-21.3	-92.1	120.7	165.9	40.1

Table 4.2

Comparison of the Average Durations of /u:/ and /ʊ/ by all the Subjects (in msec)

For the back high vowels, it is interesting to note that the findings are rather different from those obtained for /i:/ and /ɪ/ vowels in terms of length for some of the speakers. The figures for /u:/ and /ʊ/ are reversed for S1 and S2.

The graph in Figure 4.3 indicates the distribution of the average length. As assumed previously, there are two speakers who have longer vowel duration for /u:/ than for /ʊ/. As for the rest of the subjects, their average duration for the production of these vowels is of the same range.

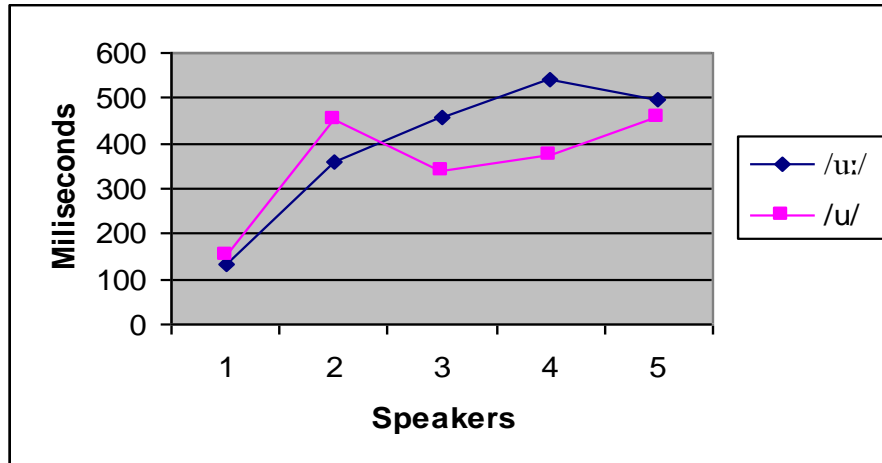


Figure 4.3

The Difference between the Production of the Vowels /u:/ and /u/ by the Speakers

In the difference between /u:/ and /u/, for single word utterance, the results vary significantly, for example in the word *good*, S5 prolongs the duration to 95 msec, the conclusion that can be made is there is a possibility that the speaker is stressing the word, since the word can function as a complement in connected speech. The standard deviation for this word is also high with 3.

The environment of the sounds in the post or initial position plays an important role in determining the vowel duration in ME.

However the results in /u:/ present consistency in the vowel duration, this is reflected by the standard deviation calculated which is lower compared to other sets of words. Reasonably the duration of the utterance of /u:/ is long for each of the listed words.

It is found that for words with semi vowel /j/ like in *huge* and *mute*. The subjects tend to say it longer compared to other words in the list. The same occurrence is also recorded for the vowel in the final position.

Figure 4.4 sums up the findings for /ʊ/ and /u:/. It indicates the ranges for both the vowels, which show that the durations somewhat collapse when the subjects produced both vowels.

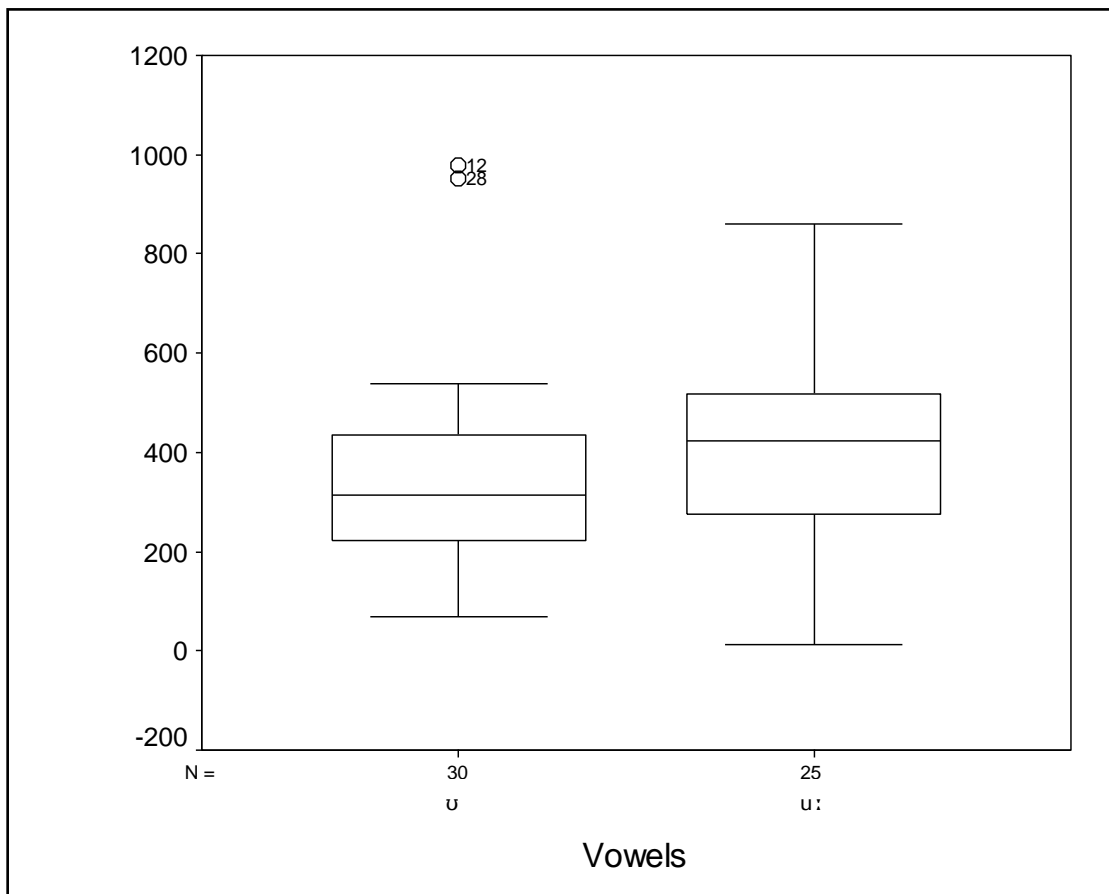


Figure 4.4
Box Plot Comparing Duration of /ʊ/ and /u:/'

5.1 Conclusion

In General both /i:/, /ɪ/ and /u:/, /ʊ/ have similar length, however as discussed earlier, some of the subjects have smaller measurement compared to the other of the subjects, especially in /i:/ and /ɪ/, the data presented in chapter four specified that S1 produced relatively smaller range compared to other subjects.

As for the length measurement for /u:/ and /ʊ/, two out of the five subjects (S1 and S2) have a rather unique measurement, since the record showed that the average of the short vowel /ʊ/ is longer than the long vowel /u:/.

For these two sets of vowels, it can be implied that Malay speakers of English do not differentiate the two vowels significantly, as substantiated by this study.

An assumption that can be made for this discovery is that the environment where the sound is placed plays an important role in determining the length of the vowels (see 4.2)

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Appendix

Word List

1. Ship	9. Romp	17. Bridge	25. Four	33. Myth	41. Soap
2. Step	10. Speak	18. Broth	26. Good	34. Sport	42. Busy
3. Put	11. Lurk	19. Tomb	27. Noise	35. Huge	43. Shelf
4. Neck	12. Sick	20. Steak	28. Milk	36. Out	44. Wolf
5. Creep	13. Cake	21. Leave	29. Fair	37. Look	45. Sharp
6. Badge	14. Shoot	22. Cup	30. Feel	38. Write	46. View
7. Loop	15. Joke	23. Full	31. China	39. Key	47. Broad
8. Father	16. Bush	24. Hawk	32. Mute	40. Beer	48. People

Sentences

1. From the bridge, we can see the beautiful view.
2. They speak about their good workmanship
3. The key fell into the milk.
4. The wolf creeps slowly inside the bush.
5. The sick people feel dizzy.

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BUTHAYNA ALGARAWI

Abstract

The speech community in Cairo, the biggest city in the Arab world, is described from a sociolinguistic perspective looking at some features of the two-way inter-relationship between language and society. By discussing the complex diglossic language situation in Cairo, this literature review shows how the Cairene community has undergone language shift and language accommodation. Moreover, an examination of the male/female use of the phonetic variable (q) /قّ /, indicates that gender-based differences in male/female linguistic behaviour can also be found in the Cairene speech community, and thereby corroborates the sex-based hypothesis.

Key words: *sociolinguistic, Cairene Arabic, Classical Arabic, language shift and accommodation, genderlects*

Introduction

The present literature review examines the Arabic-speaking community in Cairo, the capital of Egypt and the biggest city in the Arab world from a sociolinguistic perspective by looking at some features of the two-way inter-relationship between language and society. This Middle Eastern community has been selected for discussion because it provides a good example of language shift and language accommodation. Moreover, it signifies how modernity, urbanization and nationalism are mirrored in language (Armbrust, 1996, p. 8).

Due to the fact that Egypt is situated in the middle of the Arab world in a sub-region of Africa-Eurasia, its language has been influenced not only by other geographically related Arabic communities, but also other more remote nations. The Egyptian community, like other Arab communities, is considerably distinct from the Western world, especially in its approach to gender and the social roles of men and women (Hudson, 2001). Therefore, the speech community in Cairo has been examined to find out whether gender-based differences in male/female linguistic behaviour also hold in an Arabic community. Accordingly, we can either challenge or corroborate the sex-based hypothesis.

Sociolinguistic research on Arabic-speaking communities: studies from the Middle East

Haeri (2000) notes that the interest in Arabic sociolinguistics, which was inspired by Ferguson's (1959) article on diglossic Arabic communities, began in the 1970s. From the sizable research into the Arab world, Egypt has had the lion's share, presumably due to its long history and relations with the Western world which created an interest in its language while neglecting that of some other Arabic communities (Suleiman, 2000). Nonetheless, this body of research is relatively humble compared to studies carried out in America, Europe and some other parts of the world. In fact, most studies on Arab speech communities have not given primacy to comprehensive field research into the linguistic processes and ideologies of individuals or groups. Researchers have been interested only in the analysis of different syntactic, morphological, or phonological aspects of the language and "...no linguistic ethnographies appeared offering a more detailed, complex,

and realistic analysis of the language situations ... to date” (Haeri, 2000, p. 67). The in-depth database search done for this literature review has yielded only a few recent sociolinguistic studies.

In the subsequent sections, sociolinguistic features of the Cairene speech community will be depicted first in terms of its language system and then by examining one case of how language and gender reciprocate.

The speech community in Cairo: sacred language, mundane people

The sociolinguistic pattern of code, i.e. the various language patterns for different classes in the society in Cairo is complex and has been described using the term diglossia which is used to describe the presence of two often closely-related languages, one of high prestige which is generally used formally and the other of low prestige and is usually the spoken vernacular tongue. Thus, in a diglossic situation, which is also a remarkable feature of most Arabic-speaking Middle Eastern states two or more language varieties or codes co-exist. These communities have a peculiar sociolinguistic pattern due to their stable diglossic nature, (Holmes, 2001; Ferguson, 1959); (Wardhaugh, 2006; Chambers 2003). The official superposed high (H) or formal variety is Classical Arabic, the language of the Koran and the sayings of the prophet. This variety is used mainly in formal and official situations, in writing, in print and in prestigious domains such as education, literary works and religious ceremonies. The other spoken or low (L) varieties are used in informal situations of everyday life and include a range of vernacular varieties of modern colloquial Arabic (Stockwell 2002; Holmes 2001). These regional dialects vary according to different social groups or geographical regions, but in general, as

Kirchhoff and Vergyri (2005) point out, they are classified into four main groups: North African, Levantine, Egyptian in which Cairene Arabic fits and Gulf Arabic.

The differences between all these varieties are visible on the phonological, morphological, grammatical and lexical levels. An example identified by Cowan (1966) is the varying use of the verbal prefix /b/ in different countries. Some Arabic dialects, including the Egyptian (*masri*) dialect, attach this prefix to verbs in order to indicate the present tense /*baktib*/ 'I write'. In contrast, the same prefix is used in Yemen and the Gulf states as a marker for the future: /*baktib*/ 'I will write'.

It is worth noting that the difference between Classical Arabic and other vernacular varieties is not associated with the notions of a better or a worse language. As a matter of fact, colloquial Arabic varieties have 'covert prestige' which keeps them alive, vital and autonomous, (Holmes, 2001, p. 344). The inferiority of a variety, as Trudgill (2000, p. 9) states, is merely due to its "...association with speakers from underprivileged, low-status groups". Historically speaking, the different regional varieties descended from Classical Arabic through the years and developed as accepted spoken regional varieties spoken by various groups in the society (Abuhamdia, 1988), while Classical Arabic was retained as the form with the highest profile.

Ferguson (1964, cited in Stockwell 2002) proposed the following characteristics of diglossia, to which the language system in Cairo could be compared:

- H is written;
- H is the medium of education;
- diglossia is a socially stable pattern;
- H has greater prestige than L;

- H vocabulary is often copied into L;
- repeated vocabulary often diverge in meaning and connotation.

Cairene Arabic (CA) can also be compared to Stewart's (1968) sociolinguistic typology of languages (see also Wardhaugh, 2006; Bell, 1976) in which colloquial Arabic is described as a vernacular that has three attributes:

- vitality – the existence of native speakers of a language;
- historicity – the development of a language over time through being used by a social group;
- Autonomy – users consider their language to be distinct from other varieties.

Looking at the works by both Ferguson and Stewart, we can see that the situation in Cairo fits all these criteria perfectly. Classical Arabic, *fus-ha*, is the H variety whereas the L varieties consist of regional colloquial dialects, Haeri (1997).

In the Cairene speech community, the degree of difference between H and L could be illustrated on the phonological level by the varying articulation of the sound (q) /ق/. In H, it is articulated using a voiceless uvular plosive, while in L it is represented by a glottal stop. H and L are also quite dissimilar grammatically since they use the Arabic complicated morphology differently, Holmes (2001, p. 82). The negation device in L used by educated middle class Egyptians in Cairo (Mughazy, 2003) is a case in point:

H: *ana lam ađhab ila asūq*

L: *ana ma-roħ-t-e] isū'?*

'I didn't go to the market'

On the lexical level, similar vocabulary appears in both H and L; however, since L is used in informal domains, it contains more words for everyday objects. For instance,

in H we use '*ḥaqībah*' for 'bag' which would not occur in casual conversation, where the word '*ʾanṭah*' is used from the L variety.

Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and Cairene Arabic (CA)

This diglossic situation in the Arab communities has led to a linguistic revolution attempting to bridge the massive gap between Classical Arabic and the various colloquial dialects on the one hand, and between those detached dialects on the other. It resulted in “A Modern Inter-Arabic” known as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) which is a simplified version of Classical Arabic with colloquial interference, Bishai (1966).

According to Haeri (2000), the speech community in Cairo, similar to other Arabic-speaking communities, went through the process of Arabization which encouraged the maximum use of Classical Arabic while restricting the colloquial. This was followed by the movement of pan-Arab nationalism, Haeri et al. (1997). As mentioned above, this movement called for language renovation or urbanization to establish equilibrium by simplifying and modernizing Arabic, although most state schools as Starrett (1998) and Wagner (1993) report, stressed the use of Classical Arabic in teaching. Today, the resultant MSA represents a language based on, and at the same time different from Classical Arabic. Kirchhoff and Vergyri (2005) list some examples of differences between MSA and Egyptian Colloquial Arabic used in Cairo (ECA) (see Table 1):

Table 1. *Linguistic Differences between MSA and ECA*

<i>Change</i>	<i>MSA</i>	<i>ECA</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
---------------	------------	------------	--------------

/ø/→/s/, /t/	/øala:øa/	/tala:ta/	ثلاث three
/ð/→/z/, /d/	/ ðahab/	/dahab/	ذهب gold
/ay/→/e:/	/Saif/	/Se:f/	صيف summer
Inflections	yatakallam(u)	yitkallim	يتكلم he speaks
Vocabulary	tawila	tarabeeza	منضدة table
Word order	VSO	SVO	

Miller (2005) notes that the urban and national status of CA has offered it a specific character. Despite the fact that it is not a nationally acknowledged standard colloquial variety, it is used in all spoken domains of life and in some written poetry, novels and advertisement, Mazraani (1997). Woidich (1994, p. 506) defines it as “a Central Delta dialect with an admixture of features pertaining to neighbouring regions”. CA, according to Miller (2005), is similar to the Central Delta dialect and has some features of the dialect of Middle Egypt, but is different from them in some specific features as follows:

1. no final pausal *imāla* (final [a] is raised to /i/ or /e/ as in CA *warda* vs. rural dialects *warde* 'a rose'
2. the 3rd sg. Perf. ending of the weak verbs is *-it* not *-at* as in CA *ramit* vs. rural dialects *ramat* 'she threw away'
3. the object suffixes of the 3rd sg. m. have long allomorphs as in CA *ma ramahū]* vs. rural dialects *ma ramah]* 'he did not throw it'

She adds that features of MSA mark CA at specific speech contexts, educational levels and in the upper and middle classes. Nevertheless, the concept of 'Standard Cairo Arabic'

is contingent upon speakers' attitudes, and the present-day CA has developed as a consequence of urbanization and mass migration to Cairo in the 1950s and 1960s. Contemporary CA displays some new features such as the marginalization of some Cairene words, the elimination of many Osmani words and the inclusion of many English words. This change has occurred partly due to the influence of rural dialects spoken by the migrants to Cairo, particularly those from the region of the Nile valley (Upper Egypt, known as *is-Sa^ʕīd*). Miller poses three factors that have affected the linguistic adaptation and accommodation of the migrants in Cairo:

- media and urbanization (interaction with CA);
- education and mass media (influence of Classical Arabic);
- better means of communication and increased contact between regions (regional interdialectal levelling).

In her study, Miller (*ibid*) identified some of the distinctive features of CA which is a prestigious dialect, and the two Upper Egyptian Arabic (UEA) variants which belong to the latest waves of migrants. Both UEA dialects are so distinct from CA that they are usually unintelligible to Cairene people who associate them with derogatory stereotypes portraying their speakers as “poor rural migrants, often illiterate and extremely conservative”, Miller (2005, p. 909). Generally speaking, CA is described in all parts of the Arab world as soft, elegant and modern whereas UEA is dry, heavy, rough and closer to *fus-ha*. Table 2 illustrates the distinction and similarity between CA and the two dialects of UEA: UE1 and UE2 in four features from Miller's original 21-feature-list of the rural dialects of Upper Egyptian Arabic (UEA) in the Sohag-Qena bow of the Nile. These features sketch the Cairene speech community and indicate how in the case of

CA/UEA contact, regional coineization and mixing processes might occur within an individual's speech. What has caught my attention in Miller's table is the similarity of some UEA features to the (*hidhazi*) dialect of the Western region of Saudi Arabia. This finding also elucidates the effect of language contact and dialect shift in societies since this part of the Arabian Peninsula is very close to the Egyptian land with only the Red Sea lying between them.

Table 2. *Some distinctive features between CA and UEA - adapted from Miller (2005)*

<i>Features</i>	<i>CA</i>	<i>UE1</i>	<i>UE2</i>
Q 'he said' 'now' 'Koran'	? [q] (MSA words) <i>?ál</i> <i>dilwa?ti</i> <i>qur?an</i>	g [k] in some words [q] (MSA words) <i>gál</i> <i>delwakiti, adilwikit</i> <i>qur?an</i>	idem UE1
J 'camel'	 <i>gamal</i>	/g/, /dŋ/, /ŋ/; /d/ according to subvarieties and types of lexical items <i>gamal, dŋamal, ŋamal,</i> <i>damal</i>	idem UE1
Personal pronouns I, you (m.sg.), you (f.sg.), he, she, we, you (pl.), they	<i>Ana, inta, inti, huwwa,</i> <i>hiyya, ihna, intum, huma</i>	<i>Ana (ani), inti(a), hūwa,</i> <i>hīya, nahna(i),</i> <i>intum, huma</i>	idem UE1
Demonstratives 'this' 'that'	<i>Dukha, dikha, dukham</i> <i>dawwat, diyyat, dōlat</i>	<i>Dakka, dikka, dakummāti</i> <i>kidawāti, kidēti</i>	<i>Dukhu, dikhi,</i> <i>dukhumma</i> <i>kidawāti, kidēti</i>

Other speech varieties in Cairo

In addition to the above mentioned varieties, CA has very localized accents used by uneducated groups in all the regions in addition to some foreign languages such as, French, English and Italian spoken by some of the educated people who attended

missionary and secular foreign-language private schools, Haeri et al., (1997). Nonetheless, since Cairo, like other metropolitan cities in the world, is the terrain for civilization and the cradle for modernization, it is inhabited by the vast majority of the aristocrats and upper-middle classes and, in my view, its spoken variety stands a good chance of adoption as a lingua franca and a widely preferred prestigious model.

In general, UEA speakers prefer to speak CA in Cairo to be able to communicate with others, adapt to the environment and avoid discrimination and stereotyping. According to Miller (2005), the frequency of occurrence of either CA or UEA features depends on variations in social networks, discourse topics, situational contexts and the influence of *fus-ha*.

I presume that any attempt at standardizing Arabic in Egypt or in any other Arab country and replacing it with an emergent new genre is barren for two reasons, Wardhaugh (2006); Allen (1997). The first is that the state itself is facing impediments concerning the reproduction of its official language, Haeri (1997). The second reason is that Egyptians, among other Muslims, consider knowing Classical Arabic to be an obligation of every Muslim and a means of constructing their Arabic identity, Ahmed (1999); Lynch (1999); Wagner (1993, p. 19). Hence, it is not surprising that they believe, as Haeri et al. (1997) inform us, that Classical Arabic bestows authority on those who know it and establishes their political unity and resistance to colonial domination. According to Hourani (1991, p. 68), Classical Arabic exerts religio-cultural credentials which have constantly generated a strong ideology that extols it and devalues the “living spoken languages”.

Let us now take the discussion on language and society interplay a stage further and examine an aspect of gender-related differences in CA.

Genderlects in the Cairene speech community: strangers in a tolerant land

The study of language and gender has grown considerably in the last decades of the Twentieth Century (Wardhaugh, 2006). Traditionally, this type of research has focused on two issues: gender differences in language use and sexist language. Currently, more feminist language researchers, notably, Weatherall (2002a), Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) and Cameron (1998), are concerned with the social construction of gender, i.e., viewing genderlects through a social lens. They perceive gender to be relevant to any interaction (see Weatherall 2002b, 2000; Stokoe and Smithson, 2001).

According to Erlandson (2005) and Hirokawa et al. (2004), many gender-related differences in language use have been identified by exploring gender in relation to turn-taking (Romaine, 2000; DeFrancisco, 1991), questions (Todd, 1983), topic change (Dorval, 1990), self-disclosure (Tannen, 1991), conversational dominance (Leet-Pellegrini, 1980), face (Deuchar, 1988), conversational involvement (Tannen, 1990), verbal aggression (Eder, 1990; Labov, 1972a), verbal hygiene (Cameron, 1995), social attitudes (Trudgill, 2000), e-mail interactions (Colley and Todd, 2002), verbal tasks (Parsons et al., 2005) and so on.

Many researchers have examined features of genderlects of men and women. Scollon and Scollon (2001, p. 245) for example, outline nine closely related dimensions in the conversational styles of women and men respectively:

- intimacy – independence;

- connection – status;
- inclusive – exclusive;
- relationship – information;
- rapport – report;
- community – contest;
- problems – solutions;
- novice – expert;
- listening – lecturing.

As Scollon and Scollon's outline indicates, womens' communication patterns are distinct from those of men in form and substance. Their speech, as Lackoff (1975) suggests, reflects their socialization into subordinate roles. Labov (2001) notes that women are superior to men "in all aspects of verbal behaviour". But what explanations (Romaine, 2000) can be given for gender-based differences in linguistic styles in general? Wardhaugh (2006) explains gender differences in language behaviour in terms of the following claims:

1. A language can be sexist;
2. The biological and psychological disposition of men and women;
3. The hierarchy of power relationships between men and women;
4. The socially learned behaviour to which men and women are subjected and how they are taught to be gendered.

According to Swim et al., (2004), Stockwell (2002), Holmes (2001), Romaine (2000) and many others, some languages are described as sexist due to the way they express negative or positive stereotypes of women and men. Moreover, the structure of

the lexicon has always been viewed by sociolinguists as the reflection of the social environment in language which usually denotes that men are superior to women. This discrimination against women can be exemplified in many aspects of a sexist language. For instance, animal imagery in English shows that less positive images are used for women than men – *cow* and *bitch* vs. *stud* and *wolf*, Holmes (2001, p. 305). In Arabic, the use of an additional suffix to signal feminine adjectives connotes that women are deviant or abnormal - *kabīr* vs. *kabīrah*.

Despite ample proposals to eliminate sexist language, this sexism is a controversial issue. In practice, as Wardhaugh (2006) argues, the differences are socially-based rather than linguistically-based. In other words, it is the way a language is used by people that informs gender-based variation. Consistent with this view is Harrison and Hood-Williams' (2002) description of how gender attributes are determined in people's interaction “the continuous interactive process whereby one both presents oneself as gendered and is allocated a gender by everyone with whom one interacts” (p. 34).

Considering the different linguistic styles of men and women, Chambers (2003) indicates that several studies specifically those of Romaine (2000, 1978), Holmes (1997) and Labov (1972b) have indicated that in the same social group, women seem to use fewer stigmatized and non-standard variants than men do. Moreover, it has been found that in some societies, men's speech is marked by a larger repertoire of variants and wider stylistic shifting. This is evident in some studies of Middle Eastern societies which differ to a great extent, socially and culturally, from other societies in the world (Haeri et al., 1997). Although these differences provide some support for the sex-based variability

hypothesis, they “...do seem to overturn the sociolinguistic roles of women and men” (Chambers, 2003, p. 154).

In a study of gender-based linguistic differences in Egypt and the Levant, Haeri (1987) examined the use of the phonetic variable (q) /ق/. This variable to which Elshafei et al. (2001) refer as 'Always Accented Consonant' is a pharyngeal phoneme that has three variants (Chambers 2003) and is used differently in the different varieties of Arabic. These variants are:

- The standard or classical variant: the uvular stop [q] - Arabic / ق /;
- The urban speech or spoken vernacular variant: the glottal stop (plosive) [ʔ] - Arabic / ء /;
- The low-level variant: the voiced velar stop (plosive) [g].

Thus, as Sallam (1980) illustrates, the word *qál* قال 'he said' has the following variants in Egypt: *qál* *ʔál* *gál*

The striking results of Haeri's study show that in some Middle Eastern communities, such as Cairo, Amman and an international group from Egypt and the Levant countries, women use fewer classical forms and more colloquial varieties than men. Miller (2005) reached a similar result in her study mentioned above. She noticed that men tended to use [q] in words like *qurʔán* 'Koran' and *fiqh* 'jurisprudence' in formal and religious contexts.

The results of both studies seem to contradict the hypothesis related to sex-based variability. Although the group of interest to us in Haeri's survey is the Cairo sample, the other two samples have been included to emphasize the findings. However, for more clarity, the different groups have been separated in three graphs adapting Haeri's Figure 1

(p. 174) which represents proportions of (q) variants for women and men in the three Arabic communities:

- In the sample from CA, Figure 1 below, both men and women do not use the low-level variant [g], while women use a lower proportion of the standard [q] and a higher proportion of the urban variant [ʔ] than men do.

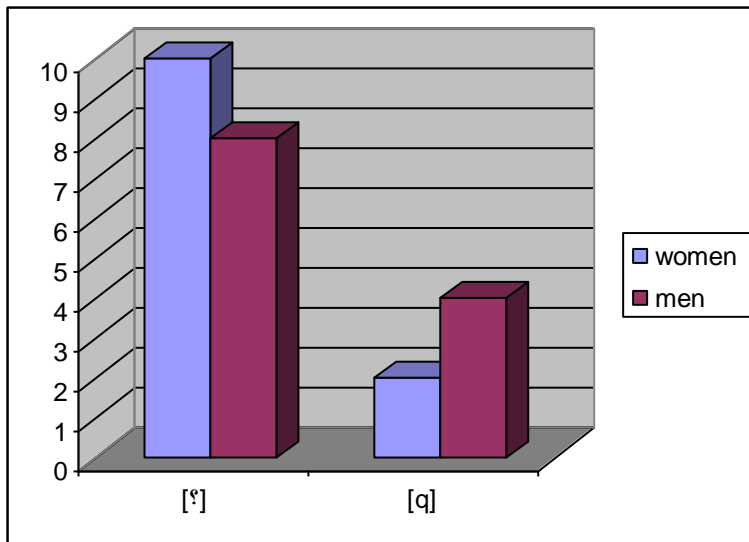


Figure 1. *Male/female use of the variable (q) /ق/ amongst the Cairo sample*

- The Amman sample, Figure 2 below, also shows a higher proportion of standard [q] used by men than women, who again score a higher proportion of the urban variant [ʔ]

than men, and like Cairene women, score no proportion of the low-level variant [g] which is used by less than 10% of the male participants.

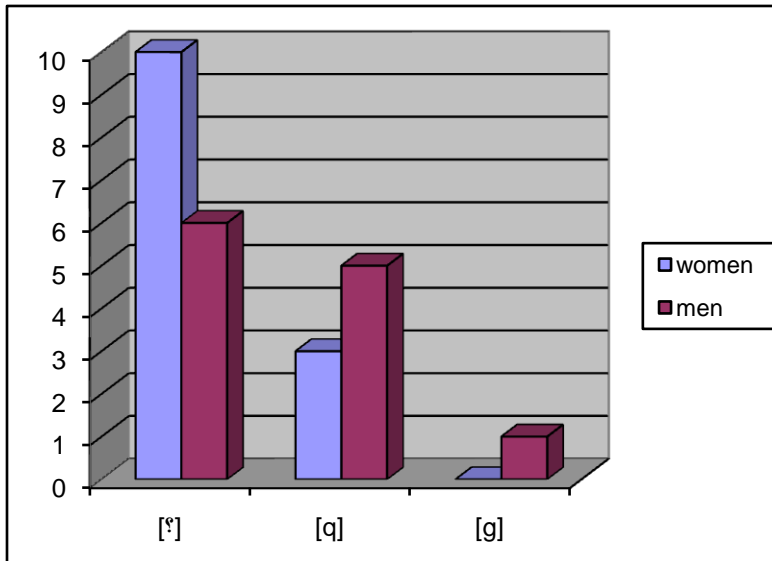


Figure 2. Male/female use of the variable (q) /ق/ amongst the Amman sample

In addition, Figure 3 indicates that in the international group a higher proportion of women use the urban variant [ʕ] than men, who score higher than women in using the other two variants [q] and [g].

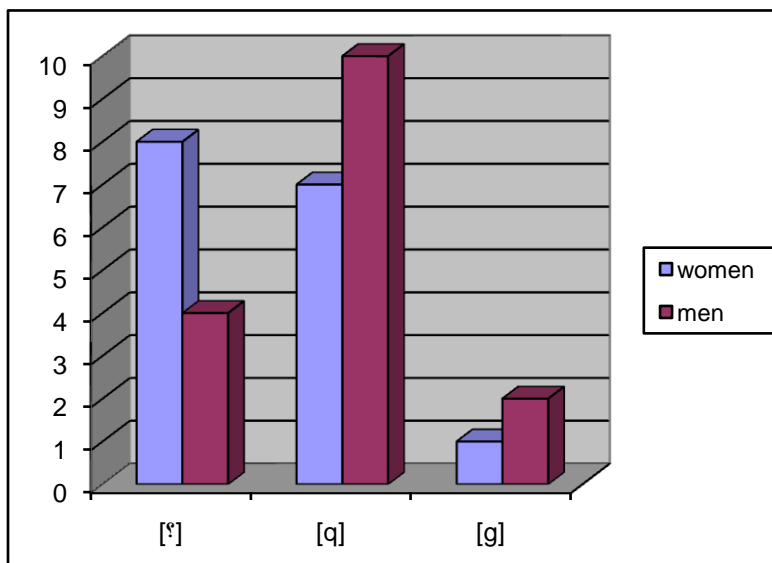


Figure 3. Male/female use of the variable (q) /ق/ amongst the international group

The most conspicuous result is that in all three surveys, males score higher than females in their use of standard [q] which indicates that the phenomenon of the greater female use of standard variants common in Western communities is reversed in Arabic communities (see also Labov, 1990; Abd-el-Jawad, 1981). This same conclusion is drawn in a similar study of sex variation in Basrah by Bakir (1986) who attributes the differences to gender-segregative social circumstances. He believes that Arab women lead more insular lives than men and thereby lack access to the standard variety as cultural and social beliefs restrict them from playing a major role in the community. Therefore, they are not motivated to use the “prestige” variety of the “public domain” (Abdel-Jawad 1981).

Arguably, Chambers (2003, p. 162) claims that the results are definitely consistent with the hypothesis of sex-related differences in men's and women's linguistic behaviour. In fact, the proportions of [q] demonstrate the variant used in Classical Arabic which is not the national preferred standard variety as it does not represent the ordinary means of communication of any social group or community. It has been noted in the previous section that the linguistic system in Cairo and other Arab societies is complex and Classical Arabic is not the real vernacular or preferred standard variety in everyday use. In Chambers (2003, p. 160) he says, “literary Arabic does not form part of the linguistic continuum in Arabic communities but is removed from it by a gap. As a result, it cannot fill the role of the standard variety in social stratification.” Therefore, if we look at the proportions of [ʔ] which represent the variant used in the colloquial standard, we find that females score higher proportions than males in all the groups. Accordingly, we could conclude that women in these communities are still using fewer non-standard and stigmatized variants than men. Another crucial point to add to this case is the finding by Haeri (1996) that men from the upper classes in Cairo did not actually use forms of Classical Arabic as they thought they should.

It is true that women in the three samples do not use Classical Arabic forms - “forms that they consider to be better” - since they belong to the prestigious variety of their religion and the sacred Holy Book, Bakir (1986, p. 6). Yet, the appropriate variety for them is the urban colloquial which is the norm amongst people. Holmes (2001, p. 29) points out that Arabs proffer respect and admiration to a stranger who has a mastery of Classical Arabic, which is a difficult task even for an Arab (see Holes, 1995; Ibrahim,

1986; Bishai, 1966; Macdonald, 1910). However, in reality, and from my personal experience in Classical Arabic and most colloquial Arabic varieties, I have noticed that using Classical Arabic in informal situations is considered artificial, bizarre and by no means prestigious. Rather, it is like speaking Shakespearian English at the butchers (Holmes, 2001).

A final note

By offering a sketch of the sociolinguistic situation in Cairo, this literature review has indicated that language shift and language accommodation are sociolinguistic phenomena which coincide with language contact. The sociolinguistic perspective of the discussion highlights the relationship between language and society and attempts to provide the reader with some intuitions into sociolinguistic theory.

With gender as a variable, an aspect of the linguistic behaviour of men and women in the Cairene community, among some other groups, has been described to see to what extent it conforms to the hypothesis of gender-based variability. Research on the role of gender in linguistic choice in an Arabic-speaking community can yield fruitful grounds for analysing the relationship between form and ideology. It can also supplement crucial insights into social theory by depicting the real values and the actual functions that operate in such a community.

The Arab world has not yet been subject to sufficient studies to delve into realities about its sociolinguistic realms. What is needed then are more studies on stylistic

variations and deeper ethnographic research on the real positions of Classical Arabic, the colloquials and genderlects in this part of the globe.

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Appendix 1: List of Abbreviations

- CA** : Cairene Arabic
- ECA** : Egyptian Colloquial Arabic
- H** : High variety
- L** : Low variety
- m.** : masculine

MSA: Modern Standard Arabic

Perf. : Perfect

sg. : Singular

SVO: subject / verb / object

UEA: Upper Egyptian Arabic

UE1: Upper Egypt dialect 1

UE2: Upper Egypt dialect 2

VSO: verb / subject / object

Appendix 2: Pronunciation Conventions

Brief conventions for reading the transcribed material employed are as follows:

Consonant letters

ø, ð voiceless and voiced dental fricatives;

ʃ, ʒ voiceless and voiced palato-alveolar fricatives;

r an alveolar flap;

ħ a voiceless pharyngeal fricative;

q a voiceless uvular plosive;

ʔ a glottal plosive;

g a voiced velar plosive;

S, dɣ, ʈ emphatic pharyngealized consonants corresponding to non-emphatic s, z, t;

d a non-emphatic pharyngealized consonant.

Vowel letters

i a half-close to close front spread vowel;

u a half-close to close back rounded vowel;

a a front open vowel;

e, o mid- to half-close front and back vowels;

ī, ū, á, ē, ō long realizations of the above vowels respectively.

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PROSPECTIVE TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING 3-D DESCRIPTIVE GEOMETRY: INSIGHTS FROM A KEY INFORMANT

DANIEL DINIS DA COSTA

Introductory overview

There is a growing recognition that elements of heuristic significance play a large part in practical 3D descriptive geometry when a graphical method of solving space or solid analytic problems is employed (Slaby, 1976). Some of these elements are related to personal development, as the ability to understand abstract geometrical concepts evolves throughout one's life.

Prospective teachers' perceptions about the professional learning of descriptive geometry may vary in relation to solving problems of 3D space via a 2D drawing plane with the use of different projecting methods (Bakó, 2006). Solving problems of spatial dimensions requires a creative imagination, space analysis skills and visualisation, which themselves can be harnessed and taken to another level of understanding through practice. In doing so, there is a use of the projecting drawings, which are solely intended to interpret the spatial relation, solve problems and offer solutions (*C.f.* Stachel, 2005:1).

A variety of projecting methods in geometry have the main purpose to represent spatial objects on a drawing plane. For the purpose of systematisation in this study, from

a comprehensive survey of these methods show that can be summarised in three categories: central projection, axonometric projection, and methods of descriptive geometry (Bakó, 2006).

Central projection consists mainly of one projecting plane that is reliant on one or two centres from which emanate the lines of sight. In one-centre projection the purposeful use of deformation can solve certain geometric problems; whilst two-centre projection uses obliquity, which can interfere with good representation.

Axonometric projection is the most extensively used method of projection in schools and teacher education institutions. It depicts parallel projections instead of the concurrent projecting lines used in central projection. Conversely, the methods of descriptive geometry use double projections, which can be extended to a third projection, both positioned orthogonally around a reference line.

To solve practical problems of spatial dimension, the fundamentals of methods of geometry must be understood. These encompass, *inter alia*, the following aspects:

- Points in a 3-D space;
- Lines in a 3-D space;
- Plane surfaces in a 3-D space;
- Three-dimensional spatial relationships of lines and planes;
- Rotations of geometric elements;
- Location of points and tangent planes on geometric solids and surfaces;
- Intersections of common geometric solids and surfaces;
- Development of surfaces and geometric solids.

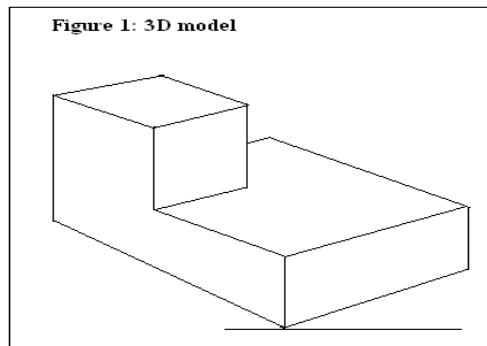
(Slaby 1976).

These fundamentals inform descriptive geometry programmes, such as those that the Pedagogical University (UP) of Mozambique implements:

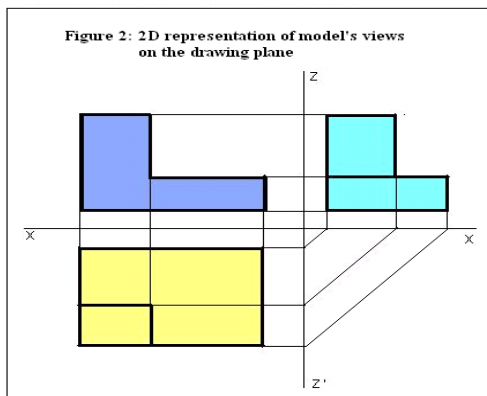
- Descriptive geometry notation;
- Two-dimensional plane and graphical representation;
- Three-dimensional relations and problems;
- Points and lines (including visibility);
- Angle measurements (perpendicularity, linearity and parallelism);
- Rotation techniques;
- Surface development;
- Planes (including true size, oblique, piercing points, parallel and perpendicular planes, dihedral angles, and revolution or rotation techniques);
- Intersections (Point and line, line and line, point and plane, plane and plane);
- Solid geometry (which includes polyhedra [platonic solids, prisms and pyramids], and non-polyhedra consisting of sphere, torus, cylinder and cone);
- Theory of section;
- Theories of shades, shadows and cast shadows.

(Nhiuane et al 2003).

However, although not necessarily exhaustive, such a list of geometry-related content is expected to lay a good foundation upon which student-teachers develop their spatial reasoning, visualisation skills and fine motricity (rigorous representation).



Besides this, in learning descriptive geometry professionally one develops an



intuitive ability to identify the best viewing direction for good representation and thus the easier solution of spatial problems as in the above 3D modeⁱ shown in figure 1 in

simple axonometric projection. Thus, modelling and model manipulation are key skills worth mastering in order to be able to ‘see’ through three-dimensional (3D) space and render this knowledge in graphical form (2D) on epure (also known as a drawing plane shown in the 2D representation in figure 2*).

Computer-mediated learning comes into play here as an enabling resource that enhances this manipulative and iterative process between 3D and 2D, which the UP’s Faculty of Science and Mathematics has decided to embrace (Nhiuane et al. 2003). However, it is appropriate to succinctly review some relevant influential factors in descriptive geometry education.

Firstly, it is widely recognised that the teaching of descriptive geometry has been confined to technical schools in many countries. It is not surprising to find that the best candidates for higher education geometry courses are invariably those coming from these type of schools. In Mozambique, the teaching of descriptive geometry as a formal curricular component was introduced in schools in the late 1970s, particularly in teacher education institutions and public universities. However, the majority of these were short courses, which led to a poor professional foundation for graduates, as was found in an evaluation of the education system study (INDE 2005).

This situation also led to calls for a renewal of the curriculum, not only to revise the outdated knowledge-based aspects of the programme, but also to give it a broader philosophical perspective as well as greater time allocation within the curriculum. Practice is also central to geometry curriculum. In its report, INDE (2005) suggested that a sound model of the teacher education curriculum should capitalise on these aspects if secondary schools are to deliver satisfactory results in the subject. Furthermore, the sound

initial preparation of prospective geometry teachers should enrich their experiences on becoming professionals.

Becoming a good teacher of geometry stems from a plethora of training efforts against the backdrop of conditions such as a career development mind-set, psychological preparation, school development, students' background and needs, the school's ecology, time constraints, and the financial resources for post-preservice training 'refreshment' and courses (*c.f.* Villegas-Reimers and Rameirs, 2000).

These conditions therefore boil down to an understanding that the teaching and learning of descriptive geometry may benefit greatly from its mainstreaming in the mathematics curriculum only if there is a policy review and curriculum renewal in favour of a system that provides room for investigative learning in a more practical way, so that the status of the teachers and subject is raised within the mathematics domain (Bishop, 1980). Sufficient resources (time and materials) would need to be deployed for better student-teachers learning of descriptive geometry.

In order to further analyse respondent's perceptions concerning the learning of geometry, a grounded theory study was conducted using six focus group interviews along with ten semi-structured interviews. The participants were selected randomly from amongst student-teachers and teacher educators/school managers. The approach to data collection that was employed was guided by the research questions (Punch 2005:159).

This paper presents data from an interview with one of the study's key informants, Mr. Christopher Elias (CE) (pseudonym), who is a member of the Faculty of Science and Mathematics at Pedagogical University (UP) in Maputo. As the department's descriptive geometry lecturer, Mr. Elias is involved in most policy-making decisions,

curriculum specification and the training of secondary school descriptive geometry teachers.

The aim of the interview was to characterise Mr Elias' perceptions of student-teacher learning of descriptive geometry. An interview format was chosen that asked neither closed questions nor risked bias from researcher preconceptions. The aim was to explore the respondent's perceptions of geometry education by listening to his own words, giving him the opportunity to talk and speak his mind freely (Matusse, 1998:235), as follows:

Interviewer (DDC): How do you develop student-teachers' competencies to attain the expected results in descriptive geometry?

CE: In reality, it is highly complex for student-teachers to study descriptive geometry. This subject is extremely demanding. The most we can do initially is to assign them more investigative work. Then we provide them with reading lists. When introducing a topic, they form groups of five or six student-teachers. They review the theoretical concepts and conduct a small investigative task.

DDC: Is this a monograph?

CE: It may be comparable to a monograph. This is a kind of initial research study to see how much they understand things. A student is supposed to collect data and solve problems, then and in the classroom we discuss the findings to see whether they understand the concepts, since we know that descriptive geometry is intended to equip them to be able to see through space and to be able to use their imagination.

DDC: Does this work promote students' autonomy and independence?

CE: Oh yes, yes.

DDC: How does this relate to the learning process?

CE: It is indeed student-focused learning. The student should actively be involved in learning whilst the lecturer monitors the activities, instructing them to follow the correct steps and paths.

DDC: How do you assess this teaching method?

CE: This method we are now introducing is, in reality, a bit difficult for students. However, they must be familiarised with it. The thinking process lies in students' hands rather than the lecturer's. The lecturer is a facilitator. We aim for even higher knowledge here, as opposed to practices in secondary schooling.

DDC: Does it produce any good results?

CE: Oh yeah, it does! [Emphatic]. The level of accomplishment is very good. However, when group work is assigned, three or four students are usually hard-working and a few others are just passive learners [hum!]. When it comes to presenting the group work, there are real difficulties. What I do is to select students randomly to present the work.

DDC: What happens then?

CE: I choose them randomly to present the group work, as I said. The next time all the students come prepared individually to present their work, since they know that the teacher will not allow them to choose who to present the results.

DDC: In that case, what are the topics in which students experience difficulty in descriptive geometry?

CE: For instance, in this semester we have seen the introduction to geometry: points, lines, planes. However, the intersections of lines with planes and intersections between planes are complex, and require more time for explanation and practice.

DDC: How do you solve this problem?

CE: We produce models to help students to develop their creative imagination and rigorous thinking through a visualisation process. According to our curricular regulations, we are supposed to make models and posters to show how things work to solve space or solid problems on the drawing plane. Students do this exercise too.

DDC: In your view, how well do the students learn?

CE: In my opinion, only fifty per cent managed to achieve the learning objectives. The other half requires remedial activities.

DDC: How does the curriculum help to promote professional competencies in training good secondary teachers of descriptive geometry?

CE: At end of the course, I believe that professional competencies have developed. In terms of output, our graduates are equipped to teach all lower secondary school levels. We also equip them with additional knowledge and skills to teach upper secondary grades, since we know that the country lacks descriptive geometry teachers. Let me explain it better. The curriculum aims for them to be able to teach grades 8, 9 and 10 only. We offer additional competencies for them to teach students at grades 11 and 12.

DDC: What are the topics taught at this institution to student-teachers who will teach in upper schools?

CE: We introduce the whole field of descriptive geometry, from the theory of points up to the intersections of lines with solids. We recognise, however, that some students were not taught these things during secondary school, so we give them further input.

DDC: How do you manage time in teaching descriptive geometry?

CE: Descriptive geometry is taught in two semesters. They take this subject at the end of the second year and the beginning of the third year. They have six hours per week, and each training session takes 50 minutes. I think that time is sufficient for the amount of knowledge content delivered to students and for the purposes of the programme.

DDC: What is your understanding about student-teachers' confidence in teaching descriptive geometry?

CE: Not all students can get acceptable results to give them the confidence to teach this subject. At least fifty per cent of students come out more or less confident to teach at high school. In my own professional experience, even for lower secondary! Some graduates will not teach to level 10 though. They may fear to teach grades 10 and 12 students because they are in the final-exam grades.

DDC: Why are they not so confident?

CE: I am not sure whether it is lack of confidence or something else. Teachers at grades 8 and 9 are very flexible. However, for teaching at grade 10, I do not know what is happening, they are so fearful! Why it is happening, I do not know really! They receive a very good training and are well equipped before leaving.

DDC: Isn't it a lack of more practice during the training and at school?

CE: It might be, but we have no evidence to support that as a contributing factor for such a lack of self-esteem.

DDC: What is it then, if is not lack of practice?

CE: I think that the most likely source of the lack of confidence is the insufficient time devoted to school-based training. Besides this, during practice, they are often assigned grades 8 and 9 but not 10. This is more to do with the school where the practicum takes place and what the school leadership decides are the places available for student-teachers at the time of the placement. Such placements may not necessarily meet training needs. It would be best for them to practice with the final years; that is, grades 10 or 12.

However, the school managers, heads and deputy-heads think that they are ‘novice’ teachers; therefore, they are not entitled to teach students in the final years, so instead they are given the lower levels. Another question which we cannot underestimate is to do with the exam component. Grade 10 and 12 are the exam years at college. The ‘novice’ teachers know effectively what the responsibilities are at level 10 and 12. They prefer to take classes with no exams.

DDC: Is this because in these lower grades the teacher does not carry such a burden of guilty?

CE: Yes. When it comes to exams, they are supposed to write reports; they are responsible to society or even to the whole world. There are no exams for grade 8, for instance. There is always concern about exam results every year. Therefore, newly trained teachers rule out grades with exams for fear of poor results.

DDC: Is this a kind of probation phase for those who are at the ‘beginning’ of their careers?

CE: Yes indeed! It is not wise if they are immediately posted to teach grades 10 and 12. They are actually right to see this as too much responsibility at the beginning of a career.

DDC: How do we help novice teachers to build their teaching confidence?

CE: Grades 10 and 12 are the final years of secondary schooling. When beginning in this profession all student-teachers need help and support. Nevertheless, they would prefer to teach grades 10 and 12 in their second year of teaching experience.

However, in the current situation, anyone who is posted in one province is given classes at grades 10 or 12. They have to take responsibility, as I mentioned. I remember during my training in the faculty of education, my didactic lecturer once said that you need to have a gradual growth in relation to certain positions in schools to be a good professional, and he advised us not to take different grades at the same time in the first years of teaching.

DDC: What do you mean by not taking different grades at the same time?

CE: Just one level or grade. The teaching community then plays a large role in helping the teacher to integrate professionally within the school. After all, it is a matter of support for teaching.

DDC: How is ICT taught here?

CE: Student teachers have ICT and traditional components during training. There is an exchange between the manual work and the use of ICT. This boils down to integration and linking to other areas of knowledge.

This also takes us on to professionalisation. Most of the time we question whether or not our students are able to use their knowledge in their lives. In relation to these new

technologies, again our graduates have sound training because the study curriculum itself integrates both traditional methods and the use of ICT. They are very well equipped. At end of their course they have, a practical vision and have developed skills for contributing to science development.

Now, where is the problem? When the graduates are posted in schools, they will not find a use for their professional competencies because the district education services do not meet their professional needs. The only available computer will not be for their use. We are at a phase in which growth is not uniform. The growth of the university, its curriculum most of the time is not in step with what happens out there in schools. The teacher should then investigate new ways of being in the profession.

DDC: Do you use any geometry software for teaching?

CE: They learn how to represent some geometric forms using AutoCad, which is installed in our computing clusters. All our descriptive geometry teachers learn how to make graphical representations using this software.

DDC: What is the philosophy of the descriptive geometry programme?

CE: We concentrate on demonstration and practicing through rigorous representation. However, descriptive geometry is a cross-curricular area. We think that descriptive geometry could be taught in other courses, because it helps the creative imagination. How can a chemistry teacher become a good teacher if he does not understand how molecules float in three dimensions, without knowledge and skills in descriptive geometry? Surely, he must have the practical 3D spatial training which descriptive geometry offers.

DDC: What are the student-teachers' perceptions about learning descriptive geometry professionally?

CE: In fact, there are graduates who leave with high levels of confidence. Some say “I am able to teach, I have confidence in this subject”. Nevertheless, there are very few who say they want to teach grades 11 and 12. However, teachers are proud to teach these final years, as it seems to grant an elite status in the school.

However, if you look at these two levels, in lower and higher schools in terms of the approach used, to teach at lower grades is demanding, you need to be an individual with lots of initiative. Lower secondary level involves more visual education, more spontaneous abstraction which is related to technical drawing, whereas at high school things are more precise and rigorous. In the latter, you have data and there is no space for subjectivity. In descriptive geometry, you have concrete points, lines, planes and intersections and projections which evolve in simultaneous interrelation as a process.

DDC: Any thoughts on the results of this programme?

CE: The results are encouraging. Descriptive geometry was overlooked for years when the social science subjects became predominant, but now it is experiencing a surge. This subject offers a valuable contribution to society.

Concluding remarks

It is clear that mathematics/geometry teachers need to have a deep knowledge of content-related aspects of this subject if they are to be successful teachers. To a large extent, this is highlighted in this interview. However, it is important to stress that there is a need for policy makers and curriculum bodies to act, in interest of appropriate curriculum renewal measures, which can inform and offer new perspective to practitioners for intervention in preservice education.

While geometry-related content matters, to arrive at decisions concerning what is to be taught or what ought to be emphasised in laying a good foundation in geometry education in teacher education institutions, represents a serious challenge. In this study, the initial findings concerning the respondent's perception of learning geometry emerged. These are sixfold: (i) The practical 3D descriptive geometry programme, (ii) learning process, (iii) learning activities, (iv) teaching methods, (v) the role of teacher educators and (vi) becoming a geometry teacher.

Put briefly, the first category includes the goals and philosophy of teaching geometry at teacher education institutions, while the second consists of teaching and learning geometry procedures such as practice, time and the language used for learning geometry. The third category includes aspects concerning the nature of the learning activities followed both by the trainees and by teacher educators.

The fourth category concerns with approaches to teaching drawn from the pedagogy of geometry. A 'hybrid' system was perceived to be most applicable, where the lecture format, group work and self-study during the course were used interchangeably and, at times, were complementary to one another. The role of the teacher educator the fifth category involves all of supporting and facilitative tasks performed by them. The final category, becoming a geometry teacher, involves a number of college-based and school based activities.

To conclude, these categories are not self-explanatory. However, they represent the passages 'quoted' from respondents' comments and 'negotiated' with them to establish their face and content validity. The main recurrent themes were sought in terms of respondent's perceptions, difficulties identified and solutions offered, in line with the

methodological approach of grounded theory. The analytic procedure that governed the study was iterative and interchangeable in each stage of method of the data collection. Although the semi-structured interview technique was open-ended, it helped the researcher to probe further and understand respondent's perceptions of geometry education. The study results may be relevant to geometry learning practices, however, call for learners' specific situation and require further analysis.

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***A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG SECONDARY
SCHOOL HEAD TEACHERS IN THE CITY OF JEDDAH, SAUDI ARABIA***

AHMED M. ALZAIDI

Abstract

This paper aims to contribute to the limited literature on job satisfaction amongst secondary school head teachers in Saudi Arabia. Drawing on five focus group interviews with 25 head teachers and semi-structured interviews with 20 head teachers in the city of Jeddah, this paper identifies the factors producing job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and the impact this has on how head teachers feel. Head teachers' satisfaction was found to lie in holding good relationships with educational supervision centres and supervisors, the implementation of human relationships and the practice of professional development for teachers. Factors causing dissatisfaction were found to be a lack of financial resources and authority, a lack of training programmes for head teachers, and a lack of response to their requests for school needs. The paper identifies the highly centralised educational system in Saudi Arabia and the lack of school autonomy as contributing factors to job dissatisfaction. The context of the Saudi educational system is considered specifically, in

an effort to explore how the Saudi Ministry of Education officials may address the issue of secondary school head teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Key words: *head teachers, job satisfaction, Saudi Arabia, secondary school*

Introduction

The importance of job satisfaction among the employees of organisations and institutions goes back to the second half of the 20th century, with the appearance of Maslow's theory (1956). Since then, researchers have given deep consideration to the matter and various analytical studies have been undertaken. The movement towards human relationships sheds more light on the importance of the morale and improvement of the work conditions for the employees of organisations and institutions aiming at increasing productivity.

The job satisfaction of employees in any organisation, as Conley et al. (1989) have indicated, is regarded as a main component of the work environment and one of the main factors determining organisational climate. In addition, Hoy and Misked (1987) have stated that job satisfaction is viewed as a decisive factor as to the general efficiency of an organisation.

It is known that research into job satisfaction started in the field of industry and business administration, with a special emphasis being laid on the working classes. Later on this research moved into the field of education, with more concentration being placed on the teaching sector. Abdulkhalig (1982) pointed out that the majority of job satisfaction research has been directed towards lower level employees, adding that it is

limited with regards to looking at managers, technicians and professionals. Furthermore, Bacharch and Mitchell (1983) have expressed that within the educational context the importance of the reality of teachers and their attitudes towards their jobs came at the cost of studying the importance of the reality of other employees in the educational context, such as head teachers and supervisors.

Job satisfaction is regarded as a very important issue within the educational context, especially for school head teachers. This is mainly due to the fact that it is connected with different aspects of their role and those which consume most of their time both in and outside of school. Therefore, it is necessary that they feel satisfaction and harmony in carrying out their duties to ensure effectiveness in delivering their role.

The nature of the Saudi educational context imposes another dimension for the importance of the job satisfaction of school head teachers, particularly at secondary level. The secondary level is the final stage of general education, which requires intensive effort and the fulfilment of responsibilities towards students and the community at large. However, the central system in Saudi Arabia has a tendency to minimise the autonomy of head teachers and their engagement in administrative issues at the cost of the professional side.

Within the Saudi educational context there are a few researchers dealing with the issue of job satisfaction among head teachers at different levels in Saudi Arabia, such as Alotabi (2000), Alonazi (2001), Alagbari (2002), and Alroyali (2002). Their studies in general have been descriptive, using questionnaires for data collection, laying emphasis on quantitative methods. Just one of these studies has dealt with the job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers, that of Alonazi (2001). This indicates the limitation of

research based on the job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers, leaving the door open for more studies on the subject.

The findings of these studies indicate that the level of job satisfaction has not reached an optimal level. For example, the study of Alotabi (2000) showed the weakness of job satisfaction among head teachers in general. While the study of Alagbari (2002) indicated that a minority of the population studied felt a low level of job satisfaction.

On the other hand, the study of Alroyali (2002) and Alonazi (2001) both found that the level of job satisfaction among head teachers was average.

In short, all the aforementioned studies did not investigate the job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers in the city of Jeddah in particular. Moreover, these studies were not extensive and did not explore in depth the underpinning factors contributing to the job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers. Therefore, this study will bridge the gap by giving secondary school head teachers the chance to express their emotions, feelings, and attitudes regarding their job satisfaction through the adoption of qualitative methods.

This study was carried out with the benefit of the researcher's personal experience from his job as a head manager for one of the educational supervision centres in the city of Jeddah. There are indications of job dissatisfaction among secondary school head teachers. These indications are as follows: Firstly the resistance from some distinguished middle school head teachers to being promoted to the secondary level. Secondly, the wish of a large number of distinguished secondary school head teachers to move to the private school sector.

This study focuses on exploring the factors that might affect the job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers. Our exploration in this paper provides a good opportunity to develop an entire in depth understanding of the underpinning factors contributing to the job satisfaction or dissatisfaction of secondary school head teachers in the city of Jeddah. The findings express the first-hand views of head teachers and capture their feelings on the different aspects of their role. Such knowledge will be of relevant importance to the educational administration of the city of Jeddah and the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia in their endeavour to increase the level of job satisfaction among this group.

Theoretical framework and literature on the job satisfaction of head teachers

The term job satisfaction is complex and multidimensional in nature. There is considerable amount of literature dealing with its complexity and multiplicity. There is no agreed upon definition of what constitutes job satisfaction. Different attempts have been made to define the term within different perspectives. While De Nobile (2003) defined it as the extent to which a staff member has favourable or positive feelings about work or the work environment, Furnham, (1997) and Locke (1976) defined it as positive attitudes or emotional dispositions people may gain from work or through aspects of work. Faragher et al. (2005) added another dimension, by defining it as being the positive emotional reaction and attitudes an individual has towards their job. From these different definitions, we can conclude that the main components of job satisfaction are emotion, attitude and reaction. Conversely, job dissatisfaction, according to Furnham (1997), refers to unhappy or negative feelings about work or the working environment.

Foundation theories on job satisfaction have been proposed by different scholars, the most prominent and widely used in the educational context being that of Herzberg and his associates (Derlin and Schneider, 1994; Dinham and Scott, 2000; Scott and Dinham, 1999). Herzberg's (1968) two factors theory looks at job satisfaction from a set of variables, which are motivators or satisfiers. The same theory uses a set of variables governing job dissatisfaction, that of hygiene factors or dissatisfiers. In other words, these factors can be described as either intrinsic (such as feelings of accomplishment, recognition and autonomy) or extrinsic (such as pay, security and physical work conditions).

According to the two factors theory of Gruneberg (1979) and Herzberg (1968), job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are considered separate constructs. The absence of hygiene factors was believed to lead to job satisfaction, but at the same time their fulfilment did not lead to job satisfaction. Similarly, the fulfilment of motivator variables did not lead to job satisfaction.

Although the two factors theory is widely used it has faced criticism for being too dependent on a particular methodology and by restricting its categorisation to satisfiers and dissatisfiers (McKenna, 1987). Along similar lines are the other prominent theories on job satisfaction, such as the expectancy theory, the equity theory, and Maslow's theory, which have all been criticised in various ways. However, the criticism levied against them does not detract from the importance they have in the field of job satisfaction. Worth mentioning is the fact that these theories emerged mainly in the Western developed world. For this reason the theories cannot necessary be applied to the context of the education field in the developing world. Nevertheless, these theories are

useful as a foundation to help in understanding the existence of the job satisfaction phenomenon within the Saudi educational context.

It has been agreed that job satisfaction can be categorised according to dimensions of work as well as un-dimensional or general (Scott et al., 1999). The determination of job satisfaction dimensions has the benefit of being more focussed on aspects of work that might lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Given that many studies have been carried out within developed countries, they can be used to identify the dimensions of job satisfaction among school head teachers. With regards to the context of the Arab world, the dimensions of job satisfaction have been identified through studies by Alomari (1992) and Yaseen (1990), who adopted well known job satisfaction measurements like the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (M.S.Q) and the Job Descriptive Index (J.D.I). While others identified job satisfaction within the Arab context, such as Alagbari (2002), by addressing twenty dimensions of job satisfaction dealing with the different aspects of the role of head teacher in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia. Along similar lines, Alroyali (2002) determined the dimensions of job satisfaction to include six dimensions; namely, working conditions, relationships with educational administration, relationships with colleagues, social status, salary and advancement. In addition, the study of Team (1999) includes another two dimensions; namely, work stability and educational supervision. The study of Alarami (1998) approached the issue of the dimensions of job satisfaction from a different angle by including workload, promotion, financial reward, work challenges, work relationships, authority, and adequacy of resources.

In spite of the theoretical background of the issue of job satisfaction among head teachers, one can argue that certain characteristics of society as a whole, the educational

context and personal traits are crucial in deciding the different dimensions or factors related to job satisfaction.

Over the last decade, many studies in the Arab countries have attempted to identify factors affecting the job satisfaction of head teachers. According to most of these studies, job satisfaction and dissatisfaction among head teachers is clearly related to a number of different aspects. The main factors that have been found to contribute to job satisfaction among head teachers are work conditions, supervision and relationships. Additional factors include achievement, societal recognition and teacher collaboration (Yaseen, 1999; Alomari, 1992; Alarami, 1998; Team, 1999; Alagbari, 2002; Aloanazi, 2002; Alroyali, 2002). According to the same studies, factors contributing to job dissatisfaction included salary, financial reward and promotion.

Context of the research

Saudi Arabia is a country with an independent monarchy situated in South West Asia. The first feature of the educational system in Saudi Arabia is the combination of different international education systems along Islamic lines. The Ministry of Education (MOE) was founded in 1954 as a replacement to the Directory of Education. It is the responsible body for educational policy development of the curriculum and teaching methods.

The educational system is highly centralised, and decision making is top-down. General education is divided into three main levels: primary level for six years, middle level for three years and secondary level for three years. The schools in each city of Saudi

Arabia come under the responsibility and supervision of the Educational Administration. The city of Jeddah, which is the second largest city in Saudi Arabia with a total population of four million, is located in the Western Region. The total number of secondary governmental schools in the city is eighty six, working under five educational supervision centres.

Purpose of the study

The research upon which this paper focuses was carried out late in 2006 and the beginning of 2007. It was conducted in two phases: In the first phase the data was collected through focus group interviews with 25 head teachers taking part in this phase. The second phase of the study involved conducting semi-structured interviews with 20 head teachers. The present study was designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that affect the job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers in Jeddah?
2. What aspects of the head teachers' role have an impact on job satisfaction?
3. Why do these aspects impact on job satisfaction?

Methodology

Since this study is concerned with the phenomenon of job satisfaction, considering the attitudes and feelings of head teachers in regards their job satisfaction, the most proper approach to tackle the issue was the phenomenological approach, which uses qualitative methods.

In order to collect the data, a random sample of 25 secondary school head teachers in the five educational supervision centres were selected to conduct five focus group interviews as a representative sample. The question for the focus group interviews derived from the research questions and the aspects of the job role, multidimensional relationships and responsibilities of head teachers. The duration of the five focus group interviews was around 8 hours. Since the experience for head teachers participating in such an event was exciting and an incentive for most of them, their interaction resulted in highly productive and extremely extensive data.

The focus group interviews were recorded and transcribed. Each transcript had been independently read several times so that the data was familiarised and the researcher could make sense of it. In order to reduce the data in a meaningful way the inductive qualitative approach of Thomas (2006) was applied. This approach is a systematic straightforward process based on thematic analysis. The major and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis were identified and categorised using the NVivo version 2 software. The findings of the focus group interviews were in 8 major themes; namely, morale, authority, relationship with educational administration, relationship with students and parents, school environment, relationship with educational supervision, head teachers practices and relationship with teachers. To ensure the validity of the findings and minimise bias, the opportunity was given to some of the participants to engage in data analysis at certain stages.

The findings of this phase facilitated the second phase and the designing of the semi-structured interview questions, in order to investigate in depth each major theme

and relevant themes that emerged during the interviews. This was to identify more related factors that affected the job satisfaction of head teachers.

Likewise, 20 secondary school head teachers were selected randomly as a sample for the semi-structured interviews. The duration of each interview was between 45 minutes to one hour. The interviews were also recorded and transcribed. The data from the semi-structured interviews were analysed using a deductive and inductive approach to obtain an in depth understanding of the underpinning factors affecting job satisfaction among head teachers. This led to an expansion of each major theme with the addition of more related factors.

The research findings

The analysis of both the focus group and semi-structured interviews provided a deep and enriched insight into secondary school head teachers of Jeddah city, the factors associated with satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and the many complexities of the emotions and attitudes of head teachers towards their work. In analysing the interviews, we have grouped responses together under themes that capture the emotions and attitudes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction underpinning the job of head teacher.

Table 1: Major themes and total responses derived from semi-structured interviews.

Major themes		Total responses
1.	Relationship with educational administration	126
2.	Morale	108
3.	Head teachers' practices	79
4.	School environment	65
5.	Relationships with students and parents	60
6.	Head teachers' authority	52
7.	Relationship with educational supervision	43
8.	Relationship with teachers	28

The definitions of these themes are the coded passages under each theme which captured the emerging factors related to the sub-theme dealing with the following:

1. Relationship with educational administration

Procedure, responsiveness, work system, trust, job security, interference, underperforming teachers, appreciation, respect, technology and training. These sub-themes included the factors affecting the job satisfaction of head teachers.

2. Morale

\Appreciation, respect, decision making, recognition, honour, promotion, responsiveness, job security, trust, support and salary. These sub-themes included the factors affecting the job satisfaction of head teachers.

3. Head teachers' practices

Head teachers' role, human relationship, teachers' professional development, setting up school environment, head teachers' practical hand book, achievement, team building, delegation of power and learning development. These sub-themes included the factors affecting the job satisfaction of head teachers.

4. School environment

Financial resources, rented building, school cleaning, school maintenance, school premises, shortage of administrative staff and expenses paid by head teachers. These sub-themes included the factors affecting the job satisfaction of head teachers.

5. Relationships with students and parents

Relationships with students, relationships with parents, students' achievement, regulation of students assessment, regulation of students perseverance and behaviour, participation in parents council and school socioeconomic background. These sub-themes included the factors affecting the job satisfaction of head teachers.

6. Head teachers' authority

Head teachers' attitudes regarding their authority, authority related to students, authority related to teachers, authority related to deputy head teachers and authority of controlling salaries of staff. These sub-themes included the factors affecting the job satisfaction of head teachers.

7. Relationship with educational supervision

Relationships with educational supervision centres, relationships with educational supervisors, educational supervisors' practices and educational supervision authority. These sub-themes included the factors affecting the job satisfaction of head teachers.

8. Relationship with teachers

Teachers' performance, commitment, moving teachers, teachers' compatibility and teachers' professional development. These sub-themes included the factors affecting job satisfaction of head teachers.

The above definitions show the major and sub-themes, including the different factors affecting job satisfaction of head teachers, either positive or negative. The findings of the focus group interviews, although premature, nonetheless reveal indicators that helped to identify 45 factors that may contribute to job dissatisfaction and 15 factors related to job satisfaction, by quantifying the coded passages related to each of the

factors. The salient factors identified from the focus group interviews are shown as data in Table 2.

Table 2: Salient factors related to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of head teachers derived from the focus group interviews.

Factors related to job satisfaction		Total responses	Factors related to job dissatisfaction		Total responses
1	Implementation of human relationship	11	1	Lack of authority to undertaken responsibilities	20
2	Positive relationship with educational supervisors	10	2	Relationship with educational supervision centres	15
3	Corrective measure to standardised teachers' performance	6	3	Relationship with educational supervisors	15
4	Positive relationship with parents	5	4	Interference in head teachers affair	14
5	Head teachers' achievements	5	5	Lack of job security	13
6	Positive relationship with students	3	6	Problems with work system	12

The findings of the semi-structured interview deepened and enriched our understanding of the factors affecting job satisfaction among head teachers. It has confirmed that the majority of the identified factors emerged from the focus group interviews; 41 factors found related to job satisfaction and 71 factors found related to job dissatisfaction. The salient factors identified from the semi-structured interviews are shown as data in Table 3.

Table 3: Salient factors related to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction of head teachers derived from semi-structured interviews

Factors related to job satisfaction		Total responses	Factors related to job dissatisfaction		Total responses
1	Positive relationship with educational supervisors	17	1	Lack of financial resources	19
2	Positive relationship with educational supervision centres	15	2	Negative head teachers' attitude regarding their authority	18
3	Efficacy of head teachers' practical hand book	14	3	Non response to head teachers' requests	16
4	Practicing the professional development for teachers	12	4	Non participation in parents council from parents	14
5	Implementation of human relationship	10	5	Unavailability of head teachers' training programmes	14
6	Positive relationship with students	10	6	Lack of financial reward	11

Furthermore, it seems that certain characteristics of the Saudi educational system, such as its highly centralised system and lack of school autonomy, have created many negative feelings and has unfortunate consequences for the work of head teachers. Factors related to job dissatisfaction determine how head teachers consider these aspects through the expression of negative feelings with regards to them, as can be seen in Table 3.

On the other hand, factors related to job satisfaction, as can be seen in Table 3, are linked to the relationships held by head teachers. Surprisingly, the relationships held by head teachers with educational supervision centres is considered a factor of job dissatisfaction in the data of the focus group interviews. However, it appears as a factor of satisfaction in the data of the semi-structured interviews. This is most likely due to the time the focus group interviews were conducted, as they coincided with the beginning of the new school year. This is normally the time when there is much pressure and tension between schools and educational supervision centres because there is a high demand for efficient student enrolment.

In short, it is clear that the factors related to job dissatisfaction are greater than the factors related to job satisfaction. Nevertheless, it is too early to decide whether secondary school head teachers are satisfied or dissatisfied with their job. This means that the identified factors will be of great value to developing a questionnaire to examine the overall job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers.

In addition, the findings indicate particular aspects of the head teachers' role that impact on their job satisfaction, such as a lack of response from educational administration to their requests with regards to school needs. Another important aspect is lack of authority and shortage of training programmes. Moreover, the salary and financial rewards have also been expressed as cause of dissatisfaction.

Discussion

The findings presented and analysed in this paper make a significant contribution to the study of the feelings and attitudes of secondary school head teachers to their work in the city of Jeddah. Their perceptions of satisfaction were intimately connected to the joy gained from their relationships with students, parents, supervisors, educational supervision centres and the practice of professional development for teachers. The findings in this respect are similar to the findings of other studies such as those undertaken by Alonazi (2001) and Yaseen (1992).

It is often assumed that the job dissatisfaction of head teachers is largely related to salary and financial reward. This may be due to their attitudes with regards to their workload and responsibilities, resulting in feelings of unfairness as teachers with long service may get a higher salary than them. This finding is similarly to the studies of Alarami (1998), Team (1990) and Yaseen (1990).

In addition, a lack of financial resources was a common factor of dissatisfaction among secondary school head teachers, who believe that the school buffet was a good source of financial revenue when it was under school management. The shifting in the system that transferred the management of the school buffet to a private sector company deprived schools of this resource. This impacted negatively on the school environment. Surprisingly, a lack of financial resources did not appear in any of the studies that dealt with the issue within the context of Arab countries context; whereas this finding had been addressed in the study of Mercer (1997) within a British context and found to be a factor of dissatisfaction.

To sum up, this study points to some specific factors that might potentially increase the job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers in the city of Jeddah. In essence, most factors are related to morale and their relationships with educational administration. A remedy to these factors will enable them to focus on their duties and responsibilities, and minimise dissatisfaction in order to increase the level of satisfaction.

Conclusion

This study highlights the complexities involved in understanding the job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers in a way that has clear implications for policy and practice. What is now needed is serious consideration as to how these factors may be meaningfully addressed through initiatives and efforts to improve job satisfaction among head teachers. The findings demonstrate that there is an urgent need for the Saudi Educational Ministry to recognise the fact that the quality of secondary school education is largely related to the job satisfaction of head teachers.

Thus, an objective of any Ministry of Education should be to maximise the satisfaction of head teachers and minimise their dissatisfaction, not only for the benefit of the head teachers themselves but also for the sake of students.

This study clearly identified the factors affecting the job satisfaction of secondary school head teachers in the city of Jeddah. However, further investigation should be carried out by developing a questionnaire that can explore factors of relevant strength and their association with demographic variables. This will be considered later as a part of this study.

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GOALS FOR INCORPORATING A CREATIVITY PROGRAMME INTO TODAY'S SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS PROGRAMME IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS

SOUDABEH ERSHADI MANESH

Abstract

The current paper investigates factors such as aims, necessity, outcomes, ability, and the application of a creativity programme in comparison with today's school effectiveness programme, aiming to understand the quality and possibility of their integration. The emphasis of the creative psychological construct or the ability to apply original ideas to the solution of problems (Corsini, 2002) is on the thinking process, and is believed to be a main aim of education associated with self-actualisation in which we could realise our

potential (Rogers, 1959). Effectiveness is the fullest possible attainment of the goals and objectives of the school, shown as examination results or test scores (Knight, 1993). Results of the reviewed literature indicate that since creativity constructs cover a wide range of cognitive, emotional, rational, creative and behavioural aspects of students, it is important that educators combine them in school effectiveness goals for school improvement.

Key words: *creativity, effectiveness, critical thinking, problem solving, self-regulation, creative teaching*

Introduction

Nowadays the system of education in the majority of countries, especially developed countries, is an important issue. Social needs, order and economics, together with rapid shift of technology, the issue of globalisation and the need for preparation for life and communication with other countries for the next decade or decades have brought to the attention of researchers the need to think about reconstruction of the education system by systematic and scientific review of an organisation. Therefore, two models of creativity programme and the effectiveness characteristics of today's school will be discussed in this article.

The study of school effectiveness shows that during the last few decades large amounts of research have been done which have supported the idea that individual schools have made pupils progress further than might be expected (Mortimore, 1991,

cited Hopkins, 2003). They mainly focused on academic achievement in terms of basic skills in reading and mathematics, or examination results (Goodlad, 1984). As a result, a number of studies have been done in schools to investigate and understand the characteristics of school effectiveness with the aim of improving outcomes of today's schools. However, according to Stoll and Fink (1996) many of our effective schools would be considered good schools if this were 1965.

In contrast to this, in this era of unprecedented breakthroughs in technology and constant change in many aspects of life, educators are challenged more than ever before by the need to develop students who will be adaptable in fast-changing environments and this requires students to be creative with better thinking skills and learning abilities (Tan, 2000). In this position, creativity could be looked at as a principal aim of education in which educators wish to develop human minds to make people more creative.

The issues identified above are discussed in more detail below by evaluating how the goals of the creativity programme differ from those of school effectiveness. In this article, I outline the issues and ask if a creativity programme and school effectiveness programme can be combined and integrated. For this purpose, the questions below will be discussed: What are the aims, necessities, outcomes and quality of application of these programmes? What are the abilities of these programmes? To what extent could creativity programmes be incorporated into mainstream schools?

A literature review of the aims, necessity and outcomes

Rapid advances in communication and technology mean that the capacity to learn throughout life has become as important to human survival as access to food, water, and

shelter. Since education is now crucial, it is a theme which demands not only research, but immediate action (Barber, 1993). Historically, school effectiveness is measured based on the students' outcomes. The focus of school effectiveness is concerned with the idea that schools do have major effects and make a difference (Reynolds and Creemers, 1990). Furthermore, the focus has been on academic achievement in terms of basic skills in reading and mathematics, or examination results (Goodlad, 1984).

In reviewing early school effectiveness studies in the US context, a wide range of studies shows that the effective schools movement was committed to the belief that children of the economically deprived areas could succeed and schools could help them succeed (Sammons et al., 1995), but, more recent research of school effectiveness, especially in the UK context, has moved toward a focus on achievement of all students, a concern with the concept of progress over time. One definition of an effective school is that it is where the focus is on students' outcomes and in particular on the concept of the value added by the school (McPherson, 1992). For example, Mortimore (1991) has defined an effective school as one in which students progress further than might be expected.

In contrast to this, creativity in contemporary times has increasingly become an objective of interest from all sorts of different provenances because of the perceived influence of creative abilities on economic changes that are taking place in contemporary work (Karwowski et al., 2006). As our societies evolve at an ever faster pace, we are increasingly faced with new challenges in our daily lives. As a result, the ability to produce novel ideas to solve problems may be considered one of the most valuable human assets (Mouchiroud and Lubart, 2002). In this context, the psychological study of

the development of creative abilities is a relevant research topic. Historically, creativity emphasised the quality of thinking. The studies by Torrance (1974) and Gainer (1990, cited Puccio and Murdock, 2001) emphasised the creative skills programme and Creative Problem Solving, which was developed by Osborn (1963).

Also Torrance (1974) saw creativity as a term which is associated with creative solutions and creative thinking. Since creative thinking is related to the process of creativity and cognitive skills, it is associated with solving a problem and the progression from a problem which needs a creative solution and becoming sensitive to problems.

Creative thinking is an essential life skill (Puccio and Murdock, 2001). Creativity could be seen as a principal aim of education in which educators wish to develop human minds to reach the quality of a creative mind. Educators have tried to define some concepts such as critical thinking and problem solving to increase the quality of thinking. Most psychologists and educators such as Piaget (1954), Bloom et al. (1956), Rogers (1959), and Osborn (1963) considered creative thinking as an important aim of education. For example, creative thinking and creative problem solving enable us to cope with the challenges of life (Torrance, 1974), creative thinking skills promote well-being and good mental health and to survive and thrive in a complex world we need to think creatively (Puccio and Murdock, 2001). Creative thinking skills are associated with self-actualisation, in which we are able to actualise our potential (Rogers, 1959). Florida (2003) developed the theory of Creative Class (Puccio and Murdock, 2001).

There is a need in this complex world for creative thinking to survive. Creative thinking is a basic skill required in today's workplace. In light of these developments, a thinking programme was rationalised and conceived, aiming to enhance students'

capacity to learn how to learn, to enhance problem solving abilities, and to enhance students' capacity to adapt and confront change (Tan, 2000). Creativity can be measured using important psychological tools known as Cognitive Ability Tests to find out the quality of thinking, such as the ability to attempt different possible ways of organising and planning future steps for the solution of a problem (flexibility), the ability to reason, and the identification of similarities (fluid intelligence).

What are the abilities of these programmes?

Focus on thinking process or focus on teaching material

An effective school needs professional leadership that has characteristics such as: firmness and strength of purpose, sharing responsibilities with others (Mortimore et al., 2001), and a leading professional (Rutter, 1983). Effective schools also have a shared vision and mission in goals (Mortimore et al., 2001), unity of purpose (Levin, 1994), and consistency of practice (Mortimore et al., 2001).

Another important ability of effective schools is having an effective learning environment, by having an orderly atmosphere (Lightfoot, 1983) and an attractive working environment (Rutter, 1983).

Moreover, an effective school has the ability to concentrate on teaching and learning by maximisation of learning time (Mortimore et al., 2001; Alexander, 1992), academic emphasis (Levin, 1994), and focus of outcomes (Mortimore et al. 2001). Also, effective schools have purposeful teaching (Mortimore, 1993), with well organised objectives (Levine, 1994), and structured lessons. Furthermore, effective schools are regarded as having high expectations (Sammons et al., 1995) and monitoring progress (Mortimore et

al., 2001). Finally, in effective schools pupils have rights and responsibilities which raise pupil self-esteem (ibid), co-operation between home and schools, parent involvement (Coleman et al., 1993, cited Sammons et al., 1995), and staff development.

In comparison with this, while pupils' competencies in inventive thinking and problem solving is a rather neglected issue in traditional schooling (Sternberg and Lubart, 1996), creativity can be defined as a set of capacities enabling a person to behave in new and adaptive ways (Gardner, 1993; Lautrey and Lubart, 1998; Lubart, 1994, cited Mouchiroud and Lubart, 2002).

Creativity focuses on students and their thinking processes, which could help them to learn by developing cognition and metacognition. For example, in developmental studies in verbal and figural models of creativity, children are asked to solve problems concerning well-known objects, or to draw pictures based on various materials or the physical world (Mouchiroud and Lubart, 2002). Moreover, other studies on social problem solving among disadvantaged children showed student's thinking and teaching skills could have a significant effect on pro-social behaviour. In addition, it has been suggested that social and cognitive abilities are linked in childhood and that family and cultural variables have an effect on children's social behaviour (Bronstein, 1986, cited Mouchiroud and Lubart, 2002). Furthermore, on a more everyday level, social creativity may be seen as contributing favourably to interpersonal problem solving as well as leadership, self-actualisation, and psychological health (Mouchiroud and Lubart, 2002). Also, the study by Vigotsky illustrated how social creativity could be improved by social interaction and fostering cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Creativity is often defined as the ability to produce work that is both novel (such as original, unexpected and imaginative work) and appropriate (such as useful, adaptive work) (Guilford, 1976; Simonto, 2000; Sternberg and Lubart, 1996, cited Barak and Mesika, 2006). Creative thinking is a key competency for the 21st century, indeed it has been viewed as the ultimate economic source and as essential for addressing complex individual and societal issues (Plucker et al., 2006), with the ability to offer new perspectives and generate novel and meaningful ideas, new questions and identify problems (Amabile, 1996; Feist, 1998; Sternberg and Lubart, 1999, cited Beghetto, 2006).

Creativity could help students to become more active and use their own thinking. A key aspect of creativity enhancement involves providing students with informative feedback, so they can develop their capacity to determine how and when to appropriately express their ideas (Plucker et al. , 2006).

In addition to activating students, it seems that creativity affects students in a self-regulated process. For example, Pintrich's (2000) framework for self-regulated learning represents an integrated dynamic concept of how thinking and learning can be developed (Moseley et al., 2004). Creative thinking is very important because it is involved with intuition rather than inspiration (Fisher, 1995). As a result we need to think that creativity is a collection of attitudes and abilities leading creative persons to make creative, original and appropriate products, thoughts, ideas, or images.

In a creativity programme, the emphasis is on the meaningfulness of learning by creating new relationships with other elements. Based on Fisher's theory (1995), when the mental process leads to a new invention, solution, or synthesis in any area, a creative

solution may use pre-existing objects or ideas, but creates a new relationship between the elements, so it can be defined as the ability to apply original ideas to the solution of problems. For example when students start to generate new ideas from their mind at an early age they become very effective learners in the future. In a creativity programme the student is given a chance to rely on her/his own work. It seems that most students rely on their parents and their teachers to teach them, but they have fewer opportunities to reflect on why they need to learn this sort of information. We can acquire numerous types of information and use them whenever we need to. However, we may not have any idea which information is appropriate, because students are rarely required to use thinking skills such as inference, deduction, analysis and evaluation.. As Fisher (1995) reminds us, imagination is more important than knowledge, because knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world.

In a creativity programme, methods of learning such as critical thinking and problem solving, inquiry, and metacognitive strategies can promote creative thinking among students. For example, (Puccio and Murdock 2001, p. 69) illustrated how Creative Problem Solving continues to be useful for practicing many skills identified with creative thinking. They also showed that working with CPS develops skills which help people learn and develop cognition such as perceiving, conceiving and imagining, and metacognition such as knowledge of own cognitive activity

The process of Creative Problem solving or creative thinking includes three basic elements: problem defining, idea generation, and solution development and implementation with two basic operations, i.e., divergent thinking (involves a broad

search for many diverse options) and convergent thinking (involves focused search and selection) (Osborn, 1963, cited Puccio, et al., 2001).

In addition, affective skills or feelings is other area which has been investigated by educators. According to (Bloom et al. 1956), cognitive skills are related to thinking about thinking and affective skills relate to focusing on feelings. To help students to become creative, educators identified some techniques in this process, for example, based on the theory of Torrance (1974), teachers can teach students to become sensitive to problems, search for solutions, make guesses or formulate hypotheses by deficiencies, gaps in knowledge and missing elements. According to (Puccio et al., 2001, p. 70), when we take together these three groups provide a multifaceted way of organising and simplifying the diverse creative thinking skills used in applying the Creative Problem Solving process.

Application

Could we combine a creativity programme with a school programme?

We can improve some of the characteristics of schools in order to make them effective. According to Sammons et al. (1995), effectiveness studies have focused exclusively on students' outcomes in areas such as reading, mathematics or public examination results. However, we have less evidence about school and classroom processes that are important in determining schools' success in promoting social or affective outcomes such as behaviour, attendance, attitudes and self-esteem (Reynolds, 1996, cited Sammons et al., 1995). However, merely emphasising some limited factors is not enough and further research on the ways effective schools influence social and

affective outcomes, including student motivation and commitment to school would be desirable.

In contrast to this, in a creativity programme there are numerous theoretical approaches around the problem of creative education in schools, especially those that concentrate on shaping creative abilities, such as developing creative skills and problem solving abilities, shaping creative attitudes and education for creativity. One important programme named the Problem Based Learning approach, was developed as Problem-Based Creativity Learning (PBCL), advocated by Boud and Feletti (1996), and then used by Tan (2000). A problem-based learning approach was particular used in divergent-creative thinking and development of creativity.

Another thinking programme known as the Cognitive Modifiability Intervention (CMI), was based on the theory of structural cognitive modifiability (Feuerstein, 1990, 1998; Sternberg, 1985, 1986) and was conceived to enhance problem solving abilities and students' capacity to adapt and confront change (Tan, 2000). This programme consisted of lessons, prepared for 30 weeks, under four major clusters of cognitive domains, namely, the Affective Motivation Domain, the Systematic-Strategic Thinking cluster, the Analytical Inferential Thinking cluster and the Divergent-Creative. Moreover, another approach known as the Geneplore Model provides useful examples of the cognitive process, structures and properties by Isaak and Just (1995, p. 5). It focuses on the importance of "releasing unwarranted constraints".

There are also some important tools for measuring creativity such as the Cognitive Ability Test (CAT), which provides a set of measures of the students' ability to use and manipulate abstract and symbolic relationships. The emphasis of the CAT is on the

discovery of relationships and discovery of flexibility of thinking and fluid intelligence and fluency. For example, the study by Tan (2000) reveals that students can benefit from a PBCL programme which is aimed at enhancing creativity. In this case the creative cognitive functions such as associative thinking, analogy, imagery, taking multiple perspectives, flexibility, fluency, originality, refraining from premature closure and elaboration are important in developing the ability to relate to learning and problem solving. Another example from a study by Tan (2000) showed PBCL as measured by CAT produces statistically significant gains in creativity, which is good news for educators in the challenge to develop students to be flexible and creative thinkers.

Another important approach known as the Creative Personality Scale is offered as Hong Kong's current education reforms. In Hong Kong education, the use and understanding of creativity has recently been defined by the Hong Kong Curriculum Development Council (CDC) as "the ability to generate original ideas and solve problems appropriate to the contexts" (Forrester and Hui, 2006, p. 2). This is a combination of Guilford's (1950) idea of originality and Amabile's (1983) idea of appropriateness. The Curriculum Development Council (CDC) in Hong Kong introduced Learning to Learn followed by teachers' curriculum guides for the five key-learning areas of Chinese and English Language, Arts, Mathematics and Science (ibid). These guides provide suggestions of how teachers can reform class time to develop students' specific creative abilities, attitudes, attributes, how to apply the Creative Problem Solving model and creative thinking strategies (Forrester and Hui, 2006), how to empower teachers as decision makers and how to modify their classroom behaviour by providing more instructions to pupils, less frequent use of discipline, raising more questions and

providing more convergent and divergent tasks by seeking to empower decision making (ibid).

In addition, for academically weaker students, “education” may also be skill-oriented, for example, the use of various creativity strategies, such as brainstorming in problem identification or creative and critical thinking in computer problems (Hung, 2002, cited Forrester and Hui, 2006). One important programme known as Classroom Discussion provides an ideal forum for students to develop their creative thinking skills (Beghetto, 2006) so teachers can support students’ creative thinking by encouraging and rewarding students’ novel ideas, unique perspectives, and creative connections (Sternberg and Grigorenko, 2004, cited Beghetto, 2006)

There are also some important programmes for teachers. One programme to encourage teachers to develop their competence, known as Teacher Educators, can also help prospective teachers to develop their competence in supporting students’ creative thinking, developing strategies for teaching students how to self-regulate and develop creative expression during classroom discussions (Beghetto, 2006). For example, educators help teachers consider how their beliefs about the value of novel student responses may influence their subsequent instructional practices and, ultimately, creative expression, models and images of classroom discussion, instead of emphasising recitation of the correct answer (Parker and Hess, 2001, cited Beghetto, 2006). They can apply the combination of uniqueness and relevant response within a classroom discussion rather than a simple recitation of facts and see how they might react to students who offer a wide range of responses during classroom discussions.

To equip students with this learning capacity requires a more comprehensive view of education reflected in valuing creativity as a generic skill. For example, based on learning approach, creative teacher characteristics as who has comprehensive and explicit guidance that encompasses abilities, attitudes, attributes and observable behavioural outcomes. For example, teachers now need to think beyond the traditional boundaries of promoting “subject-knowledge” towards enhancing each individual student’s abilities, attitudes, attributes and observable behaviour in order to become an effective “facilitator of learning” and focus on the field of interaction between teachers and students.

Discussion and conclusion

As we understood from the literature, many efforts of school improvement over the past few decades have failed, or suffered because of a limited view of educational effectiveness, a lack of focus on the important purposes and aims of schooling, pupil outcomes, and an inability to show results. The aim of this article was to emphasize the importance of creativity in today’s schools. This literature review could be one step towards understanding the necessity of including a creativity programme in a mainstream school programme.

A fresh look at the aims, goals, necessity, outcomes and application of the education system and the curriculum simply shows us the necessity of fundamental change in the way education is now going. It is now obvious that the system of education must guide students to not only the best method of knowledge-gathering by the students, but also lead them to think about new things. Also all people in the world would like to be

creative, and the education system needs to prepare people to use their potential in facing numerous questions in real life.

Focusing on academic subjects, maximising school learning time, and using these to define an effective school would not help the new generation if they lack the skill of judgement. They also need to generate novel methods rather than copying and quoting knowledge.

Moreover, emphasis on the rigorous assessment of students' outcomes and monitoring them is not very useful when the students are not equipped with the skill of self-regulation. As the ethos of the effective school is determined by the vision, values and goals of the staff in an orderly atmosphere, the climate needs to be evaluated as to whether or not the working environment is attractive. Today's students need to cope with the challenges of life in the complex world instead of just being prepared for society's needs, and economic purposes. Although current effective school studies consider pupils' rights and responsibilities, it seems they have failed to follow current psychological studies about thinking and its processes, as the teachers and students need to learn skills which help them to be masters of intuition rather than inspiration.

They also need to learn how to learn by understanding the value of meaningfulness of learning which leads them to generate original ideas rather than reproducing taught material. In this situation the teachers must help students to focus on imagination rather than focus on memorisation. Indeed, how we could change the aim of education with regards to the outcomes is now a very controversial subject and the answer is not too difficult, as it implies that the system of education needs to focus on an ideal critical thinker rather academic performance. It must also focus on the creativity process rather

than value added concept, focus on flexibility rather than an orderly atmosphere, and focus on inventive thinking rather than teaching and learning material.

In schools, effective teachers have been identified as those who teach the class as a whole, present information, keep teaching sessions task-oriented, promote subject knowledge and show their high expectations by giving more homework, whereas, creative teachers equip students and encourage more discussion among them, lead them to become self-regulated, encourage novel ideas and responses, enhance the individual's abilities and attitudes. They are facilitators and focus on interactions rather than the transfer of knowledge.

In this situation there is a necessity for a system of education to design a new learning environment and curricula that conduct and equip firstly the motivated teachers by reforming educational programmes based on creativity programmes which promote learning to learn for life. The literature has illustrated the possibility of teaching creativity which contain identifiable concepts, definition, and principles that can be simplified, coordinated and measured.

Therefore, in order to put a creativity programme into the schools, we need to change firstly our understanding of the aims, necessities, outcomes, abilities and application of today's educational goals and ambitions. Everyone must be equipped with a basic level of learning capacity in order that they can learn throughout their lives, become critical thinkers, novel designers, problem solvers, and good decision makers.

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THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR WITHIN GIFTED AND TALENTED ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

MOHAMMED ALHOSSAINI

Abstract

This paper critically reviews previous studies that have explored the role of school counsellors for gifted and talented students. School counsellors in Saudi Arabia receive little specific training in the needs of gifted students, and it is very rare for counsellor training programmes to require counsellors to take courses on gifted students as part of the degree requirements. Therefore, this article considers theories of counselling, and the role of school counsellors, and gifted student programmes in the USA, the UK and KSA. This review considers the counsellor's role in different contexts and discusses it in the Saudi context. In doing so, the psychological, educational and professional skills of counsellors need to be understood in order to meet the needs of gifted and talented students so that they can live up to their ambitions and aspirations.

Key words: *counselling, school counsellor, gifted, talented, Saudi education*

Introduction

The role of the school counsellor is complicated and one of the most demanding careers when compared with other educational professions. It involves interaction with students from different cultural, economic and social backgrounds. The primary responsibility of the school counsellor is to develop the skills that will enable them to meet the challenges of this technological era. In the era of globalization, this objective is more important than ever, where we have to search for and develop the skills of talented students. In 1981, the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia established the General Directorate of Guidance and Counselling for Gifted Students. Since that time, guidance and counselling has become formalized and recognized as a profession, and counsellors have been appointed to deal with psychological, social, educational and vocational problems and to deliver protective counselling (Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, 1999). For this reason the current paper will highlight the historical background of school counselling and counsellors of the gifted and talented in the USA, UK and KSA.

Definition of counselling

In the 1955 Yearbook of Education, reference is made to counselling as a process of helping individuals through their own efforts to discover and develop their potentialities both for personal happiness and social usefulness (Hall & Lauwerys, 1955, cited in Milner, 1974). A more recent definition is that counselling is to help an individual to make his own decisions and choices in the light of his feelings and needs (Milner, 1974).

Jones (1970) suggested that counselling is an enabling process, designed to help an individual come to terms with his life as it is and ultimately to grow to greater maturity through learning to take responsibility and to make decisions for himself. The American School Counsellor Association (ASCA, 1999) defines counselling as an interactive process as follows: it is a confidential relationship in which the counsellor meets with students individually and in small groups to help them resolve or cope constructively with their problems and developmental concerns. In Corey's (2002) words, the central function of counselling is to help clients recognize their own strengths, discover what is preventing them from using their strengths, and clarify what kind of

person they want to be. Counselling is a process by which clients are invited to look honestly at their behaviour and lifestyle and make certain decisions about how they want to modify the quality of their life.

Pattison (2006) suggests that, counselling is an activity that takes place behind closed doors in privacy, the nature of client confidentiality requires this. However, this can make counselling practices and processes mysterious and misunderstood. In placing this research in the public arena, it is hoped that counselling practices and processes have been made a little more transparent and that the case for including young people with learning disabilities in counselling has been strengthened. Bor et al. (2002) state that school counselling is an interaction in a therapeutic setting, focusing primarily on a conversation about relationships, beliefs and behaviour (including feelings), through which the child's perceived problem is elucidated and framed or reframed in a fitting and useful way, and in which new solutions are generated and the problem takes on a new meaning .

Definition of the school counsellor

According to Wrenn (1962) the early school counselling and guidance programme emphasized occupational information. As time went by, the role of the counsellor was redefined to include:

- Counselling students,
- Consulting teachers, parents and administrators about students.
- Studying the changing nature of the student population.

Moreover, Ryan (1978) & Makinde (1984) argue that counsellors should be able to:

- Plan and develop guidance programmes,

- Help students to understand themselves, develop decision making skills and solve problems,
- Interpret and explain information about students to students themselves, teachers, parents and professionals,
- Identify students with special needs, make appropriate referrals, and collaborate with specialists and agencies,
- Collect and distribute information about school subjects and educational and career opportunities and assist students to develop long term study plans,
- Consult parents and help teachers to identify students with special needs,
- Conduct research related to students' needs and problems,
- Evaluate guidance and counselling programmes.

Therefore, Coy (1991) assigns the following responsibilities to counsellors operating within a comprehensive counselling framework:

- Designing the content of the programme,
- Counselling students both individually and in groups,
- Providing guidance on issues dealing with prevention and remediation,
- Consulting with parents, teachers, educators and community agencies.

McLaughlin (1993) mentions that effective school counselling has three elements: an educative function whereby attention is focused on the social development of the student within the school context; a reflective function which explores the possible impact of the school practices and societal conditions on the personal and mental health of the student, and a welfare function which is concerned with planning for and reacting to issues that affect the student's welfare. Gysbers (2001) adds that, by definition, a

comprehensive developmental programme leads to structured group activities for all students, de-emphasises administrative and clerical tasks, requires accountability, and is proactive rather than exclusively reactive. The requirements of the programme are that it should have a flexible, organized and planned curriculum that meets the needs of all students, it should be integrated into the educational process and involve all school staff, including those who provide counselling services, and it should help students to learn in an effective way.

Gifted and talented students

Some authors (such as Sternberg et al., 1986, Ziegler and Heller, 2000) believe that a consensus is yet to be reached on what is meant by the term (gifted), and yet multiple efforts have been made to establish criteria for this, which include components such as motivation, creativity, task commitment, and problem solving. However, personal talent is described by Renzulli (1999a, p.4) as “exceptional ability to select and achieve difficult goals that fit one’s interests, abilities and social contexts”. In his view, personal talent is an expertise developed in the domain of self-management that is directed by the individual towards selected outcomes that include well-being, happiness, personal relationships, hobbies and career achievements. He suggests that personal talent can be referred to as a continuum where those in the middle of this continuum can be described as personally competent, whereas those at the high end of the continuum can be classified as personally talented.

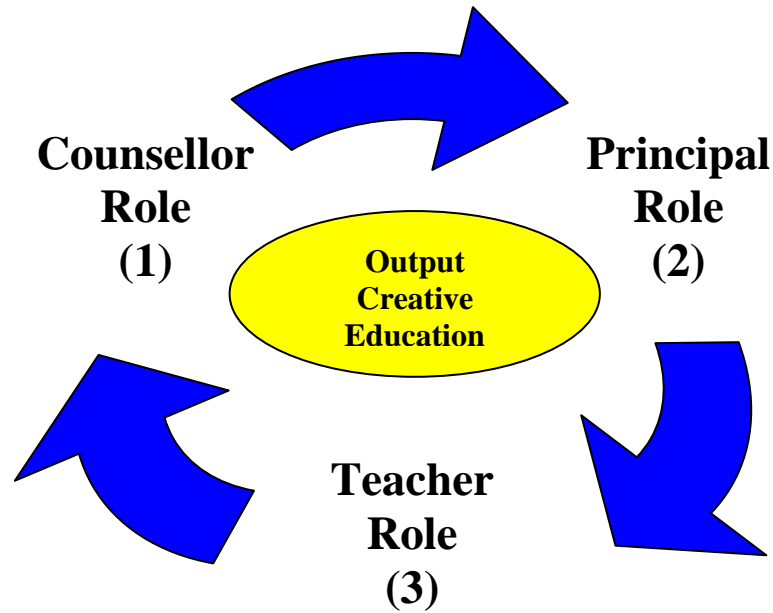
On the other hand, Masten et al. (2002) argue that resilient individuals learn how to overcome obstacles in order to achieve their anticipated goals, and that this can be described as personal talent. Also, Bland et al. (1994) refer to specific characteristics of

resilience as an indicator of exceptional abilities and talent regarding children from poor backgrounds. In this regard, Marker et al. (1996) suggest that many of the principles of differentiating curriculum for gifted and talented learners encourage the development of personal talent. They refer to learning environments that foster independence, flexibility and high mobility as being potentially more promising for fostering personal talents than the more traditional teacher-centred classrooms that concentrate on lectures with academic content. However, some researchers regret the fact that research on giftedness has been somewhat biased, having mainly concentrated on IQ-related abilities that address academic skills, and by-passing or simply ignoring other basic skills such as vocational skills (Bals, 1999), practical intelligence in everyday life (Sternberg, 2000), and, most importantly, social skills (Persson, 1997).

Motivation is another issue that has been the focus of research with regard to gifted children. According to Sternberg (2000), some theories depict motivation as a facilitating internal factor in the development of giftedness. One of these theories is Gage's dynamic theory of giftedness which depicts motivation, volition and self-management as interpersonal catalysts that help convert gifts into talents. However, these theories have failed to provide guidance in assisting youths of high ability to develop motivation. For this reason, some researchers (for example, Colangelo et al. 2000; Alrasheed, 2001) believe that talented students should be identified and given tasks at a higher level than the normal school curriculum. Renzulli (1999b) is of the opinion that gifted students should be producers of knowledge rather than mere consumers of existing information. He believes that specific programmes and services for the talented and gifted are the only solution to allow them to live up to their potential. This idea is further

supported by Reis et al (1995) who argues that it is not fair to make a gifted child sit in a classroom where learning something new will not happen until the second half of the year.

According to Alhossaini (2000), the effectiveness of the educational process could be seen in table (1):



The above figure of methods of interactions could be interpreted in this table.

Counsellor Role	Teacher Role	Principal Role	Output
+	+	+	= Creative Education
+	+	-	
+	-	+	
+	+	-	
-	+	+	
+	-	-	
-	+	-	
-	-	-	
-	-	+	

-	-	-	Less Creative = Drought & Desertification
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If these roles are all positive, we get the creative outcome. And it is mines, mines, mines, it is less creative.

Historical review of school counselling in USA

Schmidt (1999) suggests that the development of school guidance and counselling in the United States has its roots in the vocational guidance movement, which started in 1898 when a Detroit school principal, Jesse Davis, introduced a guidance curriculum that was delivered in each English class in his school to help students develop character, avoid problem behaviour, and relate vocational interests to the solution of their vocational and social problems. Gysbers (2001) argues that in the 1920s and 1930s, the concept of guidance evolved from vocational to educational guidance. Educational guidance was viewed as a set of activities that would address not only occupational concerns but also the personal and educational aspects of individuals.

However, although school counselling remained focused on secondary schools, counsellors were beginning to appear in some elementary schools in Boston in the 1930s. Yet, it was not until the 1960s that the need was generally recognized and funds were provided for the training of counsellors in elementary schools (Schmidt, 1999). However, Baker (2001) suggests that despite the progressive movement of the 1960s, school counselling did not fare well in the 1970s. During the 1970s and into the 1980s, a number of school counselling positions were eliminated and fewer jobs were available for newly trained school counsellors due to school budget cuts and financial problems across the US. At the same time, concern was being expressed about the programmes of guidance

and counselling and the services offered by counsellors in school (Baker, 1996; Schmidt, 1999). On the other hand, Herr (2001) says that attempts to define the role and functions of the school's comprehensive developmental models were better suited to meeting the development needs of students. In 1997, the American School Counsellor Association (ASCA) (1999) adopted the National Standards for School Counselling Programmes. According to these standards, school counsellors are required to address the needs of students comprehensively through the implementation of a developmental school-counselling programme.

Historical review of school counselling in the UK

School counselling in the United Kingdom dates back to 1913 when London County Council appointed a psychologist to examine backward children and advise their parents and teachers on methods of treatment (Milner, 1974). However, it was not until the 1960s that school counselling began to emerge as a discipline in its own right (Bor et al., 2002). At the time, the American school counselling model which was based on the client-centred approach proposed by Rogers (1961) was influential. Rogers produced a report in which he recommended that counsellors should be appointed to look into the needs of low achieving children. As a result, counselling courses were set up for experienced teachers, and several hundred counsellors were employed by local education authorities throughout the country (Bor et al., 2002). However, according to the Department of Education and Science (1989, cited in Bets et al. 1995) pastoral care is concerned with promoting pupils' personal and social development and fostering positive attitudes. Confronted with pervasive and traumatic social problems such as the collapse of the extended family and increases in rates of violence, the need for school counselling

attracted the attention of local education authorities. However, in the light of limited budgets, the 1980s witnessed a shift of emphasis on counselling, and it was felt that counselling should be integrated into teaching practice, so that teachers themselves should take responsibility for pastoral care (Bor et al., 2002; Mclaughlin, 1999).

Jones (1970) says that, in the absence of government backing, enthusiasm for counselling courses began to fade, and the majority of schools were left without counsellors. To exacerbate the situation even further, cuts in education funding at the hands of the Conservative government in the 1980s resulted in a reduction in the number of existing counsellors (McLaughlin, 1999). According to one estimate, only fifty counsellors were left in schools in England and Wales following the introduction of the local management of schools in 1987 (Robinson, 1996). Bor et al. (2002) argue that since the 1980s and despite heavy workloads, growing social problems and immense psychological pressure, teachers in the United Kingdom still continue to play a major role in counselling their students. To add to their problems, they have recently fallen under pressure to fulfil all of the criteria of an over-demanding National Curriculum. As a result, teachers now find it difficult to fulfil a pastoral role, and schools are beginning to feel the need to employ counsellors to meet the educational, psychological and emotional needs of students. To provide teachers with the necessary counselling skills, a sizeable number of studies in the field of pastoral care began to appear (e.g. Raymond, 1985; Watkins, 1994; Hamblin, 1984; Marland, 1989).

In general, these studies focused on good student-teacher relationships (Mclaughlin, 1999), emphasized the importance of assisting children to improve their lives, and used study skills to guide them in making their own decisions (Raymond,

1985). Nonetheless, although the literature on counselling and pastoral care in the United Kingdom is vast, it is still not integrated and provides only a few guidelines on practice (Al-Rebdi, 2000). On the other hand, some still argue that teachers have to manage complicated and demanding situations, channelling the personal, emotional and social pressures of 30 or so youngsters (Black et al., 1998).

The debate is still raging between those who argue that counselling should be provided by specialists and those who suggest that teachers should bear the burden. In this context it is worth listing the duties and responsibilities of the school counsellor as outlined by the British Association for Counselling (1997). These are:

- To offer pupils, parents and staff individual or group counselling.
- To provide information on the counselling service, the role of the counsellor and boundaries of confidentiality.
- To cooperate with head teachers, governors, parents and, where appropriate, the local education authority, in setting up a suitable appointment system.
- To keep suitable case records of counselling conducted in a secure place.
- To report back to management on a regular basis on the numbers that use the service and to give a general overview of the types of problem encountered.
- To liaise with the pastoral management team, year tutors, class teachers, governors, parents and caring agencies.
- To network with personnel from other agencies with a view to easing referrals and accessing specialist consultants.
- To devise and, where appropriate, deliver a programme of training to support and develop the counselling service.

- To attend supervision with a suitably qualified supervisor.

Historical review of school counselling in the KSA

Initially, in 1981, the Ministry of Education established the General Directorate of Guidance and Counselling. Since that time, guidance and counselling has become formalized and recognized as a profession, and counsellors have been appointed to deal with psychological, social, educational, and vocational problems and deliver protective counselling (Ministry of Education KSA, 1999). It should be mentioned here that the model for and practice of guidance and counselling in Saudi Arabian schools was derived from western sources, mainly the United States. More than two decades have passed since the guidance and counselling programme was established in Saudi schools. Its development has progressed at a slow rate and, currently, it faces various problems. The major difficulty relates to the definition of the role and function of the school counsellor (Al-Gamdi, 1999) which is unclear to principals, teachers, parents, students and school counsellors themselves. Due to this problem, counsellors have found themselves overly involved in paperwork and administrative tasks and duties not related to school counselling. Additionally, counsellors often complain about lack of support and cooperation from others involved in the counselling service, especially parents (Al-rebdi, 2000). In this situation, if school counsellors in Saudi Arabia are to provide better services for students, their role must be clearly defined. It is also necessary for those involved in counselling to have a clear view of what counsellors should and should not do. Added to this, counsellors must choose carefully how they spend their time and energy. As the role and functions of the school counsellors become clearer, they should be able to respond better to the needs of their students. Furthermore, in 1981, following

decree number 216/k issued by the Ministry of Education, the Social Educational Administration was replaced by the Student Guidance and Counselling Service, and guidance and counselling in Saudi schools became formalised. That same year, the name was changed again to the General Administration for Guidance and Counselling (Ministry of Education, 1999). The responsibilities of this administration are as follows:

- 1- To plan, prepare and develop the programme and services of guidance and counselling.
- 2- To provide professional staff who are capable of delivering such services to all students at various stages of education.
- 3- To provide students with the appropriate care applicable to their ages and their psychological, educational and social needs.
- 4- To assist students to develop their capabilities, potentialities and talents, to allow them to face their problems and to help them feel comfortable with themselves and with the community in which they live.
- 5- To attain a high standard of mental health in a way that reflects the targets and goals sought by educational guidance in general (Ministry of Education, 1999).

Saleh (1987) pointed out that, due to the immediate need for professionals to monitor and guide the counselling service in schools, the Ministry of Education sought personnel from among the existing social education supervisors to act as the supervisors; counselling and guidance programmes in addition to carrying out their normal duties. The Ministry of Education also sought personnel from within the existing teaching force, provided they had the relevant experience, to work temporarily as counsellors in schools.

To meet the need for school counsellors in all schools, the General Administration for Guidance and Counselling allowed those with a Bachelors degree in psychology, social work or sociology to perform the role of the school counsellor until enough trained professional counsellors could be provided. In order to meet the need for trained full-time counsellors to work in schools, universities in Saudi Arabia were requested to offer guidance and counselling programmes at masters' level. Statistical information for the year 2000 shows that there were 229 counselling supervisors and 3381 school counsellors overall (Ministry of Education, 2000). By 2003, the number of counsellors had increased rapidly to about 4000(Al-Rebdi, 2004). The Ministry of Education (1999) defined the term counselling as the interactive process through which the counsellor assists the student to understand himself and recognise his capabilities and potentialities and gives him a more enlightened approach to his problems and how to face them. Counsellors also help students to enhance their responsible behaviour and to show conformity with their community.

Counselling gifted students

Landau (1990) noted that gifted students might become isolated and alienated. Moreover, Rogers (1983) pointed out that in an egalitarian system children not only lack the opportunity for confirmation and social acceptance, but they also often lack the freedom to learn. The need for confirmation and emotional support is well known in the literature which focuses on giftedness and talent (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1993; Kelley, 1999; Stednitz, 1995). Donna (1999) suggests that teachers and counsellors need to encourage minority students to consider a teaching career in general and gifted student

education in particular. Ford (1995) however, believes that from an historical point of view, the counselling of gifted students has not been an important part of educational and counselling discourse. He points out that misconceptions and stereotypes of gifted students as being immune to social, emotional, and academic problems have contributed to the lack of counselling for these students, and in cases where counselling is available it is only limited to academic, assessment and placement issues.

According to Ford, the fact that more children are entering school with serious personal and academic problems should entail an expansion in the responsibilities and roles of counsellors to meet the needs of all children who seek guidance and assistance. But nonetheless according to Alrasheed, (2001) the limited availability of counselling services has failed to meet the enormous need for counselling services and research regarding gifted individuals. In this respect he endeavoured to provide counsellors, classroom teachers and educationalists as well as parents with advice regarding the understanding of the academic and social needs of gifted and talented students.

Persson (2005) considers mentorship as a possible solution to aid the immediate psychological and intellectual needs of gifted individuals, particularly received mentorship. According to Person, mentorship could be direct or indirect by cooperating with the student to find a mentor of his choice, given the fact that not all gifted students would be likely to choose their counsellors to be their mentors. Person expresses the conviction that mentorship is the only viable counselling solution in an egalitarian context, which lacks recognition and particular provision for gifted individuals. Ford (1995) outlines the goal of counselling as that of promoting healthy self-concepts and ensuring psychological growth. Bearing that in mind, counsellors must have an

awareness and understanding of the many issues that hinder gifted students and affect their psychological, social and emotional well-being. He recognises the role of counsellors in ensuring that such students remain in gifted programmes once identified and placed.

However, Neihart et al. (2002) contend that resilience is not a fixed attribute in individuals. They emphasise the fact that the successful negotiation of psychological risks at one point in a person's life does not guarantee that the individual will react positively to other stresses when the situation changes. They refer to some talented women who use successful resilience strategies and achieve, while others of similar abilities who face similar problems do not.

Finally the concept of counselling needs to be defined within a context where it is not a task assigned merely to a particular group. Instead, as Brown et al. (1992) suggest the task has expanded from an initial concern with educational and vocational guidance to the remediation and prevention of personal, interpersonal, vocational and educational concerns. Consequently, according to Persson (2005), the aim of the intervention is for the individual to gain an understanding of self and context, in which case individual differences become a sensitive and even problematic issue, particularly in cases where gifted individuals are involved.

Conclusion

The role of school counsellors for gifted and talented students has been discussed widely in the literature. However, school counsellors urgently need to be provided with the appropriate skills in the areas of education and psychology so that they are capable of providing guidance to talented students and thereby respond to their needs in a way that

will boost the educational process in the school. Counselling gifted students and their families is one of the most challenging and rewarding functions for a counsellor. Gifted students have tremendous variability, not only in their cognitive capacity, but in their affective development. While there are clearly common themes in the social-emotional issues confronting gifted students, there are also profound individual differences among them. The talented student faces many problems that make life difficult for him at school.

However, anxiety and tension may affect his social life as well as forcing him to live in isolation. Moreover, decisions in relation to gifted learners should be part and parcel of a wider programme. This implies the identification of the task as being one which helps children conform with their culture, or empowers children to advance in their society, or challenges social, political and economic inequalities. School counsellors receive little specific training on the affective needs of gifted students and it is rare for counsellor training programmes to require counsellors to take a course on gifted students as a degree requirement.

The role of the school counsellor is to develop the skills of the pupils in general, giving special attention to those who are talented and innovative by discovering their areas of interest, and by responding to their needs in a way that will achieve the anticipated benefit for themselves and for the community at large. The process of identifying the talented and innovative individuals becomes especially important in the era of globalisation, requiring an intensive search for such talented persons who are likely to become the future leaders of society. However, the fact of the matter is that all those who are concerned with the talented whether they are parents, teachers, counsellors or anyone else, need to be aware of the nature of the pressures gifted students face in order

to provide the appropriate assistance. More than fifteen years have passed since the beginning of gifted and talented programmes in Saudi Schools, but the growth of guidance and counselling programmes for gifted and talented students has been slow.

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*A PSYCHOANALYTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO ANALYSIS OF
EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A REVIEW
OF CURRENT PERSPECTIVES*

KALAIVANI GANESH

Abstract

The aim of this review paper is to provide a critical analysis of the literature on emotionally intelligent leadership, particularly in Higher Education drawing attention to psychoanalytic phenomenology to examine this area of research. The purpose of this review is two-fold: firstly, from a humanitarian perspective, research points out that emotional intelligence has been identified as a priority area of concern for and among

leaders and arguably an important aspect of leadership that has the potential to lead humanity through betterment of society (Macaleer and Shannon, 2002; Rao, 2006) and secondly, by exploring the various research theories and evidence that provides critical understanding and meaningful insights into leadership research in Higher Education. It initially reviews the (leadership) literature focusing on the current issues facing leaders and discusses how attitudes, behaviour and beliefs of leaders profoundly impact workplace relationships apart from the administrative, technical skills, laws and legal issues affecting Higher Education. Finally, it looks into psychoanalytic phenomenology and discusses how leaders' perception of their lived experiences influences group and organizational dynamics within the context of Higher Education.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, leadership, perception, phenomenology, psychoanalysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

Background and context

Leadership has been an important concept throughout history and considered to be a key determinant in the ultimate success or failure of any organisation. In the UK, changes in Higher Education (HE), driven mostly by state and government initiatives, have resulted in the need for changes in its internal structure, changes in culture and the need to work across organisational boundaries in order to sustain quality improvement and to achieve a competitive advantage. However, these

changes to a large extent have added more pressure to the current issues facing leaders in HE, therefore demanding high quality leadership.

One definition of leadership (Northouse 2001, p. 3) states that it is “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”, however, from the various leadership literature, there seems to be no consensus for the definition of leadership (Smith and Hughey 2006, p.162). One set of theories posits that leaders are born, not made and another school of thought says that leadership is a series of traits to be learned by any individual. Yet, other theories support the belief that leadership is contextual and changes according to situation. Recently, the focus on leadership seems to be along the lines of power, influence and the ability to inspire its members while emphasizing on ethics addressing the need for high levels of moral responsibility from its leaders (Moore 2006; Scott 2004). Despite the various definitions of leadership, there seems to be a common theme that requires leaders to be able to inspire and influence its members and that suggests that leaders do affect individual and group behaviour within the organization on an unconscious level, that ultimately affects organizational functioning.

Leaders in HE may include, but not be restricted to, vice-chancellors, pro-vice-chancellors, deans, principals, vice-principals, secretaries and registrars, heads of school, programme leaders, directors of resources and others who hold strategic responsibilities in HE (LFHEⁱⁱ 2006; Rich 2006, p. 40). In Smith and Hughey’s (2006, p. 157) study, they point out that “the difference between excellence and mediocrity, or even survival and extinction, is often a direct reflection of the leadership within an organization”. Similarly, Montez (2003, p. 6) states that apart from the institutional norms and policies, leaders’

attitudes, behaviour and beliefs have profound impact on workplace relationships, emphasizing qualities, skills and values of a leader to be of paramount importance.

Evidence-based research demonstrates that Emotional Intelligence (EI) is crucially important for workplace success (Ashkanasy et al. 2002; Beatty 2000; Domagalski 1999; Goleman 1996; Mayer and Salvoy 1997; Mayer et al. 2000; Slaski and Cartwright 2003) and shows that it is a key determinant of effective leadership (Kellett et al. 2006; George 2000). According to Mayer et al. (2000, p. 267), EI is the “ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and problem-solve on that basis”. Goleman (1996) indicates more precisely the components of EI to be “self-awareness, impulse control, persistence, zeal, motivation, empathy and social deftness”. On the other hand, Ashkanasy et al. (2002, p.317) view it as “the ability to read emotions in one’s self and in others, and to be able to use this information to guide decision-making”. Taken in total, they all relate to the ability of a leader in dealing with the emotional response states of self and of others and according to Lord and Hall (2005, p. 611), this kind of leader is said to be an emotionally intelligent leader.

Recent leadership is perceived to be of a mix of behaviour, cognitive and social skills, that requires pro-active steps by the leader which go beyond self-directed learning towards more deeper-level aspects to leadership for long-term development (Lord and Hall 2005). As a rule, an organisation has to develop a culture of commitment and trust among its members, it is therefore crucial that the credibility of leaders be reflected to their followers. One particular study (Yukl 1998) states that anyone in power has, by default, more influence on others but despite all this, leaders at times fail to have positive influence on their organisation members and there is not much research on this area.

Therefore, to provide better insights and contextualize leader behaviour, it is imperative to know and understand the meaning leaders attach to EI from their perspectives to improve organizational dynamics.

While emotions and EI are used interchangeably by some authors in the literature, Domagalski (1999, p. 843) describes emotion to be “a biological intra-personal response to some stimulus” and explains how the shared realities of the workplace are negotiated through emotions and therefore considered to be a primary feature of organizational process (ibid, pp. 844-846) and this brings to light, how emotions of individual and of others have the potential to affect the organizational functioning both on a conscious and unconscious level. It raises the question of whether leaders are consciously aware of EI when dealing with others and the effects and consequences it may have on the workplace. Thus it is crucial to know and understand how leaders perceive EI and the meanings they attach to it, as it ultimately affects their decisions and actions in the workplace, which is the central focus of this review paper.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Challenging issues facing leaders

Current issues surrounding leadership and of leaders in HE in particular are empowerment, collaboration, diversity, globalisation, partnerships, role ambiguities, social change, accountability, entrepreneurialism, gender issues, innovation, ethics and spirituality, etc (Kezar et al. 2006, Rich 2006; Scott 2004). Empowerment, for instance raises debates concerning who is empowered to be leaders, the role of leaders in empowering others and how followers’ beliefs are affected by oppression. These point to the direction of a lack of components of EI in leadership.

Globalisation and technology coupled with diversity is another core leadership issue Magrath (2000) and Brown (2004) mention that it is essential that leaders require certain emotional abilities and skills in the way they communicate to different cultural groups. The fact that interpersonal relations

between leaders and organizational members depend on communication means that the quality of relationships relies on communication. In addition, the recent expansion in HE that has increased its internal population with regard to gender, age and ethnicity (Bown 2006; Watson 2003) shows that HE has not been very responsive in handling diversity issues. One reason is that universities in UK are traditional-bound, i.e. ethnocentric (Dimmock and Walker, p.195-197, 2005) compared to other countries such as USA, therefore UK universities may not allow changes to its institutional practices (Bown 2006; Young 2004) and this poses as a leadership issue.

Diversity will not disappear especially in an emergent global environment like the UK, therefore a call for a better understanding of societal and ethnic cultures requires leaders to develop insights and theories that can inform their leadership processes and various studies point to the need for incorporating EI to enhance their leadership process (Domagalski 1999; George 2000; Rao 2006; Smith and Hughey 2006). However, this does not mean that emotions play a central role in leadership at all times since individuals do behave instinctively (fight/flight mode) based on gut reactions but it is essential for leaders to have a basic awareness of their own and others' feelings and emotions to deal with situations more effectively. In order to bridge the cultural gap and enhance workplace relationships, it is important for leaders to be able to communicate effectively to others to achieve better understanding of inclusion and diversity issues. However, not much research has been done in this area so far and Dimmock and Walker (2005, pp. 2-3) mention that it is important to re-address this area in order to tackle such leadership issues.

Analysis of emotionally intelligent leadership

The academic leadership literature, though few, show aspects of integrity and morality in a leader whether inborn, i.e. natural traits or required, i.e. learned traits and suggests that these are qualities educational stakeholders most value in their leaders (Lord and Hall 2005; Watson 2002; 2003). One of the central characteristics of EI is to display emotional abilities in the workplace (Beatty 2000; Mayer and Salovey 1997; Mayer et al.

2000; Wolff et al. 2002, pp. 510-514) and indicates that the emotional labour underpinning Hochschild's (1983, pp.2-4) interactional model is essential for leadership.

According to Smith and Hughey (2006, pp. 159-160), a complex organization such as HE needs predictability, creativity and control, therefore it has the tendency towards conflict, stress and emotionally charged debates within its environment. Various research (Gmelch & Burns 1993; Hughey & Smith 2006; Osseo-Asare et al. 2005; Wolverson et al. 1999) point to the direction of lack of EI in leaders as the root cause of stress and conflicts within the workplace. In particular, Wolverson et al. 's (1999, pp. 82-85) study shows that leaders require skills and qualities above cognitive intelligence to enhance their leadership processes. All this to a large extent has shifted the direction of leadership towards an emotional direction taking into account the importance of self and others' emotions and feelings when dealing with workplace relationships.

To be a successful leader, Smith and Hughey (2006, p.159) point out that leaders "must understand the people with whom they work - their roles, the function of their specific jobs and the larger organizational structure" which emphasizes the role of emotions and their impact on leadership. Similarly, Humphrey (2002, p.499) states "leaders' emotional displays are demonstrated to have a larger impact on perceptions of leaders than the content of the leaders' messages, at least in some circumstances". Reuven Bar-On provides evidence that EI is strongly correlated to Maslow's theory of self-actualisation (Bar-On 2001, pp.82-93) as the basic physiological needs have to be met before reaching self-actualisation, i.e. full potential (Macaleer and Shannon 2002, p. 9).

Rendon's (2000, pp. 3-6) study claims that since leaders deal with people, it is only humane to connect the intellect with the heart. She (ibid.) suggests that leaders will only be able to deal with the academic analysis of the issue but not deal with the emotional part if one cannot engage one's heart and therefore is not able to engage the hearts of others (Lim and Mau 1998). This points to self-reflection, self-awareness and self-orientation, all of which are key components of EI. Similarly, Rao's (2006, p.216) study from a clinical perspective demonstrates that EI begins with the capacity for recognizing one's own feelings, i.e. self-awareness and those of others. Again, it reinstates EI to be the Sine Quo Non of leadership.

George's (2000, pp. 1033-1035) study shows how emotions are intertwined with traits and stimulates the cognitive processes and decision-making highlighting the relevance of both emotions and traits for leadership effectiveness. He (ibid, p.1046) points out that since leadership itself is an emotional-laden process, EI is relevant to leadership where traits are subsumed (Humphrey 2002, pp. 494-496; Van-der Zee et al,2002, p.104; Yukl 1998). Similarly, Beatty (2000) states that in the first place, one must have the motivational (emotional) drive to be personally involved. Her study shows how a competent leader has to adhere to his/her actions despite obstacles or discouragement to attain one's goals and desired outcomes, similar to an altruistic personality (Humphrey 2002, p. 494).

It shows that a leader's optimism and show of appreciation and praise is a powerful motivator for organizational members and this can be related to Maslow's theory of motivation in terms of what motivates an individual to seek certain position reaching self-actualization. It can also be related to Mead's (1934) humanistic theory on

symbolic-interactionism, i.e. self and others that uses the term the looking glass self, i.e. imaging how we look to another person and understanding ourselves better.

According to Davies et al. (2001, p. 1027), the “running of schools and faculties has been based on management as opposed to leadership”. From the perspective of the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM) model, the three root causes that lead to weak leadership are weak interpersonal communications, weak empowerment and weak staff support (Ossere et. al. 2005, pp.155-156) and / which show the lack of components of EI in leadership. Leaders need to possess certain leadership skills and qualities in addition to cognitive abilities in order to interact well with members of staff in such a way that the whole system can be developed, implemented and continuously improved for efficient running of schools and faculties (ibid, pp. 158-162).

While the majority of literature and research support EI in leadership, some critiques of EI claim that it is more of a myth than a science (Landy 2005) since it lacks theoretical and empirical grounding and therefore is not able to make substantial claims to its validity (Ciarrochi et al. 2000; Davies et al. 1998). Some consider EI as an elusive construct and agree with the lack of scientific consensus (Zeidner et al. 2001) and therefore make a premature attempt to measure EI because there is no clear definition. Others claim that emotions have negative effect on rational decision-making (George 2000, p.1028; Northouse 2001, p. 202).

Psychoanalytic Phenomenology

Two of Freud's distinct aspects of psychoanalysis (Bateman and Holmes 1999 p. 17) that fascinate me are the development of the mind and the influence of the early life experiences on adult mental states. As evident from the leadership literature (George 2000; Macaleer and Shannon 2002; Rao 2006; Smith and Hughey 2006), this nature and role of unconscious mental phenomena of individuals can be related to leadership through leaders' behaviour based on how they perceive the world and react accordingly. Therefore, it makes sense to understand the world of meaning of leaders' lived experience through their perception and how they feel about it and to be able to interpret and make-sense of their meanings.

This fact highlights the need for studies in this specific sector of the population to understand if there are specific ways to promote high levels of leadership in HE. In order to interpret leaders' inner dynamics from their perspectives, this part of the paper discusses the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a variant of phenomenology based on Heideggerian phenomenology underpinned by philosophical principles and its application to the leadership domain. Moustakas (1994) and Smith (2004) find that an interpretivist stance would be most appropriate to discover individual perception. Van Manen (1990, p. 2) considers hermeneutic phenomenology to be a dialectical relationship, wanting to "let things speak for themselves while recognising that (social) phenomena need to be interpreted (through language) in order to be communicated to others".

Information about leadership yielded by IPA is relevant because leaders attach specific meanings to their experiences that are unique to each individual and that

ultimately determine their decisions and actions in the workplace. The key here is the awareness of what is meaningful to leaders on a conscious level that can help understand the links between their lived experience of this phenomenon and their behaviour, that can help explain organizational dynamics. It is a powerful way of making sense of participants' sense-making, which provides meaningful insights and contextually new findings useful to leadership research in HE.

Most of the phenomenological studies are popular in the health care discipline drawn towards patients' life experiences but overlooked in the leadership domain. And as yet, there is no clear literature investigating emotionally intelligent leadership in an academic domain particularly in HE. And because of the reasons mentioned above, qualitative studies using a phenomenological approach in this area of research need to be acknowledged.

IPA is particularly useful for the analysis of the emotionally intelligent leader for its specific focus on participants' perceptions of their experiences and their attribution of meanings (Prins 2006, p. 339; Smith and Eatough 2006, pp. 325-327; Smith 2004). Higgs (2003) argues that if a sense making paradigm is used, it becomes feasible to even identify a model of experiential leadership relevant to the context of complexity and change facing organizations in the new millennium.

According to Diamond (1999, p. 34), psychoanalytic phenomenology "centers on the acquisition of reflective knowledge" of participants' lived experience by making sense of their perceptual world and the influence of that inner world on their organization. It looks into the subjective perceptions of the world achieved by using reflective analysis of their experience and meaning. In this respect, IPA is used to

understand what leaders experience, how that experience influences their perceptions and ultimately affects their decisions and actions in the workplace. It provides insights into the part of leaders to gain insight into the reaction of organizational members (Northouse 2001, p. 199). In addition to this, Douglas (1970 cited in Bogdan and Taylor, 1975, p. 2) says that the “forces that move human beings, as human beings rather than simply as human bodies.... are meaningful stuff.” They are internal ideas, feelings, and motives that say that subjective perceptions greatly influence human behaviour.

From a phenomenological perspective, the important reality is what people imagine it to be. Bogdan and Taylor (1975, p.13) explain this as “what people say and do is a product of how they interpret the world” and in this respect, IPA can be used to show how leaders reflect on their own background and experience and how this affects their potential as leaders with others. Unlike the positivist approach, which searches for facts and causes, IPA is concerned with understanding the phenomenon through participants’ perception.

From the various leadership literatures, there are many theories and frameworks that underpin EI and leadership, namely Maslow's motivational theory, multiple intelligence theory, Dewey’s reflective thinking theory, Vygotsky’s inner speech theory or even a combination of these theories to provide a broader spectrum from an interdisciplinary interpretation. However, based on the discussion above, at a conceptual level, the framework that I consider most influential for this area of research is the Psychodynamic Theory (Freudian approach) using psychoanalytic interpretations, though not limited to, integrated with the Systems Theory (Neumann and Hirschhorn 1999).

This influence can be translated to explain and understand leaders, group and organizational behaviour embedded in a net of mutual interactions between personal, behavioural and environmental spheres within the context of HE. The choice for this integrated framework referred to as the Systems Psychodynamics is that it considers both micro and macro level perspectives, for instance using the Psychodynamic Theory to look into the unconscious motivations of individuals while employing the Systems Theory to look into the conscious ones rooted in economic, technological and political concerns looking at processes from an organizational level (ibid, pp. 683-685).

Domagalski (1999, p. 839) points out that the behaviour of leaders seen from a psychodynamic perspective can be described “as psychologically defense-mechanisms to unconscious fears and anxieties and unresolved early life experiences”. This perspective helps to describe how leaders’ unconscious emotional processes influence organizational processes and thus interpersonal relations within the organisation.

According to Freud, the psychodynamic perspective explains the filling of gaps between the conscious and unconscious links of participants so that the meaning correctly represents the outer world. Psychoanalytic concepts of inter-subjectivity, defense-mechanism, intra-psychic factors and transference would be useful to explain and understand the organizational dynamics within HE, however, the discussion towards a more detailed account of this area of research and the subjects’ lived experiences will contribute towards the author’s doctoral paper.

Reflective process

The ability to reflect as a reflective learning process implies having meta-cognition abilities that contribute to learning behaviour (Brown 2004). It includes components of EI such as self-awareness and reflective processes based on the Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) model where the brain (neuro) and the words (linguistic) have a powerful effect on the state of mind that can change the behaviour of an individual. Conversely speaking, without such reflection on lived meaning, it is difficult to become aware of unfortunate practices we are part of (Irwin 2006) whether unconsciously or consciously. Reflection through experience allows individuals to broaden and deepen the awareness of a particular phenomenon so that further improvements can be made (Bruner 1990).

Since the emphasis on IPA is on sense-making through participants’ reflective process and the researcher’s sense-making, it means that IPA shares with cognitive psychology and social cognition a central concern with unraveling the relationship between what people think (cognition), say (account) and

do (behaviour). On the other hand, Phillip's (1999) study states that IPA and cognitive psychology are fundamentally different because in IPA, meaning is conceptualized as practical understanding that occurs in the dialogue embedded in the subject's behaviour whereas in cognitive psychology, meaning resides in mental representations within the mind (Brown 2005). In evaluating the respective merits of the hermeneutic and cognitive psychological approaches to meaning, it helps to question which of the two approaches best reflects how meaning is experienced and dealt with. Again, the discussion from these two dimensions of literature will contribute towards the author's doctoral paper based on research findings to make any firm conclusions.

HEA (2005, p.3) states that reflection "is largely based on the reprocessing of knowledge, understanding and possibly emotions that we already possess" and adds that reflection can be emotional or spiritual and believes that there is a close relationship between the use of reflection and emotions.

Inter-subjectivity of human interactions

The structure of inter-subjectivity, also referred to as thematic patterning (Gadamer 2000) discovers organizational behaviour from a psychodynamic perspective. Through leaders' perception, a coherent 'storyline' can be constructed to explain the reasons and motives underlying current patterns of organizational dynamics. According to Diamond (1999, p. 41), organizational culture consists of "structures of inter-subjectivity located in human interactions [that] are affected by pre-reflectively unconscious thoughts, feelings and perceptions" that in turn influence decisions and actions in the workplace (Finlay 2005). Therefore, an examination of the inter-subjectivity of human interaction that includes emotions to be part of the organizational process (Domagalski 1999; Hochschild 1983; Nuttall 2001) enhances organizational behaviour through the influence of interpersonal relations to effect real organizational change.

Transference of emotions in hierarchical positions

Transference of emotions is an unconscious phenomenon that occurs between two people when one transfers feelings from a significant past relationship, for example, mother, father, siblings, etc. to a significant person in the present (Bateman and Holmes 1999, p. 97; Streaun 1979, p.87). Seen from a psychodynamic perspective, the analysis of transference dynamics that are usually present in hierarchical relationships provides a better understanding of organizational behaviour (Diamond 1990, pp. 37-39) because hierarchical relationships are characterized by superior-subordinate relations and have the tendency for over-dependencies. Especially in a complex, hierarchical organization such as HE where leaders and organizational members may have the “tendency to mutually displace previously frustrated self object needs onto each other” (ibid, p. 39), the concept of transference can be used to understand and explain such organizational dynamics.

III. CONCLUSION

Based on the evaluation of the review above, it can be said that the analysis of emotionally intelligent leadership in HE is possible through psychoanalysis based on hermeneutic phenomenology. Moreover, literature on emotions and leadership (Domagalski 1999; Kezar et. al. 2006) shows that leadership processes involve parts of people outside their professional spheres involving families, communities and activities based on life experiences. It is therefore hoped that there will be more empirical studies that look into how leaders reflect on their own background and experience and how that

affects their potential as a leader in order to provide a better understanding of organizational dynamics with a view to promote a positive work culture.

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Notes

1. While the review of psychoanalytic phenomenological approach in an educational context, particularly in Higher Education is fairly new, its origins in practical experience owe much to the medical and health-care discipline.

2. See, for example, Larson, J., Rosenqvist, U. and Holmstrom, I., 2006. Being a young and inexperienced trainee anesthetist: A phenomenological study on tough working conditions. *Acta Anaesthesiologica Scandinavica*, 50 (6), 653-658; Dawkins, H. and May, E. 2002. The lived experience of doing a higher degree in occupational therapy from the perspective of five graduates: A phenomenological study. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 49 (3), 128-137; Smith, J.A., 1996. Beyond the divide between cognition and discourse: Using interpretative phenomenological analysis in health psychology. *Psychology and Health*, 11, 261-271.

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INFLUENCE OF CORE CULTURAL VALUES ON THE COMMUNICATION

BEHAVIOUR OF STAFF IN LIBYAN ORGANISATION

ABDUSALAM ABUBAKER

Abstract

This paper aims to critically review previous studies on the influence of culture on the communication behaviour of staff in Libyan organisations, in order to find deficiencies in this field and to examine the future research focus on this issue. Specifically, it considers recent studies investigating the influence of cultural values on communication in Libyan organisations. The article starts with general definitions of culture, communication behaviours, organisation, and organisational culture. Previous studies of the influence of national Libyan cultural values on the communication behaviour of individuals in organisations are then considered. This literature shows that Libyan culture exhibits high

power distance, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. It is also characterised by low individualism.

Key words: *culture, Libyan culture, communication behaviours, organisational culture, Hofstede's dimensions*

Introduction

The theoretical and institutional field of cultural studies has developed over the past three decades, during which time various problems, issues and debates have emerged from within the literature. Thus, this review considers the impact of Libyan culture on the communication behaviour of individuals in Libyan organisations.

In this paper the recent cultural studies are examined in order to investigate the impact of societal culture on communication among staff in Libyan organisations and to advise future research on this issue. It analyses to what extent power distance, masculinity, collectivism and uncertainty avoidance affect the communication behaviours of individuals, in terms of harmony and organisational hierarchy structure in Libyan organisations.

Definition of culture

For anthropologists, culture is the umbrella which covers all the patterns of our social activities, and it has a serious impact on our behaviour, communication, relationships and other social patterns. Therefore, the literature always emphasizes the importance of culture. Although this is defined in different ways, it is usually strongly connected with communication. For instance, Hall (1969, p. 20) defines culture as: “the

way of life of a people. It is the sum of their learned behaviour patterns, attitudes, and material things”. He also considers that culture is a code that we learn and share; this learning and sharing requires communication.

Moreover, in recent years, the American Psychological Association (2002) defines culture as, “the belief system and value orientations that influence customs, norms, practices, and social institutions, including psychological processes (language, care taking practice, media and educational systems) and organisations (media, educational system)”. Thus, culture in the societal level is manifest in values and less in practice. However, culture in the organisational level is more likely to be in practice and less in values (Hofstede, 1997). Therefore, in many business studies and training programmes that are now available, courses in cultural communications are included, which generally provide models of culture and cross-cultural communication skills (Graf, 2004).

Communication behaviours

Since every cultural pattern and every single act of social behaviour involves communication, communication is widely studied as a means of transmitting ideas and as part of culture (Jandt, 2004). In classifying communication, Ferraro (1990, p. 45) says that it can be divided into three types: “verbal (use of words with specific meanings), paraverbal (tone of the voice), and non-verbal communication”. It also has various components, such as, encoding, message, channel, receiver, decoding and receiver response in achieving success in communication (Jandt, 2004). Therefore, communication behaviour is divided into verbal and non-verbal communication.

Verbal communication

Communication is strongly related to culture, so different cultures have different definitions and strategies of communication. Thus, Jandt (2004, p. 29) says that in Western culture the process of verbal communication is described as, “involving a speaker, the speech act, an audience, and a purpose”. He also adds that the philosophy of Confucius defines communication as, “an infinite interpretive process where all parties are searching to develop and maintain a social relationship” (Jandt, 2004, p. 38). Communication is strongly related to culture, and culture cannot be understood without the study of communication and vice versa.

In spite of the fact that the main element of communication is language, and all languages are similar in linguistic structure, they may express different cultural aspects (Fisher, 1978). Thus Wray and Grace (2007) think that cultural diversity plays an important role in misunderstanding in exoteric communication. This brings us to the conclusion that each culture seems to have its own characteristics, which lead to various studies and approaches to communication. The understanding of the hearer is the responsibility of the speaker, who usually takes further steps to clarify his message. Therefore, the understanding of the cultural background of the listener and the clarity of the message has an important role in facilitating communication (Jandt, 2004).

Non-verbal communication

Non-verbal communication implies emotions, attitudes and feelings shown in different gestures and motions, and these may be conveyed unintentionally by facial

expressions, gestures, and body language (Hargie and Dickson, 2004). Body language has a strong impact on communication between people from different cultures. For example, in Libyan culture most people unintentionally use facial expressions to express fear, sadness, happiness, and surprise (Twati, 2006). These facial expressions are less likely to be recognised by people who are from different cultural backgrounds (Samovar and Porter, 2004).

Therefore, many theories provide various approaches to facilitating communication between different discourse systems. One approach is to increase shared knowledge, which aims to find out more about the cultural background of the people we communicate with. Moreover, the miscommunication approach deals with misunderstandings and considers these to be prevalent in professional communication (Scollon and Scollon, 2001). The face saving strategy is one of the main approaches in Libyan communication. This may be due to Libyan societal structure, because in Libyan organisations, employees care about the reputation of their names, families and tribes. Therefore, social reputation is a very important element for societal relationships in Libyan society (Twati, 2006).

Organisation

The study of organisation systematically started just after the second world war in the USA and then in Europe. In the beginning organisational studies concentrated on moral bases of management, leadership and the dynamism of bureaucracy. Then in the second half of the last century there were different studies about organisational structure, activities and the relationship between organisation and their communities (Boden, 1994).

In Libya, communist public organisational systems are adopted in many sectors, such as business, education, health, and media; in addition to other social and political organisations.

The organisational development in developed countries leads many organisations in developing countries to adopt Western models without considering local cultural values, as is the case with Libya. This leads to conflict between organisational values and national values (Al-Hamadi et al, 2007). Therefore, the allure of globalisation has affected most organisations in Libya. It has also created huge debate about organisational values and the methods of dealing with social issues in Libyan organisations. In terms of education, Libyan universities are considered new organisations in Libyan society. Therefore, in the early 1970s there were few women who went to university. However, nowadays Libyan universities have more women than men especially in the humanities and social sciences fields. This is due to cultural change and the need for education in Libyan society (Twati, 2006).

Organisational culture

Since each organisation has its own cultural patterns, Hyde and Williamson (2000) define organisational culture as, “A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the organisation asserts are important as guides to the way people should behave to solve its problems of external adaptation and internal integration to achieve its goals and objectives”. As a result, communication aims to achieve the goals and objectives in

organisations. Moreover, this communication allows members of the organisation to exchange information to fulfil their tasks (Lee, 2005).

Thus, the employees in organisations work between two systems of values; their cultural background values system and the organisational values system, both of which usually share the same values but to achieve different objectives. For example, loyalty to a group is an important cultural value in Libyan society; on the other hand, loyalty to the organisation is also an important value in organisational culture. Therefore, such value will affect the communication behaviours of individuals in the organisation (Hyde and Williamson, 2000). Therefore, due to national cultural influences, Twati and Gammack (2004) consider organisational culture in Libya as a strong culture, which resists organisational change in many ways, including the decision making process, communication, employment, professionalism and other aspects.

Libyan culture

Libya is an Arab country and shares common cultural values, language, religion and other social values with the Arab countries. In Libya the official language is Arabic and the dominant religion is Islam. This religion has a serious role in shaping Libyan cultural values (Vandewalle, 2006). This leads many authors to generalise their cultural studies on all of the Arab countries, which leads to generalisations in cultural studies and about Libyan culture in particular.

In Libyan society, Islam is considered a comprehensive religion covering social and political aspects as well as piety of the soul and the moral principles of people's behaviour (Twati, 2006). According to the Islamic work ethics, hard work and the

respect of people in the place of work are considered virtues. Therefore, social relations at work are also encouraged. Thus, it is important to have good relationships with your colleagues and leaders, because links inside and outside work can be vital elements in achieving successful communication among staff (Yousef, 2001).

The idea of a common humanity is a central belief in Islam. Thus it is mentioned in the Koran that God created people from different tribes and nations to know and appreciate each other. Consequently, Muslims know that they must embrace even those who may not belong to their community, religion, or nation (Akbar, 2003). This supports the views of Leat and El-Kot (2007), who argued that harmony and the maintenance of social relationships are very important characteristics of Arabic culture. Hence, respect, establishing and maintaining relationships with strangers are strongly recommended in Arabic culture. Therefore, due to Islamic culture, Libyan society has strong social ties and consists of different tribes and families (Twati, 2006).

In studies of culture, national culture has an important role in forming the characteristics of society's members from an early age. Furthermore, the existence and stability of national cultural values over long periods is due to them being transmitted from one generation to another (Hofstede, 2001), so we cannot get rid of them easily. In addition, these values are considered as a type of belief concerned with what is good or desirable. They also motivate behaviour and guide evaluations and decisions (Hyde and Williamson, 2000). Thus, individuals are expected to act according to these values. Consequently, these are reasons for some of these studies to assume that this religion affected Libyan culture, the communication behaviour of employees and the organisational culture in Libyan society.

Libyan culture and Hofstede's dimensions

The IBM study is considered to be one of the most important studies on the relation between Libyan cultural values and organisational culture in Libyan organisations. The influence of Libyan culture can be seen in the findings of Hofstede in the IBM study. Hofstede's research shows how national culture affects the values of the organisations in a society. The IBM study was conducted in different nations and it compared work-related values across different cultures according to four dimensions, which are:

Power distance: refers to "the extent to which the less powerful individuals in institutions expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 98). Individualism versus Collectivism: "Individualism stands for a society in which everyone is expected to look after him/herself and her/his immediate family only. Collectivism stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" (Hofstede, 2001, p. 225). Uncertainty avoidance: this is related to the extent to which people in a culture respond to different unknown social situations (Hofstede, 1980). Masculinity versus femininity deals with gender division in the society.

This study examined the attitudes held by employees in IBM branches, in three regions and fifty countries, of which Libya was one. According to this study, Libyan culture is characterised by high power distance, high masculinity, high uncertainty avoidance and low individualism. According to Hofstede, all these factors have

contributed negatively to the communication among staff in the decision making process. He argues that most of the appointed managers in this region held high power distance and uncertainty avoidance, which affect decisions and communication in Libyan organisations.

This also supports Leat and El-Kot (2007), who argue that the findings of Hofstede (1980) complement the Islamic work ethics and other Islamic values. In terms of the Libyan case in particular, Hofstede's findings are in agreement with Twati (2006), who conducted a study about the influence of societal and organisational culture on the adoption of management information systems in the Arab world, of which Libya was one of his case studies. In this study, he found that Libyan culture still has strong power distance, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance than what Hofstede indicated in his IBM findings.

Critiques of Hofstede's work

As is the case with many studies of culture, Hofstede's work has various weaknesses. First of all, as Leat and El-Kot (2007) claim, Hofstede generalised his results in some cases, such as all Arab countries. Moreover, Hofstede considered the attitudes of his samples as the main elements in judging their cultures. However, many cultures have a diverse and wide range of cultural groups, including dominant and subordinate social groups, as is the case in many of the countries where the study was conducted (Mead, 1998).

Moreover, Hofstede studied only one industry; the computer industry, and the single multinational company IBM. In many of the countries examined, the values of

IBM employees typically represent only a small group, who are educated, middle class and live in cities (Mead, 1998). Furthermore, the study of Hofstede faced various technical problems in terms of the changing attitudes of the participants. For instance, in large power distance cultures, powerful people may pretend to be less powerful than they are. In addition, in masculine cultures men are supposed to be assertive, ambitious, and tough, but they appeared to be more understanding and accepting of the role of women in the organisations (Hofstede, 1997).

Another criticism of Hofstede's framework is oversimplifying both concepts of individualism and collectivism (Schepers, 2006). Finally, in terms of historical development, Hofstede (2001) considers that cultural change over time is an essential element which might invalidate scores on the indexes in the national cultural context.

Libyan culture and communication in organisations

Libyan culture is considered to be a traditional culture, and Libyan society consists of large tribes and families which might be due to the strong influence of the religion of Islam. According to Hall (1969) Libyan culture is considered a contact culture, where people from the same sex can stand and walk side by side near each other. However, in communication between different genders it seems to be a strict culture. Therefore, in terms of communication between individuals in organisations, there are some issues that should be considered in communication behaviours. For example, eye contact and the use of personal space are very sensitive issues, and easily cause embarrassment in Libyan culture, especially between males and females (Samovar and Porter, 2004). In Islamic culture you are not allowed to close your office door when

talking to a colleague of the opposite sex. We can argue that in this culture many cultural values are based on religion, leading to gender differences in communication, behaviour and social structure (Hofstede, 2003).

Muslims believe that God (Allah) is the greatest being and that He created them and arranged all their life affairs. Moreover, Muslims believe that the future is best left to God. Therefore, in doing their businesses, Muslims believe that they have to do their best and then success or failure is arranged by God (Akbar, 2003). This leads Leat and El-Kot (2007) to argue that individuals in Arabic culture consider hard work and keeping themselves busy as part of worshipping God and a way to relinquish sins, which is understood by Hofstede as part of uncertainty avoidance.

This can also be noted in verbal communication. According to Jandt (2004), in Arabic culture the religious expression “inshallah” means “if God wishes”. This phrase is very common and is used informally. Therefore, one should not think that you will be ignored if you ask someone to do something and he says “inshallah”, especially when he says it twice, which means “yes” in Libyan culture.

In communication in the place of work social relations are as important as outside to overcome difficulties (Leant and El Kot, 2007). We can then assume that religious ideas and ethical principles such as “respect others to gain their respect” have a serious influence on the communication behaviour of individuals in Libyan society and organisations. Moreover, in the social atmosphere, harmony and maintaining relationships are the main characteristics of Arabic culture (Jackson, 2002). Therefore, as we will see later in more detail, cooperation for many individuals in this culture is a vital element in coexisting with others in society and in organisations (Hanky, 2004).

Cultural values and organisational hierarchy

Nydell (1996) argues that, in Libya as in other Arab countries, organisations have faced various pressures from the developed countries which have affected cultural values and how people behave in their workplace. In particular, the use of Western technologies and approaches to work has necessitated the adoption of Western values and social practices. As Leat and El-Kot (2007) argue, this leads organisations in Arab countries to develop their strategies and policies according to international standards.

In terms of communication behaviour, people in high power distance cultures do care about face work strategies when they express themselves and clarify their attitudes (Westwood et al., 1992). Therefore, in relation to facial expressions, in such cultures face work communication strategies will be adopted according to the nature of the message. For instance, in delivering a negative message the sender uses an indirect communication style whereas direct face work strategies are used in delivering positive messages (Merkin, 2006).

In verbal communication in high context culture, as with Libyan culture, people usually use fewer words in delivering messages, which is the opposite in low context culture such as in America (Hofstede, 1997). Moreover, in Libyan society, as large power distance cultures, formal and respectful behaviours are important in the organisational hierarchy to show differences between the leaders and other members. For instance, members of staff usually use formal titles when they communicate with their leaders, such as Mr, Dr, Sir, and Madam (Hofstede, 2001). This may be due to social tradition

which encourages respect and obedience to parents and elderly people (Abouhidba, 2005). Therefore, an understanding of the national culture has a serious influence on how managers and employees communicate to make decisions and interpret their roles (Hanky, 2004).

In large power distance cultures, showing respect and obedience are very common among individuals. This may be because they do not value their own participation in decision making. Moreover, the leaders are more likely to have a central role in the decision making processes (Lee, 2005). Individuals accept unequal distribution of power in organisations and in society. This may lead to the use of powerful and formal language in organisational communication (Hofstede, 1997).

Therefore, Peters (2007) argued that participation in the setting of goals and the decision making process are strongly dependent on communication and the relationship between employees and their leaders. Moreover, considering the cultural background of staff and taking their ideas seriously leads to successful communication and a creative environment in the workplace. However, due to cultural characteristics, managers in Libya consider accepting advice, opinions or feedback from their subordinates as a negative sign to their way of running organisations. Therefore, in this society prohibited the feedback of qualified subordinates to advise or update their superiors (Twati & Gammack, 2007). Consequently, this leads to central management and a central decision making process in Libyan organisations.

Cultural values and harmony in organisations

As is the case in many studies, Gabb (2006) also concluded that the cultural paradigm places people in the context of their cultural origins, which includes social,

historical, psychological, political, knowledge, experience and other social factors. She argued that individuals in collectivist cultures tend to be more concerned about the importance of being members of a cohesive group. This may be to protect themselves socially in their peer groups in return for their loyalty and conformist social behaviour. On the other hand, this assumption is not encouraged by an individualistic culture that rewards individuals for their initiative and the risks they take to emphasise authority and express their theories and opinions (Hofstede, 2003). Therefore, in Libyan culture, as is the case in collectivist culture, it is really difficult for the staff to work according to organisational culture without being influenced by their cultural background. In other words, friendship and other social relationships have an influence on fulfilling tasks in Libyan organisations.

According to the religion of Islam, women are granted the ability to gain an education and to work. However, for political and social reasons, in the Islamic world and in Arab countries in particular, women still have limited participation in leading public and private organisations (Donno and Russett, 2004). Thus, gender does have an influence on the communication behaviour of individuals in different social settings (Merkin, 2005).

Johnson, et al. (2005) agreed with Burleson (2003), who found that women in employment were more concerned with establishing and maintaining good relationships and improving the work relationship with their leaders. However, men usually do extra work in developing and maintaining their work relationships.

This leads to the argument that the religion of Islam has played an essential role in creating the cultural values of individuals in Libyan society. In Islamic culture, faith,

ethics and social practices are strongly connected. Thus, Muslims usually consider Islam as their way of life (Abouhidba, 2005). Therefore, Dabbous-Sensenig (2006) reported that different aspects of the religion of Islam indicate how women should behave and dress within their homes and in the workplace. This social structure and cultural background affects the relationship and communication within Libyan universities in terms of treatment towards one another and performance.

In general, the application of religion to social relations has a crucial role in increasing power distance, collectivism and masculinity in Libyan culture (Twati, 2006). For instance, obedience to parents and elderly people is strongly recommended in the Koran, being considered as part of worshipping God, whereby believers will be rewarded (Abouhidba, 2005). This leads to a direct relationship between the organisational hierarchy and societal culture in Libyan organisations (Twati & Gammack, 2007). Moreover, it is widely known that conforming behaviours and cooperation are strongly related to collectivism (Hofstede, 2001). This can also be seen in Libyan organisations, where managers care about their subordinates in different emotional and psychological situations (Twati & Gammack, 2004). These cultural dimensions strongly affect the communicating behaviour of individuals in Libyan organisations, in addition to the social and organisational hierarchy structure in Libyan society.

Conclusion

From the review of these cultural studies, it can be seen that Libyan culture is characterised by high power distance, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. It also shows low individualism. In this review, most of the studies cited have considered Arabic

culture as a single culture; this may be because the Arab world shares certain common characteristics such as language, religion, and other social features. In future research, the concept of Arabic culture should not be generalised to the entire Arab world, for several reasons. In the first place Arab countries are located on two different continents and have different political systems. Moreover, throughout history, Arab countries have been occupied by various nations with different cultural backgrounds.

In conclusion, there is a necessity for more empirical studies to investigate cultural issues in the Libyan context. Research in the future should examine to what extent organisational strategies aim to achieve compromises between organisational values and national cultural values in order to encourage organisational change in terms of communication in ruling organisations. This will not only help in assessing communication among individuals in organisations, but can also help management processes and performance. This could then guide Libya towards a better future.

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***STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY (SLICT) AMONG THE HEADTEACHERS IN THE RURAL
MALAYSIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS***

AHMAD ZAAFAR ISMAIL

Abstract

The Strategic Leadership of Information and Communication Technology (SLICT) amongst the head teachers is crucial to the implementation and integration of digital and interactive technologies in schools particularly in the rural primary schools. SLICT focuses on the strategic roles in leading and developing ICT in schools in line with the Ministry's ICT policy. It is crucial that Malaysian schools must always ready in adopting and integrating ICT into its system to achieve ultimate goal of Smart School migration by the year 2010. It is vital for the head teachers to foresee the ICT in education and play important role on leadership of ICT at the school level. The strategic leadership of ICT will be based on ten key elements in the e-confident school.

Key words: *strategic leadership of information and communication technology, information and communication technology, E-Confident School, Smart School*

Introduction

The implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in educational systems in Malaysian primary schools is crucial. It is important to follow the global trend and challenges of ICT in the teaching and learning in schools. The

implementation of ICT will play a significant role and contribute to the national inspiration to transform the national educational system to the world class standard. In addition, ICT in education will be a driving force in accelerating the development of a knowledgeable, informative and technological society. It will prepare and equip Malaysians to face challenges of technology and information explosion in the borderless world and global village. It will also give an edge to Malaysia to position herself as a competitive nation on the map of world economic giants.

Education in Malaysia should be prepared to produce knowledge workers who are well-equipped with knowledge, skills and professionalism to meet the challenges posed by the knowledge-based society.... the influx of information easily accessible to everyone has made teaching a very challenging profession. (Moggie 2000: iv – vi)

The explosion of ICT has made a big impact to the educational systems around the world. Naisbit and Aburdene (1992) expected that the education world would experience a revolution in the usage of computer technology in education. Education in Malaysia is already in position to be able to face the new challenges in the wake of computer technology. The Ministry of Education Malaysia has drafted out a comprehensive blueprint known as the Educational Development Master Plan 2001 – 2010. This strategic planning has set out strategies of the implementation and integration of ICT into the educational system until the year 2010 and beyond. The master plan is in line with the Vision 2020, a vision to put Malaysia on the world map as one of the developed nations by the year 2020. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) will be exploited to the maximum as a tool to create human resource with knowledge and technology skills and regenerate the Malaysian economy into a knowledge-based economy (k-Economy).

In general terms Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is an umbrella term that includes any communication device or application, encompassing radio, television, cellular phones, computer and network hardware and software, satellite systems and so on, as well as the various services and applications associated with them, such as videoconferencing, and distance learning.

In the Malaysian educational context, the Educational Development Master Plan 2001 – 2010 defines ICT as a medium to support the main process in the educational management and administration, teaching and learning activities, and life-long learning. ICT will be used as a tool to improve the quality of education, and to fast track the

educational process based on the pupil's ability. Teaching and learning activities using ICT can be carried out anytime to accommodate and accelerate the pupils' learning ability.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education will promote a learning culture (Papert, 1996) and create an effective learning paradigm (Norton and Wiburg, 2003), whereas the interactive learning is replacing the traditional method, which is more on memorizing and drilling activities. Furthermore, the usage of ICT will provide hypermedia-learning environment. It will encourage and promote the exploratory and discovery skills amongst the pupils and challenge the teachers to be a step further in pedagogy and equip themselves with the technologies. The teaching and learning activities will concentrate more on pupils (pupil-centered). Besides, ICT will assist pupils to acquire the learning how to learn skills and in the long term promote the life-long education, individualized learning and make learning as a fun activities (Tapscott, 2003). This is the aim of the Ministry to encourage self-access learning among the pupils and teachers as facilitator.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) initiatives in Malaysian educational system

The first initiative on computer technology in education in Malaysia took place way back in the 1960s when computer technology incorporated in the educational management and examination management. Since the 1960s, computer technology has

changed tremendously and increasingly become more important in many aspects of management including the education sector as management tool. In line with the development, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become more visible in the educational management at all levels. ICT has been widely used in many areas of management activities including Finance Management Systems, Personnel Management Systems or Staff Management Systems (SMS), Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS), Smart School Management Systems (SSMS), Student Information Systems (SSM and SMPP), Discipline Information Systems, Scholarship Management Systems, Examination Management Systems, Textbooks Management Systems and Project Monitoring Systems.

In the early 1990s, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE) launched some ICT-based projects, school computer projects and ICT infrastructure project as its major activities. In 1992, the Ministry has launched a programme called Computers in School. There were 60 rural secondary schools involved in this pilot project. Each school supplied with 20 units of computer for pupils and a set of computer for the teacher. This was the first project involving personal computers in teaching and learning activities. The next major projects involved other educational components such as curriculum development and assessment.

Another pilot project called Computer-Assisted Learning (PPBK) was launched in 1994. The project focused on two main subjects, English Language and Mathematics in 15 primary schools in rural areas of Selangor state. This project targeted pupils from Year 4 to 6 with the aim of providing assistance in teaching and learning. In 1996, MoE extended this programme through the ICT infrastructure project to 209 secondary schools

and 20 primary schools throughout the country. The project introduced Computers in Teaching Programmes to provide exposure on computer literacy. Under this programme, each secondary school was given 20 units of PC with a server for Local Area Network (LAN). However, at this stage, the schools were not connected to the Internet. The primary schools were provided with the PCs only without LAN facilities.

The next project carried out by the Ministry was an e-Book Project. The project involved 8,000 pupils from 100 primary and secondary schools. The contents of e-Book covered all subjects taught in both primary and secondary levels. Another significant ICT project was the School Computer Project, which focused on building the ICT infrastructure in schools. The project was launched in the year 2000 involving another 2,418 primary and secondary schools throughout the country. The project involved building computer labs equipped with networking (LAN) and Internet connection. The project also supplied LCD projectors to the schools.

The commitment to integrate ICT in the national curriculum has been clearly stated in the Educational Development Planning Blueprint 2001 – 2010. The planning has outlined three main ICT agendas in education, which are:

- ICT Literacy, which provide equal opportunity and equal access to ICT skills and facilities for all – pupils and teachers.
- ICT as part of the national curriculum and medium in teaching and learning.
- ICT in management systems to increase productivity and improve delivery system.

The Smart School initiative

The major ICT transition and development in the Malaysian educational system was in 1999 when the Ministry launched the ambitious Smart School Project. The Smart School Project was one of the Malaysian Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) flagships. The Ministry set a target of total migration of its more than 10,000 primary and secondary schools into Smart School by the year 2010. The Smart School concept is a long term plan for the national educational system to produce highly skilled and knowledgeable human capital in terms of ICT and as a paradigm shift in the educational system. The Smart School will play a crucial role in providing a strong foundation for the pupils to develop and increase their abilities as individuals. The Smart School Project will be a stepping-stone to spearhead ICT integration and implementation not only in teaching and learning but also across the educational system in Malaysia. Skills and knowledge of ICT will be centre stage in Smart School and play a vital role in the school management systems.

In addition, the Ministry launched a project called SchoolNet to complement the Smart School Project. This is another important internet-based project in providing a platform for the pupils and teachers to carry out teaching and learning activities. The SchoolNet known as MySchoolNet provided teaching and learning materials and courseware. The project gave more than 7,000 schools in the rural Malaysia with the internet access through MySchoolNet. The government has allocated RM374.2 millions to network 5,998 primary schools and 1,087 secondary schools in rural areas with internet access. The biggest challenge to the Ministry is to ensure that the rural schools are at the same level and on a par with the urban schools in ICT infrastructure and

facilities. The impact of the project will reduce the digital divide between rural and urban schools in Malaysia.

The Smart School is the first step to the e-Confident School compliance. It is to make Malaysian schools to be ready to apply ICT technology in all aspects of educational systems. ICT must be integrated across the curriculum and school management. As part of the ambitious ICT projects in education, which is the total migration of schools into Smart Schools, the Ministry has to make sure that all schools must comply with the e-Confident School elements. In order to be effective in the use of ICT to support learning and teaching, schools need to be e-Confident (Becta, 2004), which means that the schools must display a number of characteristics at a sufficiently developed level. The characteristics of an e-Confident school can be summarized by 10 key features, which are:

- Level of leadership, confidence and competence.

Leadership at all levels – clear leadership at all levels, providing a shared vision for ICT, supported by strategic and operational planning to achieve the vision.

- Re-engineering teaching, learning and assessment.

Transform learning and teaching, and assessment – actions to transform teaching and assessment, personalise learning, and innovatively embed ICT throughout the curriculum.

- Leading and managing distributed learning.

Distributed and concurrent learning – active leadership and management of distributed and concurrent learning within and beyond the boundary of the traditional school timetable.

- ICT usage within organization and management processes.

Effectiveness and efficiency – effective application within organisational and management processes that secures effective pupil tracking, use of achievement data, financial and resource management, workforce reform and curriculum planning.

- Coherent ICT development for all staff.

Staff development – a guaranteed coherent personal learning and development plan, support and access for the whole school workforce.

- Secure, informed professional judgment.

Informed professional judgment – professional collaboration, dialogue and review that leads to informed professional judgment.

- Appropriate resource allocation.

ICT resources – planning and action to secure appropriate ICT resources, systems, digital content and technical support to ensure effective and sustainable use across the school.

- Availability and access to technical support.

Equal access – making sure that the school's ICT is available, operating effectively, providing inclusive access to all pupils and staff.

- Pupils with high ICT capability.

High level of pupil ICT capability – planning learning, teaching and assessment to ensure pupils develop and can demonstrate high levels of e-confidence and ICT capability.

- The school as the lead in community learning and information.

The extended school – promoting and developing the school as the lead community learning and information hub.

The task to facilitate all schools with fully-fledged ICT infrastructure and facilities is a challenge to the Ministry. It is a great task to make sure all schools have the abilities and capabilities to carry out all teaching and learning activities and school management through ICT as a medium. This is crucial to the success of the Smart School project and the Strategic Leadership of Information and Communication Technology (SLICT) of the head teachers will play a great role in achieving this ambition.

Strategic Leadership of Information and Communication Technology (SLICT)

The educational systems around the world are changing following the fast change of technology. ICT becomes part of our lives and this too affects the schooling system. As the Malaysian Government invested huge amount of money and resources in ICT for education, SLICT has to address the issues of how the head teachers develop ICT initiatives through strategic, professional and informed judgments. SLICT can contribute

significantly to the Ministry by giving clear vision and direction on ICT implementation and integration in education in Malaysia. The head teachers will play a crucial role as leaders to carry out the implementation of ICT policies at school level.

Head teachers, especially in the rural primary schools, need to think strategically and play a strategic role in leading and developing ICT in their schools, engage in developing and implementing ICT vision with informed professional judgment and stimulate a clear, strategic and transformational vision for leading their schools. Schools with strong leadership of ICT, which is defined as design and development of a vision for a school's ICT strategy, are more likely to address workload issues since they will not overwhelm their teachers with new initiatives, training and new processes coming all at once. Furthermore, by linking this in with other strategies, and by involving staff in the development of ICT strategies, the most pressing issues are likely to be addressed first, and could therefore result in almost immediate practical workload reductions – (DfES November 2004 Using ICT in Schools: Addressing Teacher Workload Issues).

Head teachers have to be familiar and knowledgeable in terms of ICT technology and development. They must be able to foresee and consider how this technology can make a difference when applied appropriately, but also sustainable, so that investments on the ICT resources do not dissipate over the years and be able to understand and address the issues relating to ICT and its potential for the education system. Effective leadership is a prerequisite for delivering any form of institutional change and embedding ICT into teaching and learning is no different. It is also clear that before an institution can have effective policies in relation to the use of ICT to support learning and teaching, it must have a clear vision in relation to what sort of learning institution it is seeking to be.

It must know what sort of learning and learners it is trying to develop – (DfES December 2004 Moving Towards e-Learning in Schools and FE Colleges: models of resource planning at the institution level).

The integration and implementation of ICT in the Malaysian educational system has been one of the Government agendas. The policy encourages the ICT application at all levels of the education system especially at the school level. Unfortunately, the importance of SLICT is still lagging behind compare to the other developed countries such as the United Kingdom. The pilot study in 2006 carried out by the Ministry on ICT usage in primary schools in rural Malaysia indicated that almost all the head teachers did not have a clear vision on ICT leadership and there was no strategic plan of ICT in their schools.

The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE) is currently developing a more strategic approach in adopting Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in its educational system. The Ministry is taking effort in transforming a more strategic approach in the implementation and integration of digital and interactive technologies in schools. Therefore, SLICT is crucial element in the successful of ICT implementation and integration in schools particularly at the rural primary schools in Malaysia. SLICT will be a benchmark to the Ministry on the strategic roles of the head teachers in leading and developing ICT in schools especially at the primary education level, and on how the head teachers develop their own strategic approach to technology as a complement to the Ministry's ICT Strategic Planning.

The main focus of Strategic Leadership of Information and Communication Technology (SLICT) in Education is based on ten key elements in the e-Confident

School strategy. The massive implementation of ICT in the Malaysian educational system needs good leaders at school level to implement the ICT Strategic Planning in line with the government policies, which is outlined in the Educational Development Master Plan 2006 – 2010 of 9th.Malaysian Plan. The aspects of leadership of ICT among the head teachers particularly in the rural primary schools still need to be strengthened to implement the ICT policies.

Efforts have been made to equip all primary and secondary schools with ICT infrastructure and facilities through the ICT initiative in education outlined in the Educational Strategic Planning Blueprint 2001 – 2010. The ICT strategic planning is to integrate ICT into teaching and learning, and in all other aspects of the educational management system. Its final goal is total conversion of all schools into Smart School by the year 2010. To achieve this target, the Government has instructed the Ministry to remodel the smart school and its implementation to be adapted to all schools. Efforts have been taken to fast track the migration of schools into smart schools to enable more existing primary and secondary schools to benefit from ICT. In line with this aspiration and to achieve the national agenda, it is crucial that Malaysian schools must be always ready to implement and integrate ICT into its system. The head teachers have huge responsibility and anticipate actively in carrying out tasks on ICT implementation besides playing a vital role in ICT leadership at school level.

The main goal of SLICT is to enable schools to be e-Confident, where school has the ability to provide an equal entitlement of ICT for all pupils. The teachers possess great skills and competence of ICT, and are able to use a range of different technologies to support teaching and learning processes, knowing how and where ICT can enhance

learning. The teachers too are able to accommodate all pupils' learning styles when using ICT and they embed ICT in all schemes of work. The school uses ICT across the whole curriculum and re-design the curriculum putting ICT at the heart of learning. The head teachers must always aware of the ICT issues in education such as in the area of ICT strategic planning and leadership. In the long term, ICT will be visible as one of the elements in the school culture. In Malaysian context, SLICT will provide a clear direction for head teachers to ensure their schools fulfill the requirements of e-Confident school. SLICT will give a clear vision on strategic leadership of ICT. It also provides a clear direction of ICT implementation at school level. These are the key factors to the success of smart school conversion by year 2010. SLICT will change the current schooling system by ensuring the head teachers or school leadership to understand the important of their role in strategically leading ICT in schools. The Malaysian educational systems will get a great benefit through SLICT in terms of reengineering the educational system to provide a quality education for all. It will help to reposition Malaysia as an educational hub in the region in near future.

SLICT will provide important information on the areas of strategic leadership in the development and renewal of ICT, ICT infrastructure and facilities, ICT resources and support, integration of ICT in the curriculum and personal ICT skills among teachers and pupils. It will give some indicators to the Ministry of Education Malaysia regarding the readiness and preparedness of the schools particularly the primary schools in rural Malaysia.

It is important to gather some information on the strategic leadership of ICT in schools particularly the primary schools in rural areas. The Ministry will be able to

monitor and evaluate the progress of the Smart School migration plan. It can improve existing strategies and overcome any shortcomings. SLICT will help the Ministry to create awareness and programmes to assist the head teachers specifically in rural primary schools and generally all the schools throughout the country in terms of ICT leadership. In near future, an e-Confident School Benchmark can be formulated to provide guidelines for the schools in maintaining and upgrading the ICT capability in line with changing technology, developing and sustaining teachers' skills and confidence in ICT, and improving pupils' learning through ICT. Furthermore, it also provide information on the school's readiness and preparedness to be a Smart School, ICT initiatives at school level, ICT competency among the teaching staff and pupils, and ICT infrastructure, facilities and support.

Conclusion

Effective ICT programmes in schools will be the result of good leadership and effective strategic planning. Both are necessary factors for the success of migration of schools into smart schools and the e-Confident School compliance. Head teachers have to play a bigger role and demonstrate a leadership role of ICT. They should seek to drive developments towards a vision of the school as a centre of excellence in using ICT for teaching and learning, and running their schools as a management tool.

Good Strategic Leadership of ICT (SLICT) will be demonstrated through having a clear understanding of the nature of ICT as a technology, a medium of instruction and a management tool. Having a clear and sound vision of what the school should achieve with ICT over time and be able to demonstrate how investment in ICT are impacting on

learning and attainment, and achieving the balance between teaching ICT skills and applying them to learning and teaching. Finally, the most important part is to understand and know the key components to ICT strategies that must be in place for ICT to succeed.

An in-depth study should be carried out to find the status and level of SLICT among the head teachers in Malaysian schools with the focus on the primary schools in the rural areas. This is important, as a lot of efforts have been made to equip the school with the ICT infrastructure and facilities to improve the Malaysian educational system in line with the Ministry's vision of a world-class educational system. The study will provide the Ministry of Education Malaysia a benchmark of the school's ICT readiness and preparedness. This will assist the Ministry to draw up strategies in ICT leadership among the head teachers and enhance the capacity of schools to act strategically in leading the development of ICT in their schools.

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LANGUAGE LEARNING AS A GENDERED EXPERIENCE

ERIN BIDLAKE

Abstract

In the past 15 years, the field of applied linguistics has witnessed major changes in its understanding of the relationship between gender and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Moving away from positivistic understandings of gender in isolation, which assume a direct relationship between language and gender, and turning toward

constructivist and poststructuralist frameworks, gender is increasingly seen as only one of many intersecting factors contributing to an individual's ever-shifting identity. In the following literature review, I aim to demonstrate the complex ways in which gender identity is implicated in a language learner's access to the second language (L2) and language learning opportunities, thereby influencing the *amount*, as well as the *kind* of L2 exposure available to the learner. Consequently, I aim to suggest that gender may have an influence on a learner's overall success in language learning, albeit one that is not always predictable. I finish by highlighting implications for classroom practices.

Key words: *gender, ethnicity, identity, language learning*

Introduction

In the past 15 years, the field of applied linguistics has witnessed major changes in its understanding of the relationship between gender and SLA. Although interest in the broader field of language and gender is in no way new, early sociolinguistic efforts (e.g., Lakoff 1975) arose from an essentialist understanding of gender as a static binary that assumed a direct relationship between language and gender. These early efforts often arrived at fixed notions about what women and men do and do not do in conversation, a framework that was known at different times as the deficit approach, the difference approach, and the dominance approach (Coates 2004). Identity theorists (e.g., Butler 1990; Cameron 2005; Gordon 2004; Lin *et al.* 2004; Mills 2006; Norton 2000; Norton & Pavlenko 2004; Pavlenko 2001; Schmenk 2004) now criticize this framework for ignoring the multiple and shifting identities "predicated on a number of factors, which include but are not limited to race, class, ethnicity, geographic region, culture, economic and social status, occupation, sexuality, religious affiliation, (dis)ability and age"

(Pavlenko 2001, p. 125) *as well as* gender. By moving away from positivistic understandings of gender in isolation and turning toward constructivist and poststructuralist frameworks, the notion of gender in SLA has been reconceptualized. As Schmenk (2004) writes:

Instead of looking at what males are like and what females are like and constructing generalized images of male and female language learners accordingly, critical voices note that language learners are themselves constantly constructing and reconstructing their identities in specific contexts and communities. To understand these processes and reflect on their possible implications for language learning and teaching, English language teachers, researchers, and teacher educators need to take into account individual learners and their respective positioning in particular social and cultural contexts. (p. 514)

Recent work examining gender from this perspective (e.g., Cameron 2005; Coates 2004; Davis & Skilton-Sylvester 2004; Ehrlich 1997; Kubota 2003; Norton 2000; Norton & Pavlenko 2004; Pavlenko 2001; Schmenk 2004; Sunderland 1992, 1998, 2000a, 2000b; Tannen 1996; Willett 1996) problematizes certain essentialist language learning and classroom myths, such as female superiority in language learning and male dominance in mixed-gender classrooms. While many studies (e.g., Baxter 2002; Cumming & Gill 1991; Goldstein 1995; Hruska 2004; Kline 1993; Losey 1995; Pica *et al.* 1991; Polanyi 1995) continue to find gender implicated in language learning success, it does not seem to be implicated in predictable ways based on gender in isolation. As a result, it is worth considering that "the way that gender identities get constructed in particular communities may have very concrete consequences for the kinds of second language proficiency developed by men and women" (Ehrlich 1997, p. 435). In the following discussion, I aim to demonstrate the complex ways in which gender identity is implicated in a language learner's access to the second language (L2) and language

learning opportunities, thereby influencing the *amount*, as well as the *kind* of L2 exposure available to the learner. Consequently, I aim to suggest that gender may have an influence on a learner's overall success in language learning, albeit an influence that is not always predictable. With this in mind, I will finish by highlighting implications for language classroom practices and offer suggestions for language teachers.

Review

Examples of SLA research that demonstrate the many implications of gender in language learning are well-documented in the literature. In this section, I will outline the examples most pertinent to my discussion, organized into the following two themes: (1) classroom interaction, (2) factors outside the classroom affecting SLA.

(1) Classroom interaction

In her ethnographic study of a kindergarten class in the United States, Hruska (2004) documents the interactions of 17 first language (L1) English speakers and 6 Spanish-English bilingual speakers at different stages of English proficiency. As well as a linguistic divide, the class had a gender divide of 9 girls and 14 boys. Hruska explains how "[g]ender ideologies, gender constructions, and related behaviors described in the study, sometimes interacted with bilingualism, ethnicity and friendships in ways that emphasized unequal power relations or shaped participation in classroom events" (p. 462). Hruska describes the process of how the children constructed the gender divide between the girls and the boys through discursive practices. For instance, the girls' conversations were characterized by their fascination with romantic liaisons, such as who was going to marry whom, whereas the boys' conversations were characterized by competitive discourse, such as who could kick the highest and who had the most racing

cars. Hruska also explains the importance among the children of establishing public alliances through same-gender friendships. Although the 6 bilingual children formed cross-gender friendships during their pull-out ESL instruction, upon reentering the kindergarten class, they were faced with renegotiating these to form same-gender friendships, in fitting with the larger classroom practice. An exception to this rule was Francisco, a Mexican boy, who happened to be extremely small for his age. His small size seemed to inspire motherly attention from many of the girls, who enjoyed helping him with classroom tasks. Simultaneously, he was accepted by the boys, because he was able to participate in their discourse of boy-identified topics, such as racing cars. Hruska illustrates how this gender flexibility granted Francisco access to both the boys' and the girls' discourses, ultimately affording him greater access to the English language. Hruska notes that "[a]t the beginning of the year, Francisco had the lowest English-language proficiency, but by the end he was the most socially and linguistically successful Spanish-bilingual child" (p. 471), suggesting that the gender *inflexibility* of the other 5 Spanish-bilingual children might have restricted their language learning opportunities and, as a result, their overall success.

Another example from a mixed classroom in the United States comes from Losey's (1995) study of an adult basic writing class comprised of both female and male L1 English speakers, and female and male Mexican American bilingual speakers. An analysis of data taken from participant observation, audiotaped classroom sessions, and interviews revealed somewhat surprising results. Losey found that although the bilingual speakers made up more than half of the class (55%), they spoke significantly less in whole class discussions than did the L1 English speakers. This, perhaps, is not so

surprising. However, of the contributions offered by the bilingual speakers "Mexican-American men contributed four times the amount expected, whereas Mexican American women spoke half as much as expected" (p. 635). Because these women contributed much more readily in other contexts, Losey argues that the cause of this imbalance during whole class discussions was due to the Mexican American women's status as 'double minorities', twice distancing them from a position of power in the classroom. She suggests that the intersection of their female gender and their Mexican ethnicity restricted their access to participating fully in language learning opportunities.

A much examined aspect of classroom interaction is the amount of time teachers devote to their female and male students. A well-known study by Spender (1982 cited in Sunderland 2000b) documents findings of a self-study she conducted by audiotaping her classes and analyzing the recordings for 'differential teacher treatment by gender', a phenomenon she was aware of and was "deeply disturbed about the possibility that it might happen in her (secondary school) classroom" (Sunderland 2000b, p. 159). Spender was dismayed to find that the maximum amount of classroom time she devoted to the girls was about 42%, whereas the minimum time devoted to the boys was 58%. Such findings have since been used to illustrate the belief that male students tend to dominate in the classroom, leaving female students to be portrayed as victims (Baxter 2002).

Subsequent studies (e.g., Baxter 2002; Hruska 2004) have found that, whereas girls wait to be called on, boys tend to call out more, which initiates interaction and results in increased male student and teacher talk-time. For example, a study by Baxter (2002) on a British high school L1 English class (with a mix of girls and boys, aged 14-15) documents the results of a comparative analysis of girls' and boys' speech. Baxter

notes three major findings: (1) "both in their speech and their behaviour, the girls showed a greater conformity [...] to the 'rules' of the classroom" (p. 837), (2) "girls appear to offer boys considerably more interactional support than they receive in return" (p. 837), (3) "boys don't just simply fail to support girls in classroom discourse; they actively seek to undermine girls' linguistic interactions and by doing so, manage, on occasion, to disempower them" (p. 838). Regardless of these findings, however, Baxter argues against the portrayal of these girls as victims. Despite evidence showing that, in whole class conversations, girls had a much harder time both securing themselves a speaking turn and holding onto that turn long enough to make their point, several of the girls were evaluated more favorably than the boys on account of their ability to effectively overcome these obstacles during discussions. When asked why some girls are able to participate in class more than others, one girl replied that it is because "the boffy people" (p. 836) (i.e., the 'nerds') most often get chosen to speak by the teacher, thus the girls who succeeded were publicly constructed as academic students.

In the L2 classroom, where there is the "increasing importance of using the language and of speaking as a skill in its own right" (Sunderland 1998, p. 52), securing talk time and teacher interaction is arguably a bigger issue. In Sunderland's (1998) study, however, she stresses the importance of looking at the *kind*, rather than simply the *amount* of teacher interaction with students. Her observations of an L2 German class in Britain (with a mix of 13 girls and 14 boys, aged 11-12) led to findings that supported previous studies demonstrating that girls receive less teacher interaction than boys. However, when she looked at the *kinds* of interaction given to girls and boys she found that interaction directed at the boys was more often disciplinary in nature, less often required

a response in the L2, and less often required more than a minimal response of one word. Interaction directed at the girls more often required a response in the L2 and more often required more than a minimal response. As a result, Sunderland contends that the girls were being constructed by the teacher as a more academic group than the boys, perhaps in accordance with the myth of female superiority in language learning, or perhaps because these girls simply were more academic. In either case, as a group, the girls received less interaction, but Sunderland suggests that the *kind* of interaction took on greater significance in this context than did the *amount*.

(2) *Factors outside the classroom affecting SLA*

There is little disagreement that a student's experience in the classroom will have an effect on her or his language learning success. However, there is also reason to believe that factors outside the classroom can contribute to the learning outcome. In two studies documenting the experiences of students on study-abroad programs (Kline 1993; Polanyi 1995), gender played a significant role in determining the success of the language learning experiences. As a consequence of being female, women in these studies found themselves targets of sexual harassment. Kline's (1993) ethnographic study documents a year-long French study-abroad program, during which 9 out of 19 female students were physically attacked by French men, and one woman was raped. Kline notes that the women in the program developed much more extensive reading practices than did the men that year, suggesting that these women sought to escape from the dangers of interaction with French men by spending more time alone reading. Not surprisingly, the

end of the year assessment found lower speaking and listening proficiency levels for the female participants than for the male participants. Kline criticizes the proficiency assessment for ignoring the significant reading and writing advancements made by the women.

Polanyi (1995) documents a similar situation in her study of the journals kept by American students participating in a study-abroad program in Russia. The women in this study, like those in Kline's study, were routinely harassed by Russian men, in contrast to the experiences of the American men participating in the study, who, in many cases, entered willingly into positive relationships with Russian women. It is worth noting that these relationships were not degrading or humiliating at all. Instead, they provided meaningful opportunities for linguistic and cultural exchange. A related study by Brecht *et al.* (1995) on the same group of students showed significantly greater language gains made by the men than the women, which Polanyi criticizes on the grounds that, although the experiences of these women and men were highly gender-specific, the proficiency measures were gender-blind (i.e., they measured all students by the same ruler), as was the case for the assessment carried out on the students in Kline's (1993) study.

An example taken from the adult ESL context in Canada comes from Goldstein's (1995) study of Portuguese immigrants in Toronto. Goldstein found that men in this immigrant community had greater access to English, both because previous military service in Portugal had afforded them opportunities to learn some English and because they were free to attend ESL classes in Canada. In contrast, she explains how the traditional family roles played by women in Portuguese society made it very difficult for the women in her study to attend ESL classes, either because husbands or fathers forbid

them to attend classes with male strangers, or because the women felt unsafe traveling to and from class at night. As a result of their limited English skills, many of these women could only find work at a factory where Portuguese was spoken exclusively to promote solidarity and maintain high productivity. Therefore, restricted access to learning English on the basis of their gender and ethnicity *further* restricted their access to English on the basis of employment.

This study might serve to explain an alarming phenomenon recorded by Canadian census data. This data reports that, although fairly equal linguistic abilities are found among immigrants upon entering Canada, longitudinal monitoring shows that nearly twice as many women as men fail to become proficient in either of Canada's two official languages, French and English (Cumming & Gill 1991).

It is also worth considering how marital status can intersect with gender and ethnicity in complex ways. For example, Moon (2000 cited in Pavlenko 2001) found that single Asian women moving to the United States had a distinct advantage over Asian men in terms of language learning, as the women in the study proved to be much more likely to find L1 English-speaking boyfriends, granting them significantly more meaningful language learning opportunities. In contrast, Ellis (1994 cited in Ehrlich 1997, p. 428) claims that:

Asian men in Britain generally attain higher levels of proficiency in L2 English than do Asian women for the simple reason that their jobs bring them into contact with the majority English-speaking group, while women are often 'enclosed' in their home.

Ellis, in this statement, seems to be referring primarily to married women, since single women would doubtfully be enclosed in their homes for practical reasons, such as employment.

In the above examples looking both inside and outside the classroom, it is possible to see how gender was implicated in language learning outcomes in ways that were not always predictable. This was due to the intersection of gender with other factors involved in the construction of a learner's identity (e.g., gender flexibility, ethnicity, academicism, being targeted by sexual harassment, employment, marital status).

What these studies demonstrate is the difficulty of drawing generalizations about the precise way that gender (more accurately, the social practices involved in the construction of gender in particular communities) will influence second language acquisition [...]. Indeed, if any generalization emerges here, it is the persistence of social and cultural practices across various communities (within the native language or target language culture) that adversely affect women's access to interactions in a target language or the nature of such interactions. (Ehrlich 1997, p. 436)

While I would argue that the effect on women's access to language interaction is not *always* adverse (as in the case of Moon's (2000 cited in Pavlenko 2001) study), I do echo Ehrlich's sentiment here that generalizations are very difficult to make on the basis of gender alone, involving, as I have shown, a complex web of other factors.

Implications for classroom practice and suggestions for teachers

In the review section I presented a wide range of SLA research in which I found gender to be a common factor (although, significantly, not the *only* factor) influencing language learning outcomes. In this section, I will move on to a discussion of the implications of this research on language classroom practices and offer some suggestions I have gleaned from the literature (and some of my own devising) that might help language teachers accommodate a wider variety of learners and their multiple, shifting identities. I have organized my discussion into the following three themes: (1)

proficiency assessment, (2) classroom interaction, and (3) working with factors outside the classroom.

(1) Proficiency assessment

In terms of proficiency assessment, both Kline (1993) and Polanyi's (1995) studies provide good examples of why language assessment should not be gender-blind. In cases such as these, rather than measuring every student by the same ruler, assessment should be informed by a closer examination of the students' experiences (i.e., looking at both the *amount* and the *kind*). Where this is not possible, assessment should be checked for other kinds of gender bias. Three prime areas of potential gender bias include "the topic (or content), the task, and the tester (or interlocutor)" (Sunderland 2000a, p. 212). Researchers working in this area (e.g., Brown & McNamara 2004; Sunderland 2000a) suggest that these should be monitored closely to ensure there is as little bias as possible. A similar argument could easily be made for assessment that is biased in terms of other factors, such as age or ethnicity. Teachers should be sensitive to all these factors when developing assessment measures.

(2) Classroom interaction

The countless and varied interactions that take place during class time put many complex demands on teachers that might influence their ability to monitor for phenomena such as 'differential teacher treatment by gender', as shown in the studies by Baxter (2002), Losey (1995), and Sunderland (1998). However, Sunderland (2000b) notes that "practitioners can of course take active professional steps to ameliorate disadvantage (though these will always be dependent on the actual classroom and cannot be simply prescribed through a list of 'Do's and Don'ts')" (p. 169). She suggests, where possible,

that teachers should try videotaping their own classes to get a realistic view of their own practices (looking at both the *amount*, as well as the *kind* of interaction made accessible to the students), or invite a colleague to observe one of their lessons. Teachers can also work together to share strategies for classroom inclusivity and, in many cases, invite students to take part in this dialogue.

Papatzikou Cochran (1996) makes three other suggestions for teachers working towards gender-aware classroom practices. These include: (1) increasing awareness of body language (although this is often a difficult task in many ESL classrooms, where a mixture of students from many ethnic and cultural backgrounds may display many different body languages), (2) avoiding sexist and racist generalizations at all costs, and (3) becoming familiar with literature on sexism and language (e.g., in the ESL classroom, teachers should draw students' attention to the lack of an epicene third-person singular pronoun and introduce the various strategies for negotiating this issue). Many researchers (e.g., Davis & Skilton-Sylvester 2004; Hruska 2004; Norton & Pavlenko 2004; Schmenk 2004; Sunderland 2000b) take this last suggestion one step further, by suggesting that sexism and language, and other topics inviting critical perspectives, would be excellent topics for in-class discussions to raise students' awareness as well. Most central to gender-aware practices and classroom inclusivity is the notion that the effect of factors such as gender and ethnicity is not predictable. Therefore:

[T]eachers must adopt a critical stance towards generalist statements about male and female learners and develop a heightened awareness of gender stereotyping. Doing so will enable them to focus on individual learners as persons rather than as group members. (Schmenk 2004, p. 522)

(3) *Working with factors outside the classroom*

Although there are many limitations existing for students outside the classroom that cannot be overcome even by teachers with the best of intentions, researchers working within critical and feminist pedagogic frameworks (e.g., Keddie 2006; Norton & Pavlenko 2004; Pennycook 1999; Schenke 1996) have demonstrated how creative thinking and innovative approaches to language teaching have helped in some cases. For example, offering day-time classes, women-only classes, subsidized classes, classes offered locally in immigrant communities, and classes with flexible curricula to best fit student needs are all attempts that have been made to increase access to language learning opportunities for people who have been denied such opportunities based on factors such as gender and ethnicity, as in the study by Goldstein (1995).

Norton and Pavlenko (2004) cite two examples of feminist pedagogy at work. Rivera (1999 cited in Norton & Pavlenko 2004) helped to create an ESL program to serve the needs of women in a Latino community in New York City. These classes were held during the day while children were in school, held locally in the community, and offered a Spanish-English bilingual program that integrated the women's previous knowledge and experiences. Frye (1999 cited in Norton & Pavlenko 2004) helped to expand a male-oriented ESL program in Washington, D.C. to better meet the needs of another group of immigrant Latina women. The women were involved in all aspects of planning and directing the ESL classes, from logistical to curricular decisions, and proposed topics for discussion that addressed their interests and challenges as women, as Latinas, as mothers, and so forth.

Clearly, only some teachers have this kind of freedom and flexibility in their classrooms. Nevertheless, my aim is to provide examples of situations where solutions to such problems have been successful.

Conclusion

My aims here were threefold: (1) to demonstrate the complex ways in which gender identity is implicated in a language learner's access to the L2 and language learning opportunities, thereby influencing the *amount*, as well as the *kind* of L2 exposure available to the learner, (2) to suggest that gender may have an influence on a learner's overall success in language learning, albeit an influence that is not always predictable, and (3) to highlight implications for the language classroom and offer suggestions for language teachers. To this end, I began by presenting a thorough review of the literature demonstrating the implications of gender on language learning, both inside and outside the classroom, and, where possible, indicating situations where the gendered experience of language learning influenced the learning outcomes. In arguing that the influences of gender are not predictable, I problematized the view of gender operating in isolation (as in the myths of female superiority and male dominance) by highlighting contexts where a learner's gender intersected with other factors, such as ethnicity, academicism, employment, and marital status. The examples I reviewed here were chosen carefully to represent a wide range of contexts (e.g., students of various ages, language classes devoted to various languages, classes mixed for L1 and L2 speakers, classes taking place in various countries, and so forth). This choice was informed by my belief that the truly

homogeneous class (in terms of age, sex, ethnicity, linguistic background and the many other complex factors in need of consideration) is virtually non-existent.

What I have not addressed here for reasons of scope includes (but is not limited to) more thorough discussions of at least three areas: (1) learner identity, (2) the myth of female superiority (with attention to learner styles, strategies, motivation, and unequal enrolment by gender), and (3) critical and feminist pedagogies. Thus the limitations to my discussion were these many truncated discussions, which are all deserving and in need of further and more thorough investigation.

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***PROFILING SECOND LANGUAGE SPEAKING DEVELOPMENT:
THE INTERFACE BETWEEN LANGUAGE LEARNING, TEACHING AND
ASSESSMENT***

MING-FEN LO

Abstract

Despite the popularity received in the testing market, an influential test as OPI (the Oral Proficiency Interview), has experienced lots of skepticism on the validity of its band descriptors defined by ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language Proficiency Guidelines). Lantolf and Frawley (1985) questioned the validity of the Guidelines by looking into its analytic logic. Brindley (1998) argued against the claim of the Guidelines as describing language development for its lack of empirical evidence. This paper, firstly, reviews the studies on the validity of the rating scales and the argument in Brindley's (1998) article—Describing language development? Secondly, the oral observation procedure devised by Pienemann, Johnston and Brindley (1988) and the Rapid Profile program based on the findings of the ZISA research group will be presented to exemplify the interface between SLA research, language assessment and language teaching. Suggestions for further research in this area will also be discussed.

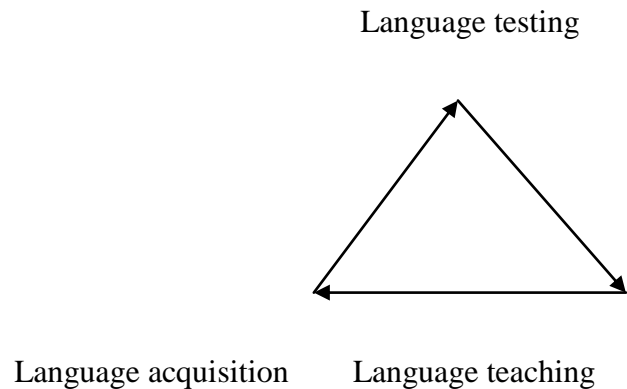
Key words: *validity, rating scales, multidimensional model, profile analyses, teachability*

Introduction

To measure language ability effectively, we have to be able to find out what the ability is and how it has developed. In the field of language assessment, the knowledge of the language and the skills possessed by the test candidates is termed test construct. Defining the construct has been the central concern of language testing research. Different views of language and language use form the theoretical basis of different tests. In the 1960s, discrete point testing which was mostly formatted in multiple choice question type focuses on learners' grammatical or vocabulary knowledge. Oller's unitary competence hypothesis brought the cloze tests into popularity in the 1970s and early 1980s. Until now, communicative language tests derived from Hyme's theory of communicative competence play a dominating role in today's test markets (McNamara 2000). Another important contribution to the development of language testing comes from the findings of second language acquisition research. From the perspective of language teaching, the ultimate purpose of language assessment is to help learners make progress. As noted by Alderson (2006), "if researchers, theoreticians and testers do not know how language proficiency develops, they can hardly claim to be able to help learners develop such an ability." Therefore, this paper, firstly, intends to examine the ACTFL (the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language Proficiency Guidelines) to see if this influential guidelines which form the basis for two speaking tests, OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview) and TOPT (Texas Oral Proficiency Test) correspond to the realities of language acquisition and use. This part of discussion is based on Brindley's (1998) article—Describing language development?

The second part of this paper attempts to provide a response to Clark's claim of foreign and second-language proficiency testing as an "inexact science" for the lack of an

objective testing procedure guided by a uniform theoretical structure. (Lantolf 1985, p. 338) The oral observation procedure devised by Pienemann, Johnston and Brindley (1988) and the Rapid Profile program will be presented to exemplify the interface between SLA research, language assessment and language teaching. Suggestions for further research in this area will also be identified.



SLA and the rating scales

Lantolf and Frawley's (1985) comparison of a criterion-referenced test to a driving test reminds me of my driving test experience in Taiwan. By performing some required tasks such as backing, parallel parking, signaling and turning at the test center which simulates the real road situations, with some expected mistakes, I was granted a driver's license. What is the meaning carried by the tiny piece of paper for which I was trained for a month at a private driving school? Does it mean that I have mastered the skills required for passing a driving test at the virtual center, achieved the learning objectives for the training courses, acted as a qualified driver (I have acquired the driving competence.) or just simply obtained the permission to drive in my country? The situation is somewhat like a performance test which claims to assess L2 learners' oral proficiency or communicative competence in a simulated real-life situation. Can the oral

proficiency tests in practice today measure what they claim to assess? In other words, can the test results of learners' performance in specific contexts infer the underlying linguistic competence they have acquired? The following quote from Bachman and Palmer's frequently-cited paper might serve as part of an answer to this question, "measures of communicative performance must not be taken as an indication of some absolute amount of success an individual has in communicating." (Bachman and Palmer 1984) Moreover, oral proficiency assessment is not as simple as a driving test which measures one person's performance with a pass or fail judgment. Most performance tests, oral proficiency test such as the OPI (the Oral Proficiency Interview) for instance, adopt a behavioural rating scale for scoring. Behavioural rating scales, in Brindley's words, "seek to define language ability globally in terms of features of 'real-life' performance and thus describe specific contexts of language use" (Brindley 1998, p. 112).

Despite the popularity received in the testing market, an influential test as OPI has experienced lots of skepticism on the validity of its level descriptors defined by ACTFL. Lantolf and Frawley (1985) questioned the analytic logic of the guidelines by saying that "the reductive definitions of the Guidelines have self-defined truth: they define the truth of each level". In other words, the Guidelines measure reality by definition because no empirical evidence for the gradation of linguistic criteria can be found. Like most behavioural rating scales, the ACTFL scale prescribes what the test designers think learners should be able to do by using a native-speaker norm rather than describes what learners actually do. Another objection to the use of the behavioural rating scale is its lack of diagnostic information. One of the most important functions of language tests is

to notify language teachers what strengths and weaknesses their learners bear. Geoff Brindley (1998), from the perspective of SLA, argued against the claims made by Galloway (1987), Griffin and Nix (1991), Graham (1993) and Ingram (1984) that the level descriptions of rating scales are learner norms-referenced and therefore describe language acquisitional or developmental processes. In line with Lantolf and Frawley's view, Brindley argued that no studies in SLA were found to verify the above-mentioned claims.

By examining the ability levels expressed in terms of text types, task difficulty and skill hierarchy in rating scales, Brindley further questioned the relationship between the proficiency defined in the ACTFL Guidelines and what is tested in the OPI. As Alderson (1991b cited in Brindley 1998) pointed out, "if descriptors are to be meaningful characterizations of ability, then they should be able to be related to actual performance." As mentioned before, the ACTFL Guidelines or any other holistic rating scales measure language proficiency by definition. The method of defining the units of measurement seems to be the method we use to measure most of the things in the world. We define the standard rule such as the metric system so that we can measure height and length. However, mental constructs are not like physical characteristics which we can observe directly. Is the proficiency defined in each level of the rating scales related to the performance in a test situation? Are the intervals between the different levels equal? Is there a hierarchy of text types and skills? Does the performance on higher proficiency tasks subsume lower ones? Moreover, there are problems of achieving inter-rater reliability since different raters may apply the descriptors of each level or perceive the

performance differently, though this is likely to be solved by extending the time for rater training.

After reviewing the literature on the relationship between the ability levels and skills hierarchy, Brindley makes the following conclusions:

- Expert judges may perceive difficulty of the items differently from other judges and from the descriptions of task and skill hierarchy in rating scales. (Alderson 1990)
- Higher-level items failed to show better discrimination than lower-level ones which may be because they not only are dependent on language ability but also measure general knowledge or reasoning. (Buck 1990)
- What makes the items or tasks difficult may be the wording of the questions rather than the skills being tested. (Pollitt, et al. 1985; Lumley 1993)

By applying a Rasch approach, the FACETS programs in a scalar analysis, Kenyon and Stansfield (1996) conducted a study that compared foreign language teachers' ratings of speaking task difficulty with the level posited by the ACTFL Guidelines. The researchers looked for empirical evidence for an underlying scale that conformed to the ACTFL Guidelines to support the validity of the Guidelines "as a description of developing competence in a second language." The findings of their research showed a close correspondence between the teachers' scaling and the Guidelines. Nevertheless, as Brindley argued, this agreement cannot validate the scale descriptors until further evidence showing that "the predicted order is also reflected in actual test performance...It cannot automatically be assumed that self-assessed difficulty will match task difficulty under actual test conditions." His argument was justified by Hamp-Lyons and Mathias'

study (1994) of essay prompt difficulty. The researchers found that judges' predictions of difficulty were almost totally the reverse of the scoring patterns revealed in the test data.

SLA and language assessment

What we need to know if we want to develop good scales is not linguistic knowledge of how language is structured, what all the features of language are; we need to know how somebody acquires language, that is, what the developmental stages in language acquisition are. (de Jong 1988 cited in Brindley 1998, p. 130)

1. The ZISA group's Multidimensional Model

The previous discussion proved from various perspectives that the descriptors of behavioural rating scales failed to describe language development as they claimed. Since it is important for language teachers and tests developers to understand how languages develop for diagnosing purposes, is there any possibility to take a developmental approach to language assessment? The answer is assertive.

Based on the empirical analysis of the developmental sequence for German L2 word-order acquisition, the first attempt to establish a preliminary profile as an assessment procedure derives from the research of Clahsen (1985).

Another significant work in this area is proposed by Pienemann, Johnston and Brindley (Pienemann et al. 1988). In this article, the authors presented an observation procedure for assessing the adult ESL (English as a second language) syntactic and morphological development. Both of the above-mentioned procedures are theoretically based on the multidimensional model of second language acquisition developed by

Meisel, Clahsen and Pienemann (1981) and extended to ESL acquisition by Pienemann and Johnston (1987a). Before looking into the ESL assessment procedure, some references to the key findings of the following research group which establishes the multidimensional model should be reviewed.

The ZISA (Zweitspracherwerb italienischer und spanischer Arbeiter = second language acquisition of Italian and Spanish immigrant workers) project comprised a cross-sectional study of 45 adults, a one-year longitudinal study of three 8-year-old children and a two-year longitudinal study with 12 adult learners. This project used interview data of the naturalistic acquisition of German as an SL (GSL) by speakers of Spanish and Italian. The findings of the ZISA project that formed the basis of the assessment procedures are as follows:

➤ German word order development

It was found that both children and adult learners in the research project acquired the German word order following a five-stage developmental sequence, after the production of isolated words and formulae in an initial period.

SVO < ADV < SEP < INV < V-END

As pointed out by Pienemann and his colleagues, these learners accumulate the above-mentioned rules. In other words, “the structure of a given interlanguage can be described as the sum of all the rules the learner has acquired up to a certain point.” (Pienemann et al. 1988) What makes this research group’s work a significant contribution to SLA research and language assessment is that it proposes a cognitive explanation for the GSL word-order data, and this explanation has potential generalizability to other

developmental sequences and to other languages such as ESL, Swedish SL and Japanese SL (Larsen-Freeman 1991).

The sequence in the acquisition of the GSL word order has been explained by the three speech-processing strategies proposed by Clahsen (1984). These strategies are Canonical Order Strategy (COS), Initialization-Finalization Strategy (IFS) and Subordinate Clause Strategy (SCS). The sequence of GSL word-order acquisition of L2 learners using various combinations of the processing strategies at different stages is illustrated by the following table.

GSL Word Order Stage			Permissible permutations	Controlling Strategies
X+4	(V-END)	Sub-categorization	[w x y z]	[-COS, -IFS, -SCS]
X+3	(INV)	Internal movement	[w x y z]	[-COS, -IFS, +SCS]
X+2	(SEP)	Disruption and movement to salient position	[w ^x _y z]	[-COS, +IFS, +SCS]
X+1	(ADV)	Initialization/finalization	[w x y z]	[+COS, +IFS, +SCS]
X	(SVO)	Canonical order	[w x y z]	[+COS, +SCS]

Table 1. Processing Strategies Underlying the GSL Word Order Stages, based on Larsen-Freeman 1991, p. 273.

➤ The Multidimensional Model

Another influential contribution of the ZISA group is the development of a multidimensional model. Based on the empirical evidence provided by ZISA data, the research group discovered that there were two systematic and independent dimensions in SLA: development and variation.

Although the development of L2 acquisition follows certain invariant sequences, different learners may find his/her own path on the way to acquiring the target language. Such differences do not conflict with the other dimension of developmental sequence. Pienemann and his colleagues (1988) exemplified the concept of learner's orientation by demonstrating variations involving copula insertion. Learners who are simplifying-oriented may produce equational sentences instead of the correct form (e.g. "he good") while the other type of learners labeled norm-oriented produce the sentence in the correct form immediately. These different types of learners display the variational features systematically not only in copula insertion but also in other structures for communicative effectiveness. (The copula "is" in the demonstrated sentence is a grammatical device, which is redundant in the sense of communication.) Given the "incorrect" form of interlanguage structures emergent across stages of the developmental sequence, it can be certified that accuracy cannot be used as a measure of linguistic development. The L2 developmental sequence is a dynamic process. The notion that emergence of the interlanguage structure rather than mastery of the structure accounts for the evidence of development has a significant meaning in constructing the L2 assessment procedure to be introduced later.

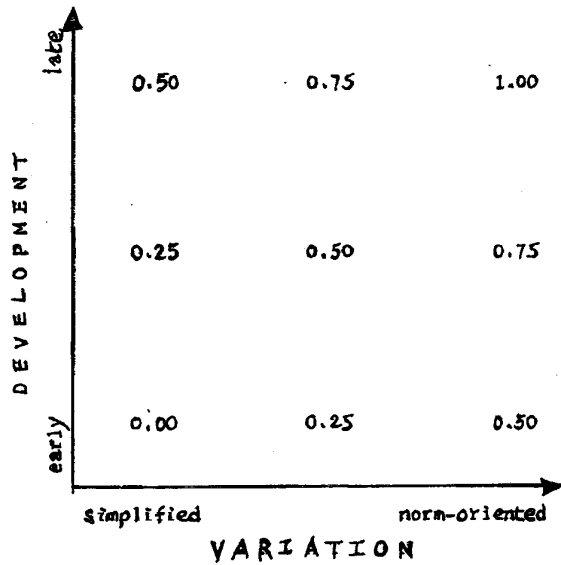


Figure 1. A multidimensional model of second language acquisition, extracted from Pienemann, Johnston and Brindley 1988, p. 223.

2. ESL development and profile analysis

The processing constraints in the development of GSL word-order sequence were claimed to be universal. They were claimed to be able to control the development of other interlanguages. The application of the model was done by Pienemann and Johnston (1987a) to sketch the developmental sequence of ESL (English as a second language). The hypothesis in their study was tested against the empirical evidence provided in Johnston's (1985) cross-sectional study involving adult Vietnamese and Polish learners for the acquisition of ESL. The prediction of the order of acquisition is outlined in the following:

Stage 1: single words, formulae

Stage 2: SVO, plural marking

Stage 3: Do Fronting, Topicalization, Adverb Preposing, Neg+V

Stage 4: Pseudo-Inversion, Yes/No-Inversion

Stage 5: 3rd-Sgl-S, Aux-2nd, D-2nd.

(Pienemann, Johnston and Brindley 1988, p. 228)

The eleven grammatical structures plus single words and formulae which have been identified as indicators of a developmental stage were selected to be monitored and scored in the proposed assessment procedure.

It was mentioned previously in this paper that Clahsen's (1985) preliminary procedure for assessing GSL word order adopted the methodology of profile analysis. So does the procedure devised by Pienemann and his colleagues (1988) for assessing ESL morpho-syntactic structures. Profile analysis was used in clinical linguistics where the subject's linguistic behaviour was charted and discriminated for diagnostic and remedial purposes. The most useful profiles, according to Crystal (1981), "are those which are based on an acquisitional dimension, because they can then be used simultaneously for assessment and remediation". As Clahsen remarked, linguistic profiles fulfilled the requirements he proposed as follows for L2 assessment procedures:

- A. The evaluation of oral L2 speech production should be at the core of an assessment procedure which aims at identifying the general developmental level of the learners' interlanguage.
- B. The assessment should be based on a representative sample of spontaneous speech which is gathered in a natural communicative situation.
- C. The procedure should attempt to provide a comprehensive description of the learners' interlanguage.

- D. The procedure should focus on the evaluation of syntax and morphology.
- E. The procedure should grade the linguistic structures used by the learners in terms of the order of acquisition in natural L2 development.

(Clahsen 1985, p. 286-288)

Profiling approaches have been developed and used in the assessment of language disorders, such as aphasia. As noted by Clahsen (1985, p. 292), profiling approaches “were to provide a detailed linguistic assessment of grammatical disability and to suggest a remedial approach.” Clahsen distinguished profile analyses from formal tests by saying that “profiles are informal evaluation procedures of language behaviour which attempt to be comprehensive in the linguistic domains under investigation.” (Clahsen, *ibid.* p. 293)

The three characteristics of linguistic profiles described by Crystal (1982) and Clahsen (1985) corresponded to Pienemann, Johnston and Brindley’s view on language assessment: “Descriptive criteria are objective; developmental criteria are psychologically plausible and interactive criteria are based on natural language use” (Pienemann et al. 1988, p. 231).

The oral observation procedure proposed by Pienemann, Johnston and Brindley (1988) has been tested for its reliability by looking at the extent of the agreement between the assessors’ actual observations, their final ratings and the results of the independent linguistic analysis. Although the correlations might not be satisfactory due to some errors caused by inadequate training of the assessors and wrong interpretations of the actual observations, they were significant. The linguistic observation procedure as a shorthand version of a profile analysis avoided the impracticality of profile analyses which were constrained by time, expertise, training and costs.

With the advance of information technology through the years, this procedure has been developed into a computer-assisted procedure for screening speech samples collected from language learners to assess their level of language development as compared to standard patterns in the acquisition of the target language (Mackey1991). IL data collection and elicitation for analysis is run by administering a communicative task that involves an interactive conversation between the researcher and the informant or between two informants. The naturally occurred speech sample is coded on-line using the Rapid Profile software. To analyze the data, the analyst simply clicks on the boxes which indicate the emergence or absence of targeted features on the computer interface. The information entered by the analyst is stored in the computer and then calculated by the software for locating the development level of the learner. The result of the analysis (profile) yielded by the system benefits language teachers in mapping and diagnosing the featured grammatical structures that have /not been developed by the learners.

3. Criticism of the Multidimensional Model and the developmental approach

Whenever there is a theory formed, there is challenge and criticism of it. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 284-286) listed some problems with the Multidimensional Model, albeit with a claim that they were limitations rather than flaws. The first and the most serious problem was that the model did not specify how language was acquired as opposed to constraints on acquisition. The second problem concerned the falsifiability of the predictive framework, such as early chunked morphology. Also, some may question the discrete point scoring method used by the profiling procedure based on the Model

even though the rationale for the selection of the items is proposed. The criticism in the following by Ingram is a collection of others:

[T]hey involve an unnatural, largely decontextualized and mechanical use of language use where meaning is much subordinated to form; they differ fundamentally from more “direct” tests because their focus is still on the piece of knowledge or skill being tested and their aim is to discriminate amongst the learners rather than specifically to assess their proficiency. (Ingram 1985, p. 236)

Despite the criticism of discrete point testing, the targeted morpho-syntactic structures for assessment are indicators of a developmental stage. Besides, discrete point testing retains value for diagnostic purposes with the fact that one thing is tested at a time. The definition of “proficiency” in the above quote may be different from how it is defined by the ZISA group.

In a nutshell, the Multidimensional Model and the ZISA group have made significant contributions to the study of SLA. This can be further supported by the following remark of Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 283):

[T]he ZISA project was one of the first to relinquish the prevailing target-language orientation of the 1970s, thereby avoiding what Bley-Vroman has called the ‘comparative fallacy in IL studies...they redefined acquisition (of a form) as the first appearance of a form in an IL, this and the subsequent evolution of form-function relationships being treated from the same learner-oriented perspective that long been taken for granted by creolists...”

As pedagogical implications are concerned, the predictive power, one of the greatest strengths of the Multidimensional Model promises the practical applications in syllabus design, teaching methodology and language assessment (Larsen-Freeman and Long 1991, p. 287). First, the developmental stages can be used in sequencing items in a syllabus. Second, language teachers can utilize knowledge of developmental stages and variational

features as a diagnostic resource for offering remedial help. In the same vein, Pienemann and others identified the use and misuse of their linguistic profiling procedure by saying that “it will not predict the future learning success of the testee. It is aimed at providing teachers with information concerning a given learner’s developmental stage and hence at assisting them to make teaching learnable” (Pienemann, et al. 1988). A third application to language assessment harmonizes the main issue discussed in this paper. Although there are so many proficiency tests claimed as ‘IL-sensitive’ or ‘IL-based’, their validity has been found to be questionable for the lack of empirical evidence. However, it has been proved that the oral observation procedure theoretically based on the Multidimensional Model capitalizes on research findings about developmental sequences in SLA.

Pedagogical implications: constructing an acquisition-based syllabus

The predictive framework of the Multidimensional Model forms the basis of the Teachability Hypothesis. According to the Teachability Hypothesis, the course of second language development cannot be altered by factors external to the learner. (Pienemann, et al. 1988) That means the developmental stage cannot be influenced by formal instruction. However, this does not imply that instruction cannot make any difference to learning or guarantee learning to be achieved naturally by the internal mechanisms. As argued by Pienemann (1985), “foreign language teaching has to conform to the constraints of learnability/teachability. Teaching can be effective only when the learner is at the right stage for the instruction because a structure learned at one stage is a necessary prerequisite for later stages”. Based on these findings in SLA development, Pienemann

(1985) proposed a structural/functional syllabus, which he claimed, was “a general framework for a psychologically valid grading of teaching material”. The guidelines for grading (the sequence of the material presented) are summarized as follows:

1. Do not demand a learning process which is impossible at a given stage. (i.e. order of teaching objectives be in line with stages of acquisition)
2. But do not introduce deviant forms.
3. The general input may contain structures which were not introduced for production.

General Input	Developing Interlanguage				Learning Objectives		
	structure		functions		questions	Temporal reference	etc
The general input contains the learning objectives plus the ‘structural consequences’	Word order	Morphol.	Questions	etc			
	—	—	ellip. Questions Wh+x	—	ellip. Questions Wh+x	— connectives	—
	—	—	Intonate. Marked qu.	—	Intonate. Marked qu.	—	—
	verb-sep.	ge+V+t	Wh-quest. without INV	—	0	pres.perf. (+ verb-sep)	—
	INV	—	Wh-quest. with INV	—	Wh-quest. with INV	—	—
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Table 3. Communicative syllabus and interlanguage development, from Pienemann 1985, p. 67.

So far, we can almost glimpse the picture of how SLA research, language testing and language teaching weave together with the string of the developmental theory. To

apply what has been discussed above to a real-life situation, a language teacher may first conduct a profiling procedure to locate the present stage of his/her learner; then constructs a learnable syllabus in accordance with the test results; finally, post-tests the learner to examine the effectiveness of the instruction and the achievement the learner has attained.

Conclusion

From this discussion, we have found evidence of the interface between SLA research, language testing and language teaching. Our next step is to find out the way to increase the feasibility and applicability of the profiling procedure. It is likely to see in the near future an application of the oral procedure introduced in this paper to assessing written performance of L2 learners. Hopefully, the research in computational linguistics and corpus linguistics may be able to develop an automatic IL parsing program to replace the human assessors used in the Rapid Profile system. Moreover, it is also expectable to expand the breadth and depth of the current procedure that focuses on the development of morpho-syntactic structures domain to the development of other components of language ability, such as discourse, pragmatic competence and higher level of sentence complexity.

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Appendices

1. Task variation (from Pienemann, 1998, p. 280)

Task	Structure	Participants
(1) Habitual Actions	3SG S	Subject + Researcher
<p>This task involved a set of photographs depicting “a day in the life of someone such as a librarian or a police officer”. Subjects were asked questions such as “what does a librarian do every day?”.</p>		
(2) Story Completion	Wh Questions	Subject + Researcher
<p>Subjects were shown a set of pictures, which were in order, and were then given instructions to find a story behind the pictures. They were encouraged to ask for information to enable them to guess the story. One example of this task used pictures of a man who had been given poison and who needed to find an antidote.</p>		
(3) Informal Interview	General	Subject + Researcher
<p>Subjects were interviewed informally and with sensitivity by the researcher. The situation was designed to be as close as possible to a friendly chat. The researcher asked questions of the subject and subjects were encouraged to ask questions of the researcher as well.</p>		
(4) Picture Sequencing	Questions	Subject + Subject
<p>Subjects were each given part of a sequence of pictures. Together the parts made up one story. The pictures were lettered so that they could be identified for discussion. In order to sequence the pictures with the story, questions had to be formed and responses given which were sometimes negative. An example of this task was a story which involved a man being assaulted by three different people on his way home from work.</p>		
(5) Picture Differences	Negations/Questions	Subject + Subject
<p>Subjects were given on picture each of the “Spot the Difference” variety. They were</p>		

told that there were a number of differences. They ha to ask questions and make positive and negative responses in order to find the difference.

(6) Meet Partner Questions Subject + Subject

Subjects in dyads asked each other questions to find out information and then were given the opportunity to introduce each other to the researcher.

2. RP labels: L2 English Developmental Stages, extracted from: <http://groups.uni-paderborn.de/rapidprofile/docs/Stages.pdf>

Stage	Phenomena	Examples
6	Indirect Question (SVO)	I wonder what he wants .
5	Neg/Aux-2 nd -? Aux-2 nd -? 3sg-s-	Why didn't you tell me? Why can't she come? Why did she eat that? What will you do? Peter likes bananas.
4	Copula S (x) Wh-copula S (x) V-Particle	Is she at home? Where is she? Turn it off!
3	Do-SV (O)-? Aux SV (O)-? Wh-SV- (O)-? Adverb-1 st Poss (Pronoun) Object (Pronoun)	Do he live here? Can I go home? Where she went? What you want? Today he stay here. I show you my garden. This is your pencil. Mary called him.
2	S neg V (O) SVO SVO-Question -ed -ing Plural-s (Noun) Poss-s (Noun)	Me no live here./I don't live here. Me live here. You live here? John played. Jane going. I like cats. Pat's cat is fat.
1	Words Formulae	Hello, Five Dock, Central How are you? Where is X? What's your name?

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THE EVOLUTION OF ENGLISH WRITING SYSTEM: A REVIEW OF SPELLING REFORM

LI-TING CHENG

Abstract

Today English is an extremely popular international language in the world. The issue of English writing system has been brought up by certain researchers in recent years. As Cook (2004, p. 1) puts, “English writing system is connected to our lives in many ways, not something that is an ancillary to other aspects of language but vitally important to almost everything we do, from signing our wills to sending a text message.” Therefore, this article will review the evolution of English writing system, focusing on English spelling in particular. It begins with historical changes in the English writing system, variation in the English writing system comes next, and English spelling reform is discussed in the end.

Key words: *English writing system, Old English, Middle English, Modern English, spelling reform*

Introduction

What is a writing system? There are two distinct meanings in ‘writing system’: one attached to general ideas of writing and the other to specific languages (Cook and Bassetti 2005). According to Coulmas (1999, p. 560), in the first sense, a writing system is “a set of visible or tactile signs used to represent units of language in a systemic way” and related to the terms of ‘script’ and ‘orthography’. A script is “the graphic form of the units of a writing system” (Coulmas 2003, p. 35), namely, its actual physical form – letters or characters; on the other hand, ‘orthography’ is the set of rules for using a script



in a particular language (i.e. the English orthography for Roman alphabet) like symbol-sound correspondences, capitalization, hyphenation, punctuation, and so on. The second sense of writing system overlaps with orthography by means of referring to the set of rules used in a particular language for spelling, punctuation etc., that is, ‘the English writing system’.

There is no doubt that today English is an extremely popular international language in the world. The issue of English writing system has been brought up by certain researchers in recent years. As Cook (2004, p. 1) puts it, “English writing system is connected to our lives in many ways, not something that is an ancillary to other aspects of language but vitally important to almost everything we do, from signing our wills to sending a text message.” Therefore, this article will describe the evolution of English writing system, focusing on English spelling in particular. It begins with historical changes in the English writing system, variation in the English writing system comes next, and English spelling reform is discussed in the end.

Historical changes in the English writing system Before English

It’s uncertain when humans first started using language and how it spread. There is a large gap between 50, 000 years ago, when humans probably started using language, and the time from which we have historical evidence for language in the form of writing (Gelderen 2006). Three types of writing systems are as follows: the first type of writing system, where one word is expressed in one symbol, is named logographic; the second type of writing system is syllabic, where the symbol represents the pronunciation of a syllable; the third type of writing is phonetic or alphabetic – one symbol stands for one

sound. Some languages use a combination of writing systems, such as Egyptian using three systems. English is also starting to include some syllabic symbols, for example, *CUL8R* for 'see you later'.

It is believed that the sound-letter correspondence has started in the Semitic languages of the eastern Mediterranean about 1700 BC, leading to scripts for Hebrew, Arabic and Phoenician that used letters to correspond only to consonants and were written from right to left. We can see that English is influenced by some early alphabets. Take the Phoenician alphabet as an instance, the letters have been rotated 90° clockwise,  as A and  as B.

Old English (450-1150)

The English language had its start about 449 when Germanic tribes came to England and settled down there. They pushed some of the native inhabitants westwards; however, initially they co-existed with them and adopted some customs and possibly linguistic features. There were Latin influences on English by missionaries from Rome as well as French influences after the Norman invasion in 1066 during this period. Some works in Old English are shown in the following Table 1.

Table 1. Some works in Old English

Beowulf. Mixed dialect Northumbrian / West Saxon; manuscript from c. 1000 but based on earlier version.

Lindisfarne Gospels. Northumbrian interlinear gloss; c.950.

Rushworth Glosses. Interlinear gloss; c. 970. Matthew is Mercian; Mark, Luke and John are Northumbrian.

The Junius Manuscripts. Written between the 7th and 10th centuries (some argue partly by the Caedmon poet); compiled towards the late 10th; contains *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Christ and Satan*.

The Exeter Book. Early poetry; contains *Riddles, Wulf and Eadwacer, The Wanderer, and the Seafarer.*

Gregory's Pastoral Care. Early West Saxon, late 9th century, ascribed to King Alfred.

Boethius and Orosius. Early West-Saxon, ascribed to King Alfred.

Homilies, by Aelfric. West Saxon, circa 1000.

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Many versions, one composed in Peterborough that continues to 1154.

(Gelderen 2006, p. 48)

The manuscripts are copied and illustrated by the scribes who worked mainly in monasteries, and they are often exquisite work of art. Usually the originals were written on vellum, expensive thin leather, and thus books were owned by a monastery, a church, or a rich person and were typically versions of the Bible, prayer books, school books, manuals of various kinds, and music. Take Lindisfarne Gospels for example, it is written in Latin, using the Vulgate version made by St Jerome, who died in about 420. Lindisfarne Gospels contain the oldest surviving translation of the Gospels into the English language. In around 950-960 Aldred, a member of the Community of St Cuthbert, added his Old English translation between the lines of Latin.

The end of the Lindisfarne Gospels with the colophon was added by Aldred in the 950s or 960s. The script of the Gospels shown in the Figure 1 is a formal, time-consuming hand called 'half-uncial'. This was developed in the 7th century by Irish and Northumbrian scribes. The text is laid out per cola et commata, meaning that, instead of using punctuation marks, the length of the line is used to clarify the sense. If a sentence has ended, the rest of the line is left blank.

Figure 1. The text of Lindisfarne Gospels



The British Library Board

(Retrieved from <http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/lindisfarne/text.html#>)

In addition, Aldred's word-for-word translation between the lines ('the gloss') is in a less formal style. He uses a tiny, pointed Anglo-Saxon Style of lower-case lettering named 'minuscule'. Some of his glosses comment on the text as well as translating it. They show a concern with monastic reform and the abuse of clerical power.

Middle English (1150-1500)

Middle English is considered to start about 1150 when the synthetic character of Old English begins to change. For example, a number of case endings simplify and become *-e* in Middle English and this loss of endings make Middle English look 'modern'. Baugh and Cable (2002) indicate that only after 1300 does English reemerge as a language used for literature, the court and the church. In 1258, Henry III uses both English and French for an official proclamation and English gradually gains influence; in 1349, English is first used at Oxford University; and in 1362, Edward III opens Parliament in English. It is obvious that in the Early Middle English period, English is

not viewed as a prestigious language and its use needs to be defended. After 1300, the situation changes and many texts on different topics are written in English. The following is a list of works in Middle English provided in the Table 2:

Table 2. Some works in Middle English

The History of the Holy Rood Tree: West-Saxon, 12th century.

Ormulum: East Midlands, 12th century.

Katherine Group (e.g. *Katerine*, *Margarete*, *Juliene*, *Hali Meidhad* and *Sawles Warde*, but also *Ancrene Wisse* and some other texts): various manuscripts; e.g. Bodley 34; South West Midlands, early 13th century.

Layamon's *Brut*: *Caligula* and *Otho* manuscripts, now both considered to be from second half of the 13th century, (N) Worcestershire.

Cursor Mundi: various manuscripts; e.g. Cotton Ms: northern, 1300.

Gawain and the Green Knight, *St. Erkenwald*, *Pearl*, *Cleanness*, and *Patience*: assumed to be by the Gawain Poet, NW Midlands, mid 14th century.

Langland's *Piers Plowman*: West Midlands, late 14th century.

Morte d'Arthur: East Midlands, late 14th century.

Chaucer's the *Canterbury Tales*, *Boethius*, and *Astrolabe*: Southern, late 14th century.

Wycliff and followers: Midlands, late 14th century.

Chancery Documents: Southern, 14th and 15th century.

The York Plays: Northern, 15th century.

The Paston Letters: Norfolk, 15th century.

(Gelderen 2006, p. 113)

Heer (1974) suggests that some Middle English works offer an idea of daily life in the towns and castles, churches and monasteries. They are written on vellum before paper is available sometime in the 12th century. Each Middle English text is somewhat unique. For instance, the *t* in words such as *Artur*, *Antony*, and *Katerine* changes to *th*, like *Arthur* in *Gawain*, remaining to this day. During Middle English, the *æ* and *ð* spellings are replaced relatively early by *a* and *th/h* respectively. *h* is replaced by the *th* used in French sources in late Middle English. Before *h* is replaced, it looks like *y*, thus, the writing of *the* as *ye* in *ye olde shoppe*. More examples of the changes in spelling during the Middle English period are as follows: the *cw* in *cwene* and *cwic* changes to *qu* and the

u in *mus* changes to *ou*, and both of these changes could be due to loans like *question* and *mountain* and by the influence of French scribes on the spelling. Table 3 summarizes the changes of spelling during the Middle English period.

Table 3. Some Old to Middle English spelling changes

OE	ME	OE	ME
cw	qu	c	ch, c, and k
hw	wh/w/qu	u	ou
<u>b/ð</u>	th	h	3/gh
<u>sc</u>	sh		

(Gelderen 2006, p. 117)

Early Modern English (1500-1700)

This period is known as the Renaissance, an intellectual and cultural development initially inspired by the desire to revive Greek and Latin culture. It is a time of freedom of ideas. To language, it means freedom in creating and borrowing words. During this period, English goes on to become more analytic.

Take Shakespeare – Richard II transcribed in the Extract 1 as an instance:

Extract 1 Shakespeare – Richard II

This royall Throne of Kings, this sceptred Isle,
 This earth of Maiesty, this seate of Mars,
 This other Eden, demy paradise,
 This Fortresse built by Nature for her selfe,
 Against infection, and the hand of warre: 5
 This happy breed of men, this little world,
 This precious stone, set in the siluer sea,
 Which serues it in the office of a wall,
 Or as a Moate defensiuie to a house,
 Against the enuy of lesse happier Lands, 10
 This blessed plot, this earth, this Realme, this England,
 This Nurse, this teeming wombe of Royall Kings,
 Fear'd by their breed, and famous for their birth,
 Renowned for their deeds, as farre from home,
 For Christian seruice, and true Chiualrie, 15

As is the sepulcher in stubborne {Iury}
 Of the Worlds ransome, blessed {Maries} Sonne.
 This Land of such deere soules, this deere- deere Land,
 Deere for her reputation through the world,
 Is now Leas'd out (I dye pronouncing it) 20
 Like to a Tenement or pelting Farme.
 England bound in with the triumphant sea,
 Whose rocky shore beates backe the enuious siedge
 Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
 With Inky blottes, and rotten Parchment bonds. 25
 That England, that was wont to conquer others,
 Hath made a shamefull conquest of it selfe.
 Ah! Would the scandal vanish with my life,
 How happy then were my ensuing death? (II, i)
 (Adapted from Gelderen 2006, p. 161)

In the Extract 1, it is clear that there is a *u* where Modern English has *v*: *siluer*.

Besides, some word-final *-e*, as in *Moate*, *farre*, *ransome*, and *Farme*, and a few other minor points like double *-ll* in *royall*, *shamefull*, and *scandal*. [s] is also spelled either as *s* or resembling an *f*, which depends its position in the word. Furthermore, varied spellings of the same word are presented in this passage; say, *dye* (1.20) is elsewhere spelled *die* and *farre* (1.14) *far*. In Early Modern English, it is obvious that capital letters are employed more frequently than in Middle English, where they only occur at the beginning of the line. Shakespeare does capitalize nouns and sometimes adjectives.

Modern English (1700-present)

In general, the spelling is relatively stable in this period; nevertheless, there are still variant spellings in formal writing, such as honor and honour, iournal and journal, magic and magick, behaviour and behavior, and vnitie and unity. Webster's spelling books and dictionary published in the 1800s list forms which are sometimes different from the British ones. By the 1850s, spelling is standardized on both sides of the Atlantic. However, there are a number of attempts at spelling reform by the editors of the Chicago

Tribune, George Bernard Shaw, Mark Twain, and so forth. At present, we can say that spelling is relatively standardized; hence, it's not easy to get a letter shown in the Extract 2.

Extract 2

We instinktivly shrink from eny chaenj in whot iz familiar; and whot kan be mor familiar dhan dhe form ov wurdz dhat we hav seen and riten mor tiemz dhan we kan possibly estimate? We taek up a book printed in Amerika, and "honor" and "center" jar upon us every tiem we kum akros dhem; nae, eeven to see "forever" in plaes of "for ever" atrakets our atenshon in an unplezant wae.
(Taken from <http://www.e-speec.com/new.htm>)

The fragment in Extract 2 is named 'New Spelling', suggested by a British and American spelling society and accepted as the standard by the British Parliament in 1949. It seems that there are not many serious attempts at spelling reform at the moment; as a matter of fact, spelling may be getting more codified because of spell checker on our computers.

Variation in the English writing system

British and American spelling styles

The English language is used by plenty of people all around the world, including native speakers and second language users. Therefore, English has adapted itself to different countries and different uses. It happens to the spoken English, but not to written English. For instance, the New York Times, the Star (Malaysia), the Daily Nation (Kenya), the Herald Sun (Australia), it is impossible to tell where they come from in terms of the English writing system alone. Nonetheless, it does not mean that there is complete uniformity within the English writing system. The most obvious variation that

people are aware of is that between British and American spelling (Cook 2004, p. 179-180). Some evidence is shown as follows.

British <-our> versus American <-or>

British spelling prefers the <-our> ending, American the <-or> (e.g. ‘colour’ and ‘color’, ‘honour’ and ‘honor’). A similar rule applies to <oul> in some word. British spelling tends to keep the <u> while American to drop it, such as ‘mould’ and ‘mold’, and ‘smoulder’ and ‘smolder’.

British <-re> versus American <-er>

British style uses <-re> but American chooses <-er>. Say ‘centre’ and ‘center’, ‘theatre’ and ‘theater’, and ‘litre’ and ‘liter’. Carney (1994) points out that one advantage of the British <-re> is that it allows a distinction between ‘agent’ nouns like ‘meter’ (instrument for measuring things) and other nouns like ‘metre’ (unit of length). On the other hand, Venezky (1999) indicates that the American <-er> is not extended to derived forms such as ‘central’ (‘central’) and ‘theatrical’ (‘theatrical’).

British <-ise> versus American <-ize>

British spelling uses both <-ise> and <-ize> where American prefers <-ize> in verbs and verb-derived forms. Usually American ‘apologize’ is ‘apologise’ in British spelling, ‘recognize’ ‘recognise’ and ‘criticize’ ‘criticise’. The <-ize> form is clearly American in many cases, but there are some American spellings with <-ise>, such as ‘advertise’, ‘improvise’ and ‘televise’. Likewise, British style has <-ize> in ‘capsize’ and ‘seize’. As McArthur (1992, p. 43) puts it, among British publishers <-ize> “is preferred by Cassell, Collins, Longman, Oxford, <-ise> by the Readers’ Digest (UK); Chambers has <-ise> for its native-speaker dictionaries, <-ize> for EFL learners’ dictionary”.

British <-ce> versus American <-se>

British style has <-ce> in many words that have <-se> in American style. (e.g. British ‘defence’ and American ‘defense’, ‘offence’ and ‘offense’, and ‘pretence’ and ‘pretense’.) In some cases British English signals nouns versus verbs by the <-ce> / <-se> contrast, such as nouns ‘advice’, ‘practice’, ‘licence’ and ‘prophecy’ versus verbs ‘advise’, ‘practise’, ‘license’ and ‘prophesy’.

Individual words

Some words vary arbitrarily between British spelling and American one. One group of words alternates <-ogure> and <-og>. British ‘dialogue’, ‘prologue’ and ‘catalogue’ versus American ‘dialog’, ‘prolog’ and ‘catalog’. A list of other differences of the two styles of spelling is given in the box below.

Some differences between ‘British’ and ‘American’ spelling (tendencies rather than absolute)					
American	British	American	British	American	British
jail	goal/jail	mustache	moustache	airplane	aeroplane
check	cheque	sulfur	sulphur	karat	carat
curb	kerb	program	programme/ program	cozy	cosy
plow	plough	wagon	wagon/ waggon	aluminum	aluminium
skeptic	sceptic			ax	axe
draft	draught	tire	tyre	pajamas	pyjamas
gray	grey/gray	z (/zi:/)	z (/zed/)	namable	nameable
judgement	judgment/ judgement	carcase	carcass/ carcase		

(Taken from Cook 2004, p. 182)

Spelling reform

Generally speaking, spelling reform rests on a belief that ideal writing system conforms to the alphabetic principle which written letters correspond to phonemes, with its corollaries, the one-to-one principle that each letter links to a single sound and the linearity principle that letters occur in the same sequence as sounds. Venezky (1999, p. 4) addresses that “English orthography is not a failed phonetic transcription system, invented out of madness or perversity. Instead, it is a more complex system that preserves bits of history (i.e. etymology), facilitates understanding, and also translates into sound.” Also, Sproat (2000) states that:

English is one of the few major languages that has been blessed not to have had any large-scale formally sanctioned spelling reforms during its history, this despite the numerous attempts on the part of various individuals for the past three hundred years.
(Sproat 2000, p. 192)

Since the 16th century, scholars have put forward alternatives to the current spelling of their day, going from John Cheke to George Bernard Shaw, working on a greater sound/symbol correspondence (Baron 2000).

The Cut Spelling system

Currently, the Cut Spelling system is advocated by the Simplified Spelling Society, modernizing English spelling by eliminating unnecessary letters. The advocates of spelling reform believe in the alphabetical principle “An ideal spelling system matches letters to speech-sounds” (Simplified Spelling Society 2001). The general idea of the Cut Spelling system is shown in the box below:

Cut Spelling system
Rule 1: Cut letters irrelevant to the sound: hed, dout, caut, wen, nife...etc.
Rule 2a: Cut unstressed vowels before L/M/N/R: pedl, womn, vicr, caml, systm, victm, pistl, fathm, reasn, consl, albm, glamr

Rule 2b: Cut vowels in regular endings: washd, washs, washng, washbl
Rule 3: Write most double consonants single: eb, lok, wel, botl, hopd, hopng, acomodate
Substitute letters: <f> for <gh>/<ph>: ruf, fotograf <j> for 'soft' <g>: jinjr, juj <y> for <igh>: sy, syt, syn
Use fewer capital and apostrophes: Only proper names with capitals: <i>France/french, Paris/parisian, Satrn/satrdy</i> . Apostrophes for linking words: <i>she'd, it's, we'l, let's</i> , not for showing omission or possession: <i>oclok, hadn't, Freds house, our neibrs houses</i> .

(Based on the Simplified Spelling Society Handbook, Cook 2004, p. 173)

The Cut Spelling System would have to demonstrate that reduced forms are as easy and rapid to use through the lexical route as their spoken counterparts. There are some questions needed considered, such as whether losing the small number of lexical spelling is an advantage, whether the current accessibility of written English to people around the world regardless of dialect would not be sacrificed, and so on.

The Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC)

Spelling changes, like anything else, with the modern technology developing. How does English writing adapt to the age of the computer? Baron (1998) proposes that “Computer-Mediated Communication as a force in language change.” The overall label for language used by means of the computer is Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). We start to use CMC in e-mails, chat-rooms and text messages. A pervasive convention in CMC is the use of letters or numbers as words. For example, 'c u l8er' is for 'see you later'. Devotees of texting claim this shortens messages to get them within the permitted 160 characters and make it faster to key them in. Another notable convention is the use of initial letters of phrases –

'ASAP' 'as soon as possible', 'LOL' 'laughing out loud', 'BRB' 'be right back', and even 'TANSTAAFL' 'there ain't no such thing as a free lunch'. Moreover, the use of emotions is one of conventions in CMC. For instance, starting as sideways face cartoons made with punctuation marks :>), they have evolved in many chat-rooms to little cartoons ☺ appearing whenever the user types in 'happy face' etc – a totally new way to convey emotion in written English lacking the expressive powers of spoken intonation.

Conclusion

We can say that the English writing system has changed in complex ways over a thousand years. It may change because of phonological change, in response to new vocabulary introduced from other language, or to accommodate new technology like the printing press and the computer (Cook 2004). No matter how the system changes, the purpose of it remains the same, that is, communication. Baron (2000, p.1) puts that “the written word is an integral part of contemporary communication.” It tells how significant written language is. Apart from written system, spoken language is another important factor to communication. In fact, some aspects of written language get involved in a relationship between written symbols and spoken sounds (sound-based writing) while other aspects of writing involve a direct relationship between written symbols and meanings (meaning-based writing). It shows the ties of written language and spoken sounds. Consequently, the link between the written and spoken language is the next area worth studying.

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WE CANNOT KNOW WHAT THE ANSWERS ARE, BUT THAT IN ITSELF IS AN ADVANTAGE: AN INTERVIEW WITH DR ALAN FIRTH

PETRA SCHOOF

Introduction

Dr. Alan Firth joined Newcastle University at the beginning of the summer term 2007 from the Department of Languages, Culture and Aesthetics at Alborg University, Denmark. His work in the field of discourse and communication has gained him a high reputation, particularly his view of a “reconceptualized” Second Language Acquisition – developed with Johannes Wagner - inspired controversy and lively discussions and made him one of the well-known and influential experts in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research. The following interview aims to give a brief idea of his area(s) of expertise, some first-hand information, to arouse interest and promote more detailed reading about the research of Conversation Analysis (CA) and Second Language Acquisition; finally the reader’s attention might be drawn to interesting research activities to join and explore.

Dr Firth’s areas of expertise include a variety of different activities; he wrote the textbook *On Location* for Teaching English as a Second / Foreign Language (S/FL), was a regular columnist on the Danish language teachers’ magazine *Sproglæreren*; he dealt with Sociolinguistics particularly investigating the language used in telephone helplines, and Pragmatics, with conversation analysis and intercultural and international communication and – as mentioned above - made a most influential contribution to the reconceptualization of SLA. Of course only a limited number of topics could be touched here; the conversation will be divided into three topical blocks.

Firstly, some central concepts of Dr Firth's writings focussing on English language use and learning will be addressed; keywords such as "learning-in-action" and "acquisition of language on the fly" that shed new light on the vision of English as a Lingua Franca will be considered. In 1997 Dr Firth introduced the expression of "monolithic elements in SLA" which will be the next aspects to focus on; the Second Language User would be a prominent topic of concern in this context, particularly as regards his / her use of the language, the teaching goal / target language combined with it and the question, if competence and performance can, or even should, be considered as separate entities. Following the "possibility that greater emic sensitivity towards identity categorization may, ..., prove to be profitable for the SLA researcher" (Firth and Wagner 1997, 297) instead of confining the observation focus on the non-native speaker viewed as a "defective communicator" (ibid, 288), the categorizations "Second Language Learner" ("L2 Learner") and "Non-Native Speaker" should be replaced by the term "Second Language User" ("L2 User") as introduced by Cook for a person who "uses the second language for real-life purposes" (Cook 2001, p.12).

In the second topical block Dr Firth's engagement as the manager / editor of the Internet forum *LangUse*, as the co-founder of the *Micro-Analysis of Verbal Interaction Network* MOVIN (with J. Wagner and J. Steensig) and the newly-founded *MARG* data group at Newcastle University (with Dr Chris Jenks) will be addressed.

The last but definitely not least focus of attention lies on two children's books Dr Firth published in the 1980s, *The Bermuda Triangle Mystery* (1987) and *The Loch Ness Mystery* (1989), both published in Copenhagen.

For a time reference frame, it might be interesting to know that the interview was carried out on 30th April 2007.

Interview

A.F. = Dr Alan Firth

I. = Interviewer (Petra Schoofs)

I. Dr Firth, as early as 1990 you already emphasized the importance of interaction in discourse study. In your latest paper (together with J. Wagner, to appear in December 2007) you are employing the expressions "learning-in-action" and "acquiring language on the fly". What would you consider to be the basic characteristics of language learning labelled like that?

A.F. Well, I think I have used these terms to emphasize the kind of situated and local feature of language learning as an alternative to conventionalised conceptions of learning in SLA, including SLA studies which are centrally interested in interaction, including in fact some of the SLA studies which use CA (= Conversation Analysis) in some of the very latest SLA studies. The idea is that we need to think carefully about how we conceptualize the notion of learning. Normally what happens in SLA is that we conceive of learning as something that is witnessable across time, in other words, it is recurrent and it looks as though there exists evidence that it has been established through this recurrence across the temporal scene and on this basis the research of SLA learning is taking place. But what is not explicated is: What do we mean by temporality? To what extent are we talking about recurrence? What I am saying is an alternative to that. I am not rejecting that; I am saying that we also need to conceive

of learning as a temporal occurrence that can be conceived as a “here and now” occurrence. People can demonstrate that they have learned something and indeed are learning something within the interaction itself. This is normally not seen as evidence of learning; you normally need to see something repeatedly and across repeated interaction. This is why it is so common and seen as critically important in SLA-studies to have longitudinal studies and in the 2004 special issue of the *Modern Language Journal* where CA was discussed as a way into SLA, longitudinality was a main theme of the discussion, specifically the extent that CA could deal with longitudinality. And again I think we need to think about longitudinality as something that takes place over days or months but also sequentially in an actual conversation. In my own research – and I have shown this in one of my latest papers, that one to be published in MLJ with Johannes Wagner – we can actually see learners or users using new language not only within an interaction but selectively using new forms of language and the selection criteria are in our particular case the interlocutors, so they take into account what the interlocutors know or what they assume the interlocutors would know and also what they experience the interlocutors to know. So they adjust their syntax or lexis according to certain referential terms according to the interlocutor’s presumed knowledge. You can actually see different forms of language being used in line with the various identities and assumed knowledge of the interlocutors; this is quite new in SLA.

I. If I have understood your point correctly, this does not only refer to the time the interaction takes place in but also to the surroundings.

A.F. Yes, it also refers for example to the identity and to what has been established discursively in the actual previous conversation, they are taking into account many different factors. One of the reasons why this is so important is that, and I think this is really something pretty new that could emerge from this, we tend to see learning in a close approximation to the native speaker norms whereas some of the data I have been looking at show that second language speakers will on occasions adjust their language in such a way that it even looks as though it is moving away from native speaker forms. They do this as a way of recipient designing their language performance. They choose to - and this is an expression I am using in the paper with Carolyn Baker and Mike Emissen in 2005 – *calibrate* for competence. They calibrate their language production in accordance with the perceived competence of their interlocutor. Which means that learning happens contrary to the Interlanguage conception of learning which says that it is linear; that it is progressive in the sense that it gets closer to the native speaker norm. The linear metaphor could be replaced by a kind of patchwork or quilt metaphor one might say, where learning occurs in different areas and in some cases it looks as though it is unlearned. It is not being unlearned in fact; this is I think where more traditional SLA scholars might turn to some instances where non-standard forms were adopted, whereas previously we have had evidence for standard forms being used. One might refer to this as “regression” for example or “unlearned” whereas what we had were perhaps instances of not unlearned forms, but of quite the opposite: learning how to use various forms in accordance with local demands of this particular interaction with this particular interlocutor in which case non-native or non-standard forms may be deemed by both participants to be more appropriate than standard forms. Our

examples of foreign language users show that they can use standard forms and non-standard forms. Instead of calling these examples “Interlanguage” or “unlearning” it would be more appreciative to call what they are doing using language resourcefully in accordance with the requirements of the interlocutor. This is what we meant by “acquisition of language on the fly” or “learning-in-action”. It is a different conception of learning; we still have not come up with a metaphor that captures the full meaning of it yet, but it is certainly an alternative and a challenge to this kind of linear Interlanguage idea.

- I. The idea of linear learning leads us to another question, the question of “markedness / unmarkedness” and “appropriateness”. In other words: if we do not accept the so-called native as the standard or as the target, what would be the measure that we could have? What would be called “right” or “wrong” if somebody tries to learn a language?

A.F. Well, that is a very hotly debated question - it just depends on who you ask. If you ask interlocutors, again that depends on who they are interacting with to a certain extent - because language is about communication ... If you are taking members of this process and pose this question, you can say that language is a self-regulating system. In other words: if you are not clear, if the norms you are using, if the norms you are abiding by or even creating, are not meaningful or transparent, then that will render the communication process problematic. So, to a certain extent from the members’ / users’ point of view and certainly if you look at this analytically, if you consider language empirically, you can see that interlocutors as well are much more resourceful, inventive and creative - because of the nature of language you have to refer to a certain set of norms in order to be understandable. There has to be a framework within which you can refer to and collectively draw upon. But also within that kind of framework there is an element of invention and creativity and a certain amount of movement. We are interested in certain circumstances such as workplace interactions, where interlocutors will not see themselves as being users of language for evaluation purposes - in contrast to learners who would be using language essentially to practise it, to be assessed, to be evaluated – who conceive of their own language use as something which is learner-based. I am really talking about people who are using language to get on with “real world real things”, selling or buying, being interviewed for jobs and so on.

- I. In one of your articles you say that “real Danish cheese” and “real big money” is made. (Firth and Wagner, to appear December 2007, online version pp 4/5)

A.F. Absolutely. So what tends to happen in these particular cases is that the message substrate becomes the primary focus in the communication rather than – say – the surface characteristics of the discourse and as shown also in my 1996 *Journal of Pragmatics* paper. What we found is that interactants are extremely skilful at being able to adapt to the local demands even when that entails using non-standard forms of English. From a member’s / user’s perspective I think there are differences. There are differences in who is using the language. Are they learners – particular if they are learners in an educational setting - in which case there is going to be perhaps more of a reference to native norms. Again that would be heavily influenced by teachers’ attitudes and some of the debates within the Englishes of Lingua Franca are trying to examine to what extent we as teachers can try and bring across the message that

English is no longer owned by native speakers and therefore norms are something that can be negotiated also by non-native speakers, thus giving rise to different kinds of Englishes, not only that kind of national English such as Nigerian English or Singaporian English, also perhaps the English of journalists or tourists in certain areas, or cheese sellers. There are different forms of English arising. Students themselves often defer to native speaker norms which may result in some kind of mismatch between the message or the conviction of the teacher who is trying to emphasize a more liberal idea of normativity in language whereas the students themselves defer to native speakers and have this ingrained belief that sounding more like a native speaker is something that is most desirable and therefore what they should be aiming for. Then there are the teachers themselves; if you ask them the question that you posed you will see what some researchers have found recently – and this is coming out in Jennifer Jenkins’ book at the end of this year on English as a Lingua Franca - you will find that teachers – especially EFL teachers - on the whole were found to be much more conservative and defer again to native speaker norms.

I. You had a very interesting image for that. You referred to the native speaker as the “seemingly omniscient figure” in SLA (Firth and Wagner, 1997, 291) and then you borrowed a phrase of Mey who called the native speaker the “uncrowned king of linguistics” (ibid).

A.F. Yes, I think the native speaker in linguistics is regarded essentially as an omniscient figure and it certainly serves as a figure who has a stable and all-encompassing knowledge of language. The native speaker in linguistics is assumed to have certain characteristics, certain levels of knowledge whereas if we actually look at language in use we see that native speakers use new forms of language according to situations of learning involved and so on. I think throughout so many SLA publications there is a hugely dominant viewpoint that the native speaker norms should be the target despite the rise of English as a global language, particularly in the last fifteen or twenty years. Take the Cobuild dictionary project where the tag-line of the dictionaries is ‘Teaching learners *real* English’, where *real* means naturally-occurring and native-speaker English. They use recordings of native speakers - that is one example of many where the native speaker is seen as unquestionably the target.

I. But again the question is: who is that native speaker? It could be a British or an American person ...

A.F. Yes, that’s absolutely right. If you start looking under the surface at the language models that are often recorded, they seem very often to be UK-based and US-based and the gradations there continue to be middle-class, educated and speakers of accepted standard forms of English, normally RP or standard British or American English. It has come to awareness though in EFL textbook productions that it is necessary to also expose learners to different forms of English, regional accents within the native speakers’ countries but also there is a new development to use the forms of English from people who use English as their foreign or second language, the English of Danes, the English of Germans, the English of Argentines, Japanese and so on where we are using the category of an “expert”, so the determining factor is no longer that of a “native speaker” but it is moving to that of a very skilled communicator or expert. This notion of “expert” transcends both so-called non-native and native speakers. I think very slowly textbook writers are beginning to become

aware of this idea. It is necessary to seriously embrace this idea of “English as a global language” or “English as a world language” and therefore expose learners to many different kinds of English including so-called non-native types, regional and non-standard forms. But of course at the same time there has to be an acknowledgement that teachers work with limited resources, a limited amount of time and therefore there has to be some rationalization – you cannot spend all of your time exposing learners to many different kinds of English. I think there is a kind of pragmatic acceptance that on the one hand one has to acknowledge a certain base standard and at the same time also expose learners to different forms of English and particularly non-native forms and try and challenge and bring across to the learners themselves that the native speaker is one speaker of many and that they are all forms of English even if they have an accent. It should not necessarily be the accent and the syntax that is the defining factor of quality in terms of language, but how skilful one is as a communicator according to the local context that we are in.

I In one of your articles you are referring to this bipolarity that de Saussure already spoke about – “langue” and “parole” – which was taken up by Chomsky as “competence” and “performance”. (Firth and Wagner, 1997, 287). If I have understood you correctly before, your idea does include breaking down the border between competence and performance, doesn’t it?

A.F. Yes, it does. This came out in the paper Johannes Wagner and I wrote in 1998, published in the *Modern Language Journal* where we replied to S. Gass, for example, and also in the *Modern Language Journal* in 1998 or to G. Kasper in *MLJ* in 1997 about Second Language Acquisition not being about language use but about acquisition. I think there are certain parallels between “langue”, “parole”, “acquisition” and “use”. Of course many people have criticized the de Saussurian idea that was later developed by Chomsky and analysed as “competence” and “performance” – Volosinov in his “Marxism and the Philosophy of Language” for example produced a very trenchant critique of de Saussure and then of course you have people like Hymes and Gumperz who have attacked the Chomskyan idea of “competence” and “performance”. I think there are certain interesting parallels between those; the distinction between “acquisition” and “use” as we pointed out in our 1998 article is in fact counter-productive. We were quite surprised at how adamant some of the more conventional SLA-researchers supported this distinction between “acquisition” and “use”. But I think it is becoming more common now to deconstruct the distinction between “acquisition” and “use”. I think we need to do that because to my mind, acquisition is not going to occur without use. One could now say: what is the actual empirical validity of making the distinction between acquisition and use? I think that is a very good question and I think the answer is that there is very little validity in distinguishing between acquisition and use. There is something which reflects what is going on when people use language, when people learn. They got to do and to demonstrate it through use.

I I am exaggerating but does that not say that we have in a way returned to Plato’s idea of the image of language as a tool – a tool for a purpose; we use language to achieve something as a sort of value of its own?

A.F. Absolutely. That view has particularly become prominent within sociolinguistics and in terms of sociology and even in speech to a certain extent,

- “language as action”, anthropological ideas of “language as action” from e.g. Malinowski.
- I. My last question in this block would refer to your latest publication. There you are referring to the latest development in SLA: “We are, then, witness to a natural progression, an intellectual evolution, if one will, where successful paradigms evolve (and sometimes fracture) through both support and critique.” (Firth & Wagner 2007, p.38). I was wondering where you would see yourself and your position in this development.
- A.F. Well, obviously my interests are in SLA from a social perspective, from a social-cultural angle although I do keep my eye on developments from a cognitive perspective. We did say in our 1997 article that we were not rejecting the cognitive work in SLA; we were not calling for an end of that work. Not at all. Some misunderstood that. Nanda Poulisse misunderstood us and to a certain extent Mike Long, but we were actually asking for greater attention to social and interactional perspectives and to reconceptualise learning along those lines. I think within the last ten years there have been changes in the direction of the arguments we were making in our 1997-article. Incidentally these arguments were not only made by us but by other researchers as well around the same time, people like David Block, Claire Kramsch, Leo van Lier and others. They also called for similar changes. I would see my own work and that of J. Wagner as being in line with this change where we would like to see more interactional oriented studies that are using a data base that is broader than traditional classroom learner interaction. More work is being undertaken in this direction and has begun to emerge in the last five or six years and I think SLA is really benefitting from these developments. I think this is a really exciting time for SLA because it is beginning to develop a certain side of SLA that was clearly underdeveloped ten years ago as regards a more social, a more socio-cultural approach to SLA. (The individual contributions of this debate mentioned above can be found in Seidlhofer 2003, Chapter 4, 169-267)
- I. I would now like to address your engagement as the manager / editor of the Internet discussion forum *LangUse* which has currently about 900 subscribers worldwide. Could you please give us a brief explanation as to the focus and work of this forum?
- A.F. It has very little involvement from me really, I helped to set it up actually: I think I coined the terms *LangUse* when I took over this forum from Anita Pomeranz when she began working at the State University of New York. I cannot even remember when exactly that was – might have been 1998 or 1997 and then I hosted *LangUse* at Aalborg University in Denmark where it is still hosted. And I have been able to just keep my eye on the contributions and occasional problems, spam or flaming going on – but I think *LangUse* takes care of itself. I just watch with interest and occasionally intervene when things go wrong but fortunately they do not go wrong very often. I think it is very successful. It produces extremely interesting exchanges and I am sure it is going to continue to grow. We started out with about 350 and have now reached about 900 participants.
- I. Another thing you are engaged in and that you have established together with J. Wagner and J. Steensig is the Micro-Analysis of *Verbal Interaction Network*, Denmark, short *MOVIN*. Could you also please elaborate on that?

- A.F. Well, this was an idea that Johannes, Jakob and I had again about ten years ago when we felt that it would be of benefit to people in Denmark who are interested in micro-analysis and interaction to be able to just join a group which had a website, could host meetings, apply for grants and so on. So we set up the *MOVIN* Network. I think Johannes deserves credit for establishing it. Its reputation and its activities are mostly concentrated at the University of Southern Denmark where Johannes is working. I do not want to take credit for *MOVIN* apart from originally being involved in establishing it a few years ago.
- I. There additionally is a quite new data group you are involved in, the *MARG* Network that you established together with Dr Chris Jenks. Could you tell us something about that as well?
- A.F. Well, I mean there are obvious parallels between *MOVIN* and *MARG* and we feel that many people of many schools at Newcastle University and neighbouring universities would benefit from coming together, across disciplines, in order to talk about their research in a very informal way, including PhD students, maybe Masters students. I think it is very refreshing to be able to get together around a shared methodology one is interested in, analysing language and interactive phenomena while using recording of actual language use. We are looking at contextual, interactional dimensions of language. We are not tied to a particular paradigm. It is not as though we are all discourse analysts or conversation analysts, but we are interested in language from a kind of micro-analytic perspective. We have had only one meeting so far but it was really useful and extremely interesting and I hope that *MARG* Network will continue to grow and establish itself. And who knows what might come out of that ...!
- I. By now we are arriving at our last topical block: your children's books. They were published in the 1980s, *The Bermuda Triangle Mystery* in 1987 and *The Loch Ness Mystery* in 1989. Both were published in Copenhagen and I saw that the *Bermuda Triangle Mystery* was published in 4 languages. In Swedish, English of course, Danish and ...
- A.F. In Dutch, too. Actually I think the *Bermuda Triangle Mystery* was technically a best seller; it sold over ten thousand copies in Denmark alone, so that was really successful. I was actually able to write that quite quickly, one summer, many, many years ago. I have always written stories, even when I was a boy, I loved to write stories, I particularly had a penchant for conspiracy theories and fiction and I think there was a great lack of stories for 13 – 16 year olds. J. K. Rowling certainly noticed the same gap and filled it. It was very illuminating to write that.
- I. Have you solved the mysteries?
- A.F. No, let's leave the mysteries unsolved. It is interesting to say that we can neither fathom the Loch Ness nor the Bermuda Triangle and it is a great thing to ponder and to feel that one does not have all the answers to nature or the workings of the world particularly at that age. I would like to encourage teenagers – I have two teenagers myself – to develop a sense of wonder and a sense of curiosity. A questioning and openness towards matters relating to – whatever it is – scholarship, nature, science in general. This is really what these books are about. They say: something is there, let's explore it; we do not really know what the answers are. We

- cannot know what the answers are, but that in itself is an advantage and something that we can take as an opportunity to rethink and explore different ways of thinking.
- I. A nice thought to come to a close. Dr Firth, thank you very much for that very inspiring and thought-provoking interview.
- A.F. You're very welcome.

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ⁱ Projections' measures are estimates for illustration purpose only.
ⁱⁱ Leadership Foundation for Higher Education